



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Request to use the City Hall to mark the centenary of the Signing of the Solemn League and Covenant - Co-operation Ireland
Date:	Friday, 23 March February, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext 6314)
Contact Officer:	Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer (ext. 6316)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group, at its meeting on 13 January, agreed that any applications for the use of the City Hall for events associated with the decade of centenaries should be dealt with in the normal way and be subject to the existing Council policy on the use of the building and also the principles already agreed by the Historic Centenaries Working Group which are attached as Appendix 1.
1.2	A request to mark the centenary of the Signing of the Solemn League and Covenant, at an event on 27 September, 2012, has been received from Co-operation Ireland.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Co-operation Ireland has submitted an application form requesting the use of the City Hall to hold an event entitled 'Entwined Histories – The Ulster Covenant Screening and Reception' on 27 September, 2012.
2.2	The purpose of this event is to show six films which have been produced by six groups of young people on a particular aspect of the signing of the Ulster Covenant in 1912. The films, which were produced collectively by Co-operation Ireland and Cinemagic, will seek to demonstrate our shared histories and entwined lives. Furthermore, the young people have produced the films in such a way as to demonstrate the different opinions and perspectives which existed then and now.
2.3	The event aims to provide opportunities to include a range of different perspectives and ideologies, rather than a single viewpoint, aiming to increase understanding and appreciation of other perspectives and identities. It will do this by including historical experts from Queen's University Belfast and perspectives from the Orange Order. The young people will also have access to tours of the City Hall, Ulster Museum, Schomberg Museum and the resources available at the Ulster Hall and on the Public Records Office website.

2.4	The young people, who will come from schools which reflect the full educational spectrum in Belfast, will represent different communities, will collaborate in exploring their own identity and understanding of events, now and in the past, through a managed contact process.
2.5	The organisers are seeking to ensure that the event is non-exclusive and welcoming to all sections of the community in Belfast by inviting the young people, their parents, their school teachers and governors, the academic and historical experts, members of Belfast City Council, the Department of Foreign Affairs (ROI) and the representatives of Co-operation Ireland and Cinemagic.
2.6	Based on the information received, the application appears to satisfy both the criteria on the use of the City Hall and the principles agreed by the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group on 13 January.

3	Resource Implications

4	Equality Implications
4.1	N/A

5	Recommendations
5.1	The committee is recommended to grant the use of the City Hall for the event on 27 September, 2012.

6	Decision Tracking
Officers responsible: Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer April 2012	

7	Key to Abbreviations

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 : Principles agreed by the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group	