



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources
<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast City Hall Live Site Screen
<b>Date:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2012
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive, ext. 6002
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Gerry Copeland, Events Manager ext. 3412

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
<b>1.1</b>	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Gain approval from Members to enable Officers to appoint, via publicly advertised expressions of interest process, a new content and screen management provider for the Belfast Live Site Screen. Officers would seek Members approval that the decision 'to appoint' is delegated to either BCC's Chief Executive or Director of Development.</li><li>- Approval from Members to enable the Belfast Live Site Screen team to join a consortium with up to twenty-one other Local Authorities within the Live Site Network</li><li>- Subject to the above approval to seek permission from Members to allow the screening of away games featuring Northern Ireland (including 2014 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers) and agree costs associated with screening these games.</li></ul>
<b>1.2</b>	<p>In April 2010 the Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee agreed that a Live Sites Screen should be positioned in the grounds of City Hall for a three year period. The Screen is part of 22 'live site' LED screens locations across regional capitals and key cities in including Derry~Londonderry, which is part of its preparations for the City of Culture in 2013. In May 2012 Members also agreed that the screen should stay in situ and be considered as part of DSD's Streets Ahead (phase 2) programme.</p>
<b>1.3</b>	<p>Members are reminded that the Council has agreed to allocate £20,000 per year connected to the screens maintenance and security. For Members' information the screen is operated, up to December 2012, in partnership with: BCC; LOCOG; BBC; DCAL and associated London 2012 commercial sponsors – BT; LlyodsTSB and Cisco. Events animation at the Belfast screen was funded via DCAL and LOCOG at the cost of £25,000 for the 2012 year. From January 2012 to September 2012 over 200,000 attended a variety of events at the Belfast screen, which were delivered with the above partners. In the summer of this year over 35,000 people watched the Olympic and Paralympics Games on the Live Screen. This covered events around Belfast Olympian and Paralympic athletes at the London Games. In addition the screen was used for the screening of the Euro 2012 championships, Ulster teams in the All-Ireland GAA competitions and events connected to the Titanic Centenary programme.</p>
<b>1.4</b>	<p>Currently the BBC is the content provider for the Live Screens network. Unfortunately this position will change and the BBC will now only run the screen management and content</p>

1.5	<p>process until March 2013. This recent piece of communication, from the BBC, is due to budgetary constraints within broadcaster. Unfortunately this is a significant change of position from the original project concept presented by the BBC and LOCOG back prior to April 2010. Therefore, Members are now being asked to review options and provide guidance on this matter.</p> <p>Subject to the above approval that Committee endorse the screening of away games featuring Northern Ireland (including 2014 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers) and agree costs associated with screening these games.</p>
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2	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	<p><b><u>Future content management provider</u></b></p> <p>The BBC has been involved as the content and screen management provider since the screens inception and in the planning of the Belfast Live site. However, this process will terminate at the end of March 2013 due to BBC budgetary constraints. Members are asked to note that there are five main options on the table and Council is being asked to select one of these. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Option 1: Decommission the screen.</li> <li>- Option 2: Operate the screen as an individual local authority.</li> <li>- Option 3: Operate the screen as part of a regional or small grouping.</li> <li>- Option 4: Be part of a larger UK association.</li> <li>- Option 5: Appointment of a new content provider via publicly advertised expressions of interest call</li> </ul> <p><b>2.2 Option 1: Decommission the screen.</b></p> <p>The removal of the screen would only happen if the Council cannot indicate how the screen content will be managed post 2012. The final arbiter, on this matter, will be LOCOG. If an agreement cannot be reached the Council will be liable for the removal costs of the screen and the screen will stay in the ownership of LOCOG. The estimated costs of removal would be £50,000, which is inclusive of reinstatement of the City Hall grounds.</p> <p><b>2.3 Option 2: Operate the screen as an individual local authority.</b></p> <p>Each Local Authority involved will need to resource and provide screen content and management. Currently there are not the personnel or skill-sets for this service within BCC. The Screen Network partners estimate that this would cost circa £25,000 per annum. In addition the Council would need to maintain specialist insurance and service arrangements, which is estimated at £20,000. Therefore the total cost for Option 2 is £45,000 per annum.</p> <p><b>2.4 Option 3: Operate the screen as part of a smaller regional grouping</b></p> <p>Each of the Authorities could search/investigate new partnerships/sponsors inclusive of a content provider e.g. UTV, Sky. This arrangement would need to cover the staffing costs of co-ordinating the project between each of the regional members. In addition maintenance agreements will need to be put/kept in place for the screens and operating system will need to be put in place which can link the screens. It is estimated that the cost of this option would be in the region of £50,000 to £60,000.</p> <p><b>2.5 Option 4: UK Live Screens Network Association Limited</b></p> <p>The 22 Live Screens could potentially work together to form a network consortium. The consortium would source content, sponsors and arrange maintenance contracts. LOCOG and the BBC have confirmed that the central coordination equipment can be gifted to an association, which would provide the operating system for the entire network. This process would mean that BCC would need to enter into a legal contract with a newly formed consortium. The consortium would have a full-time management team to oversee content</p>

