

**Minute of the Joint Group of Party Group Leaders Forum  
and Historic Centenaries Working Group  
Friday 18 January 2013**

<b>Present:</b>	Ald Ekin (in the Chair), Ald Rodgers, Cllr Attwood, Cllr Hanna, Cllr Jones, Cllr McVeigh and Cllr Reynolds.
<b>In attendance:</b>	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive; Ciaran Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor; Hazel Francey, Stella Gilmartin, Denise Wheatley, Consultant (item 2); and Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer (note-taker).
<b>Agenda Item 1</b>	<b>Routine Matters</b>
1.1	Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Ald Browne, Ald Humphrey, Ald Smyth Cllr Hendron and Cllr Kyle.  Cllr Jones was attending on behalf of Cllr Hendron.
1.2	The minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 10th December were agreed.
1.3	No declarations of interest were made at this stage.
<b>Agenda Item 2</b>	<b>Proposed Policy on the Flying of the Union Flag in the Garden of Remembrance</b>
2.1	H Francey reminded the Group of the decision which been take by the Council:  <i>“That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd 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 Centenary 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 on its meeting of 14th December.”</i>
2.2	H Francey then outlined the process to date:
2.3	The group had met on 10th December and considered a supplementary legal opinion from Senior Council 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.

2.4	Following discussion, the Joint Group had agreed and recommended that, since the proposed new policy had not formed part of the Equality Impact Assessment, the Council should undertake an equality screening process of the proposed policy.
2.5	The screening process would include scoping the policy to ensure that the policy aims and objectives were fully developed, and undertaking appropriate consultations with those organisations and individuals who might be affected by the new proposal.
2.6	A report outlining the proposed screening process would be submitted to the Joint Diversity Group at its meeting in January, 2013.
2.7	The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had endorsed the recommendation of the Joint Diversity Group as set out, which was subsequently ratified by the Council on 7th January.
2.8	<p>D Wheatley then presented a briefing paper which addressed the scoping of the proposed policy and the screening process and indicated that there were 3 stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scoping of the policy;</li> <li>• Consideration of the potential equality and good relations impacts; and</li> <li>• Consideration of whether a full EQIA is necessary.</li> </ul> <p>She reviewed the main details of the briefing paper and concluded by advising the Members that there were three issues for consideration and the Group was being asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify the intended aims and outcomes of the proposed policy;</li> <li>• Agree the list of consultees for pre-consultation;</li> <li>• Consider the timescale for pre-consultation.</li> </ul>
2.9	<p>Councillor Reynolds requested that the Group consider the following as the aims of the policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognition of the regional and national significance of the Garden of Remembrance/Cenotaph at Belfast City Hall; and</li> <li>2. An act of daily recognition of the past sacrifices made for the United Kingdom.</li> </ol>
2.10	<p>During discussion Councillor Attwood suggested that the intended aim of the policy should be simply:</p> <p>The Flying of the Union Flag in the Garden of Remembrance at the City Hall</p> <p>He suggested that a report be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee providing both this option and those aims</p>

	<p>which had been suggested by Councillor Reynolds.</p> <p>The point was also made that the Party Groups would need time to consider the proposals to ascertain whether any agreement could be reached.</p> <p>Councillor McVeigh stated that his Group would oppose any decision to fly the Union Flag at the Cenotaph. Councillor Reynolds indicated that the Council had already taken a decision to equality screen the proposal and all that was being discussed at the moment was how that process would be conducted.</p> <p><b>After further discussion the Group noted the aims of the proposed policy which had suggested by both Councillor Reynolds and Councillor Attwood and noted also that it would be a matter for the Strategic Policy and Resources to decide on the aims which would be included in the screening process.</b></p> <p><b>The Group approved the list of potential consultees for the pre-consultation for the screening process, agreed that the British and Irish Governments be added to the list and agreed also that the names of any additional organisations be forwarded to the Good Relations Manager.</b></p> <p><b>The Group agreed that the Good Relations Manager draw up and circulate for the information of the Members a proposed timetable for the completion of the screening process.</b></p>
<b>Agenda item 2 (b)</b>	<b>Notification of Complaints received re: FLAG EQIA</b>
	(Councillor Reynolds declared an interest in this item in that he had submitted the complaint on behalf of the DUP)
2.11	<p>The Group was advised that 3 complaints had been received regarding the Equality Impact Assessments in relation to the Flying of the Union Flag at the City Hall.</p> <p>Each of the 3 complaints alleged that the Council was in breach of its own Equality Scheme</p>
2.12	<b>The Good Relations Manager outlined the process for dealing with complaints and the Group noted that a report on the investigation of the complaints would be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in due course.</b>
<b>Agenda item 3</b>	<b>Decade of Centenaries</b>

