



BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	City Hall Christmas Signage, Lighting and Trees
Date:	20 September 2013
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects, Ext: 6217
Contact Officer:	George Wright, Head of Facilities Management, Ext: 5206

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members are reminded that the management arrangements and associated budget for the installation of Christmas festive lighting, signs and the interior Christmas trees (marble & Great Hall) at the City Hall were recently transferred from the Development Department to the Property & Projects Department, and are now therefore the responsibility of this Committee.
1.2	A number of potential changes to long-standing decorative Christmas arrangements are now being proposed by the Facilities Management Section which are intended to improve the appearance of the building, secure cost savings and improve the building's CO ₂ emissions profile. The various proposed changes are set out below, and Members are asked to note and to consider the proposed changes.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The Parks & Leisure Department have advised that they are having increasing difficulty in sourcing, transporting and installing appropriate natural pine trees for both the marble and the Great Hall and would prefer to discontinue the use of natural pine trees for both the marble and the Great Hall and to replace these with high-quality artificial trees in a traditional style (this proposal does not currently affect the exterior tree).
2.2	Besides the practical difficulties associated with natural pine trees there is also a cost issue in that the two real trees cost around £8500 per year including daily watering to prevent needle drop etc. In comparison the cost of two artificial trees is approximately £18,000 with a typical 7/10 year life span resulting in a payback period of around 2 ½ years.
2.3	Other changes include replacement of the curtain lighting on the City Hall facades with new, energy-efficient LED curtain lighting, and to position these across the windows rather than the columns in order to enhance the visual effect (see example at Appendix 1a).

2.4	Replacement, on a rolling basis, the existing pea lights in the trees around the City Hall with a significantly larger LED-type fitting (see example at Appendix 1b) which would both assist in managing the costs associated with the annual use and maintenance of the fittings and also help reduce further the CO ₂ emissions of the building.
2.5	There are no other suggested changes and all the other normal signage lighting would remain as previously agreed by Committee.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The annual budget for the provision and erecting of the Christmas lights, signage and the main tree is already in place and has been transferred to the Property & Projects Department. For this financial year the Property Maintenance Unit have also included an additional £30,000 in the planned maintenance budget for the replacement of the pea lights on the perimeter trees.
3.2	It is proposed that this overall budget is used to replace the front façade lighting completely, to repair some existing pea lights and, subject to resources, to replace at least some of the pea lights with the new LED globe type lighting during 2013/14, with the remainder carried out in subsequent years.
3.3	The estimated one-off cost for the 2 new artificial trees on the Marble and Great Hall is £18,000. The trees have a life expectancy of 7-10 years.
3.4	It should be noted there will be some energy savings and reduction in carbon emissions by using LED light fittings on both the curtain lighting and the globe tree lighting, although it is not possible to quantify these reductions in advance. However these installations will complement the main LED lighting infrastructure recently installed on the City Hall's main façade under the ILLUMINATE project.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	The relevant equality and good relations implications have been taken into consideration and a completed screening form has been forwarded to the Equality and Diversity Officer.

5	Decision(s) required & Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that the Committee notes and considers whether or not to endorse the proposals in relation to the replacement of the City Hall festive curtain lighting and tree lighting installations, and the use of artificial Christmas trees from 2013 onwards.

6	Decision Tracking
If the necessary endorsements and approvals are provided by the Committee it is intended that the new arrangements specified herein will be operational from December 2013 onwards.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
None	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1	

Appendix 1