<p>2.6</p> <p>2.7</p> <p>2.8</p> <p>2.9</p> <p>2.10</p>	<p>of the screens network and administer the requirements of each local authority. It is estimated that the maximum cost for this option would be £50,000 per local authority per year and would include maintenance and insurance costs.</p> <p><b>Option 5: Appointment of a new screen management and content provider via publicly advertised expressions of interest call at zero cost to Council</b></p> <p>This option would see Officers seek approval to go to a public tender for a content/management provider. This would be predicated on a zero cost to Council and could possibly create an income stream from the equipment. The type of possible companies who may be interested in this concept would operate in the broadcast, media and technology industries.</p> <p>Members are reminded that if BCC cannot identify an appropriate content management system for the screen that LOCOG may not transfer the screen to Council's ownership. This means that BCC will be liable for the costs to remove the screen at an estimated cost of £50,000. The annual cost to maintain the screen, insure it and programme events to BCC is £45,000 per year.</p> <p><u>Northern Ireland Football Games</u></p> <p>At this year's May Committee Members requested that Officers investigate the screening of Northern Ireland football matches. Therefore, Officers have clarified arrangements with the live broadcast rights holder to the games, BSYB, and the Irish Football Association. The Irish Football Association has expressed their opposition to home games being screened, due to a potential loss of revenue for Windsor Park. However, the Association have given their approval and support for screening away games. They have also offered their assistance to promote these screenings to the public and their involvement in any planned promotions to highlight this facility.</p> <p>Officers have also been in contact with BSKYB, who have the live broadcasting rights for Northern Ireland games, in order to obtain costs for the screening of the away matches live. Currently BSKYB cannot provide an exact written cost per game, but a maximum fee of £4,000 per away game has been quoted. Therefore, the three remaining away games for the FIFA World Cup would total £12,000. Members are asked to note that this cost would be subject to further discussions and a legal agreement with BSKYB. There would also be an additional cost for stewarding any matches alongside site facilities (toilets and barriers, etc.), which would be a maximum of £1,000.00 per game. Members are asked to note that screening of future Ulster Rugby Heineken Cup games, which are screened only via BSKYB, would have a similar cost of £5,000 approximately.</p> <p><u>Live Site Planning Consent</u></p> <p>Members are reminded that NI Planning Service has granted planning consent, for the Live Site screen, to stay in situ until April 2014 and that Members have agreed that the screen should be considered as part of the refurbishment of the Donegall Square, to be undertaken by the Department of Social Development, as part of phase two of the Streets Ahead programme.</p>
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<p>3</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p>	<p><b>Resource Implications</b></p> <p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The following are the key resource implications for Council.</p> <p>The costs attached to the Live Site Screen content provision are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Option 1: Decommission the screen. £50,000</li> <li>- Option 2: Operate the screen as an individual local authority. £45,000</li> <li>- Option 3: Operate the screen as part of a regional or small grouping. £50,000 to £60,000</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Option 4: Be part of a larger UK association. £50,000</li> <li>- Option 5: Appointment of a new screen management and content provider via publicly advertised expressions of interest call at zero cost to Council</li> </ul>
<b>3.3</b>	Estimated cost, to BCC, for Northern Ireland football away games would be circa £4,000 (per game). Plus an additional cost for event management arrangements in the region of £1,000. Therefore, each Live Site screening of a Northern Ireland away football match, by BSKyB, would be approximately £5,000. The Council would incur similar costs for other football and rugby events that Sky has the broadcast rights.
<b>3.4</b>	Members are asked to note that events animation costs for the Live Site screen are contained in the City Events Unit draft budgets for the 2013/14 period at a cost of £25,000, plus an additional £20,000 for maintenance and insurance i.e. £45,000 cost to Council.
<b>3.5</b>	<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>The City Events and Venues Section would coordinate this matter in conjunction with Corporate Communication within existing resources. However, if Option 3 and 4 are selected by Council, there would be a need to fund a post to assist in BCC's content to the Belfast Screen.</p>
<b>3.6</b>	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>The decommissioning of the screen would see the screen equipment stay in the ownership of LOCOG. Therefore, if BCC cannot identify an appropriate content management system LOCOG will not transfer the screen to Council's ownership. So as per Option 1 BCC will be liable for the costs to remove the screen at an estimated cost of £50,000. The annual cost to maintain the screen, insure it and programme events, to BCC, is £45,000 per year.</p>

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	As with all major civic events, public activities, like the above. have the potential to bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and therefore promote good relations in the city.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<p>Members are requested to agree and recommend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To approve an option in regard to the Live Site screen management and content system. If Option 4 is selected BCC would enter into a Live Site Screen consortium with up to twenty-one other Local Authorities within the Live Site Network</li> <li>- Subject to the above approval agree to screen Northern Ireland away games live, on the Belfast screen at City Hall, subject to agreement with BSKyB. Such agreement would be inclusive of associated broadcast and event costs estimated at £5,000 per game.</li> </ul>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
<p>If approved Officers will monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the project and provide post-project details as part of the Council's annual review. These outcomes will be presented to Members as part of the City Events Unit key performance indicators.</p> <p>Timeline: Post April 2013 <span style="float: right;">Reporting Officer: Gerry Copeland</span></p>	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
<p>BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation  LOCOG – London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games</p>	

DCAL - Department of Culture and Arts, Leisure DSD – Department of Social Development
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<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
None	