



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Request to use the City Hall grounds for a 'Death is not Justice' poster exhibition</b>
<b>Date:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> June 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	G. Wright, Head of Facilities Management, Ext: 5206
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext: 6217

### Relevant Background Information

As Members will be aware, the Committee has delegated authority for routine requests for use of the City Hall grounds to the Director of Property & Projects on the basis of an agreed set of criteria, and the majority of requests are now dealt with by this mechanism. However it was recognised that there would be occasions on which the nature, scale and sensitivities of the request mean that it is appropriate to place the matter directly before the Committee. The request detailed below is considered to fall into this category, and the direction of the Committee is therefore sought.

A request has been received from an organisation called Poster for Tomorrow. The organisation, based in France, lobbies on a world wide basis for the abolition of the death penalty. Although not a registered charity it has the patronage of UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and is also endorsed by Amnesty International.

Poster for Tomorrow has requested the use of the City Hall grounds to exhibit 100 posters marking World & European Day against the Death Penalty on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010. The 100 posters would be selected by a panel comprised of eminent local people from public competition submissions, and would be displayed in the grounds from the **7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010**. Belfast would be one of 100 cities across the world marking this event.

The posters would be displayed on trellis type fencing positioned around the City Hall grounds. There would be no resource implications for the Council as the organisation would provide all of their own display materials, there is no requirement for electrical power and full indemnity insurance would be taken out by the organisation.

Due to the nature of the subject some of the posters may be sensitive in nature, although BCC does have the option of vetoing specific posters if they are deemed to be controversial or offensive. Members will also be aware that the death penalty is still supported by a number of countries, notably the USA and China, so the organisers' position will not have unqualified support. It is also envisaged that the exhibition may get significant media coverage.

One of the criteria for use of the City Hall grounds states that the request should comply with the Council's equality and good relations obligations. The Poster For Tomorrow application has consequently been discussed with the council's Good Relations Manager, who - given that the UK has abolished the death penalty - recommends that the application is given approval by the Committee.

### **Key Issues**

The introduction, retention or abolition of the death penalty is currently a matter of political debate around the world. The organisers of this event take an unambiguous position on the issue and seek abolition, however their views are not universally shared. The key issue is therefore whether or not the Committee believes that the grounds of the City Hall are an appropriate place to display the posters in question and wishes to be associated with the organisers' campaign in this way.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

There are no financial implications

#### Human Resources

There are no Human Resource implications

#### Asset and Other Implications

BCC will be indemnified against any damage to the grounds or injury to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties

### **Recommendations**

Members are requested to determine whether they wish to approve the use of the City Hall grounds for the 'Death is not Justice' poster exhibition to run from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

### **Key to Abbreviations**

None

### **Documents Attached**

None