



<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Proposed amendment on the Flying of the Union Flag
<b>Date:</b>	Friday 14 December 2012
<b>Reporting Officers:</b>	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive Ciaran Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Members will be aware that at the monthly meeting of Council on 3 December, it was decided, after a recorded vote, that the Union Flag should fly on the City Hall on designated days.
1.2	Following this, and after an adjournment of the Council, a further amendment was moved: “That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23 <sup>rd</sup> November under the heading “Flying of the Union Flag at the Belfast City Hall” be further amended to provide that the Council’s Joint Group of the Party Leaders’ Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group be requested to consider a proposal that the Union Flag be flown 365 days a year in the civic space in the Garden of Remembrance in the grounds of the City Hall with a view that a report thereon be submitted for consideration by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 14 <sup>th</sup> December.”  This further amendment was carried following a recorded vote.
1.3	Accordingly, the matter was referred to the Joint Group of the Party Leaders’ Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group for consideration.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	At its meeting on Monday 10 December 2012, the Joint Diversity Group considered a supplementary legal opinion from Senior Counsel on the proposed new policy, the advice of the Equality Commission on the issue and the view of the consultant who had undertaken the associated Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA).

2.2	Following discussion, the Joint Group agreed that, since this proposed new policy had not formed part of the EQIA, the Council should undertake an equality screening process of the proposed policy. The screening process would include scoping the policy to ensure that the policy aims and objectives were fully developed and undertaking appropriate consultation with those organisations and individuals who might be affected by the new proposal.
2.3	A report outlining the proposed screening process will be submitted to the Joint Diversity Group at its meeting in January 2013.

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
To be determined	

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b>
Such a course of action would be in line with the Council's commitments as set out in its own Equality Scheme.	

<b>5.0</b>	<b>Decision required</b>
The Committee is requested to endorse the recommendation of the Joint Diversity Group, as set out above.	

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, ext 6020	