



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Christmas Lighting and Signage
Date:	7 September 2012
Reporting Officer:	Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager
Contact Officer:	Gerry Copeland, City Events Manager

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>At a meeting of the Development Committee (6 March 2012), the Members considered a report relating to Christmas lighting and signage.</p> <p>The Committee deferred consideration of a report in respect of the Council's Christmas Lights and Signage. However, it was agreed that the management and delivery of the Christmas Lights and Signage Programme would transfer from the Development Department to the Property and Projects Department in the financial year 2013/2014, and that Committee reporting lines would be transferred also to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</p>
1.2	<p>The Joint Group of the Party Group Leaders' Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group considered the deferred report at its meeting on 15 June 2012, particularly in regard to the installation of a sign in Irish. They agreed the matter should be referred to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in August, subsequent to further party group discussions.</p>

2.0	Key Issues
2.1	<p>The Council's City Events Unit is currently responsible for the festive lighting on City Hall, the installation and lighting on the main Christmas tree and for the pea-lighting on the trees within the grounds of the Hall. The Council does not manage the festive lighting in the city centre, which is overseen by Belfast City Centre Management and the Belfast Chamber of Trade.</p>
2.2	<p>The present Council position was agreed at its meeting on 1 December 2011. It agreed that a lighted sign with the wording "Merry Christmas" be erected in 2011 and every year thereafter at the front and East Entrance area of the City Hall.</p> <p>A further amendment was carried to provide that the Council agreed to explore with An Cultúrlann the possibility of it donating, pro gratis, a "Nollaig Shona" sign to be erected in the City Hall grounds. Consequent to this decision, the Council now has in its possession an</p>

	Irish language sign (Nollaig Shona Duit), supplied by An Cultúrlann at no cost. In 2011 this was positioned above the east entrance of City Hall.
2.3	'B Festive' Signage Members are asked to note that Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce have written to express their concern at the removal of the 'B Festive' signage and have requested that Members reinstate this sign.

3.0	Resource Implications
	<u>Financial</u> Costs in the region of £15k for new sign subject to final specification. Revenue funds have been allocated for this through the City Events Unit.

4.0	Equality Implications
	As with all major civic events, public events like the above have the potential to bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and therefore promote good relations in the city.

5.0	Discussion required
	Members are asked to give guidance in regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Hall festive lighting for the Christmas period in 2012, including the request from Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce to reinstate the 'B Festive' sign on City Hall.

6.0	Appendix
	Appendix 1 – Images of 2011 Christmas festive lighting at City Hall

7.0	Officers to contact
	Gerry Copeland, Ext 3412