	<b>Spring Programme -Update</b>
3.1	The Group was reminded that, at its meeting on 18th October, it had agreed to recommend a draft programme for the spring of 2013 on the role of women and the rise of the campaign for women's suffrage; this had subsequently been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 9 <sup>th</sup> November, 2012.
3.2	Some minor changes had to be made and the final programme on women's issues, which was a mix of talks and drama, had been circulated.  <b>Noted.</b>
	<b>Publication re: Women in Council</b>
3.3	The October report had referred also to the production of a brief publication and a small photographic exhibition in May 2013 to mark 40 years of Belfast City Council, which now had 16 female Members of Council, as opposed to only 6 female Members at the elections of May 1973. This was to focus on the changing nature of women in the broader political life of Belfast and link to the current work of the Council on addressing the imbalance in terms of gender in the City Hall.
3.4	At the October meeting, the Members had emphasised the need to ensure that the list of women was inclusive of all traditions. Lists of all those women who had served on the Council in the years between 1973 and 2012 were attached for information. Those lists had, on 20 November 2012, been circulated to the Party Group Leaders, and copied to all the current women Members of Council, requesting notification of any amendments required.
3.5	To date no responses had been received. The Good Relations Manager had studied the lists and identified those women who began their political life in the City Council but had gone on to do other things in public and political life. Accordingly, she proposed that the booklet covered the 16 current women Members, plus the following former Members:  Baroness Eileen Paisley and Rhonda Paisley  Diane Dodds MEP  Carmel Hanna, former MLA and Minister  Patricia Lewsley-Mooney, NICCY Commissioner  Carál Ní Chuilín, Minister for DCAL  Naomi Long, MP
3.6	All individuals listed had been contacted and had agreed to participate. A journalist/ photographer had been commissioned to interview each subject and it was expected that the booklet and

	<p>exhibition would be launched in May 2013, with a small reception, to mark the 40 year anniversary.</p> <p><b>The Group approved the list of names as outlined for inclusion in the booklet.</b></p>
3.8	<p><b>British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly Report</b></p> <p>H Francey advise that, following a visit to Belfast in October, the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly had issued its final report on the <i>Decade of Centenaries</i> which referred to that visit and commended the Council's exhibition "as a model of a balanced and informative exhibition". The report also recommended "that the exhibition also be displayed in Dublin and elsewhere"</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Noted.</b></p>
3.9	<p>The Joint Working Group was aware that the Council had agreed to loan the exhibition currently in the East Entrance to Ballymena Borough Council from the end of February until June 2013. When that had been discussed at Committee, some concern was expressed that it should be brought back to the City Hall for the major trade union conference to be held in Belfast at the end of June/early July.</p>
3.10	<p><b>Exhibition Panels</b></p> <p>Since it now appeared that the Council might receive a request for the exhibition to be loaned to Dublin, it was proposed to make copies of the specific exhibition panels that referred to the women's issues and labour/trade union issues and retain those for display during the spring and early summer, to support the associated programme of events. That proposal had been discussed and agreed with the relevant women's and trade union sector representatives and would be more cost effective.</p> <p><b>The Group agreed to the proposed copying of certain specific exhibition panels as set out above.</b></p>