



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast Telegraph Roadshows
<b>Date:</b>	22 September, 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Eamon Deeny
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	As above

### Relevant Background Information

Belfast Telegraph editor Mike Gilson wrote to the chief executive at the end of June requesting the council's involvement with the newspaper in a series of roadshows to be held at eight different locations beginning in Ballymoney (16 September) and running through to Belfast on 8 November. The Telegraph has requested use of the City Hall for the Belfast event. The purpose is to listen to the voices of the people and get their views on the issues that affect their lives

### Key Issues

Subject to approval by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Telegraph has requested the following:

- A venue where Belfast Telegraph can park a small branded van in a location at the City Hall to access as many people as possible to conduct vox pops between 11am and 3pm on Friday, 5 November.
- A venue for an evening panel discussion (7pm-8pm) on Monday, 8 November. The newspaper will informally invite (by email) a core list of guests to this but will be encouraging members of the general public to turn up also.

Facilities Management has advised that we cannot allow the promotion of commercial businesses in the grounds of the City Hall. However, the council will be given the opportunity to put its own branding at the locality of the van and the event will be promoted as a joint enterprise between the council and Belfast Telegraph to comply with council regulations.

As part of this partnership, the Belfast Telegraph has requested that the City Hall be provided free of charge for the panel discussion. The banqueting hall – with theatre style seating that can accommodate 250 people, is the preferred venue and it is available on 8 November.

JPR, a PR company which is organising this on behalf of the Belfast Telegraph, is proposing that the panel be made up of the leaders of the political parties. The Lord Mayor has agreed to host and introduce the event, subject to council approval for the proposal, but will not take part in the panel discussion as he will have to leave early due to another commitment. JPR is happy to consider any other suggestion we have in relation to the council's involvement and members may wish to consider asking each of the parties on the council to send a representative and/or the committee chairs being invited to attend as part of the audience in order to listen to the views of the public.

The event will provide the council with an opportunity to be seen to be supporting an initiative which is aimed at listening to the citizens of Belfast and taking on board their views on a range of issues. The Belfast Telegraph's intend to give extensive coverage to the initiative across all of their editions and will highlight the council in a positive light in publicity leading up to the event and in the reporting that follows.

#### **Resource Implications**

The event will be organised by Belfast Telegraph but the Council will provide the banqueting hall free of charge and Facilities Management will assist in the preparation of the room and event management (access, security etc)

#### **Recommendations**

Members are asked to approve the proposal and consider if committee chairs and/or party representative(s) be invited to attend.

#### **Key to Abbreviations**

None

#### **Documents Attached**

None