



Subject:	Heritage Trail Sign Policy – City Hall
Date:	23rd April, 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	At the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19th March, the Committee considered a request to permit the installation of an interpretative interactive sign on a bollard facing the north west lawn at City Hall. There is currently no policy to cover this type of request. Given that there are a number of cultural heritage type projects in development and a focus on community tourism, it was considered that there are likely to be further requests of this nature in the future. Members expressed some concern given the sensitivity of the City Hall as a listed building and were anxious to ensure that its setting and appearance would not be detrimentally impacted, notwithstanding the fact that no listed building consent is required for the installation of such signs. Some concern was expressed

	in relation to the installation of these signs against the front façade of City Hall, even though they are not attached to the building. The purpose of this report is to establish a potential policy regulating the installation of these signs at City Hall and within the curtilage of the grounds.
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>
2.1	The Committee is asked to consider the proposed policy and/or make recommendations as it sees fit.
3.0	<u>Main Report</u>
3.1	Against the context of the City Hall being a listed building, it is clearly important to ensure that appropriate restrictions are put in place. Multiple signs placed on the bollards would be unlikely to enhance the appearance of the building. If Members were minded to permit the installation of these signs in City Hall grounds, it is recommended that no more than four could be placed on the bollards within the ground to the front of City Hall. It is recommended that they would be all uniform in size and shape, in the case of the current application 300mm and round. Under no circumstances would such a sign be permitted to be attached to the building. In respect of the east and west sides of the City Hall, it is recommended that no signs would be permitted. However, exceptionally, if an application were to be received related to the content of either of those sides of City Hall, that is the Cenotaph or the Titanic Memorial Gardens, then such an application could be considered but only one at each location.
3.2	All other applications for interactive signage, subject to approval, would be accommodated by the provision of an interactive screen at the entrance to the exhibition. In keeping with the EQIA carried out independently for the City Hall grounds, the ambition would be to ensure balanced content and inclusivity. Subject to the content promoted by interactive signage it is a potential means by which some element of rebalancing can be achieved in which a more contemporary image of the City can be portrayed. The content promoted by the interactive signage should have some relationship with the material and themes promoted by the City Hall Visitor Exhibition.
3.3	With any permission given to install such signage the Council would require it to be maintained and would reserve the right to remove it if it became unsightly. It would also reserve the right to remove it in any other exceptional circumstances.
3.4	At the Strategic Policy and Resources meeting on 19th March, Members requested information regarding potential interest from others who might wish to have a heritage trail

	<p>sign at or in City Hall. The Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism, has indicated that initial engagement with a number of organisations has demonstrated two separate categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing tours that are guided therefore can incorporate City Hall without having needing physical or digital infrastructure such as Best of Belfast by DC Tours. There is also an audio self-guided walking tour. There is the potential for these to be further enhanced. - The second category is largely heritage organisations that have an interest in building on an existing tour or developing a new trail. <p>3.5 While there is a good level of interest, plans are not progressed yet in terms of development and delivery of specific products. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential for a heritage trail including City Hall as part of the wider Belfast Jewish Heritage Project. Pre-Covid guided tours had demonstrated a level of interest in such a tour with clear connections between Sir Otto Jaffe and City Hall. - Ulster Scots Agency are also considering a number of potential heritage trails including Sir Edward Carson. - City Connections with Eastside Tourism and Fáilte Feirste Thiar are working on a visitor passport concept to tell the story of Belfast including the <i>Journey to Peace</i>. However, this is in earliest stages of development. <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.6 There are no financial or resource implications associated with this request save for the installation of an interactive screen.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.7 Any proposals will be subject to equality screening.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	None