

## **POLICY – External coloured building lights at the Library of Birmingham**

**April 2016**

### **Background**

1. The Library of Birmingham (LoB) opened in September 2013 and is one of the most popular free visitor destinations in the country, as well as operating lending and reference library services, business library, children’s library and housing the city’s archive collections.
2. The Library of Birmingham budget was reduced in 2015-16 and 2016-17, with a consequent reduction in staffing of around 50 % and a reduction in opening hours, initially of 40%. The Library of Birmingham budget takes account of the capacity of the building to generate income from trading, including the hiring of rooms, charging for services and events (where permitted under the 1964 act), fines and fundraising – i.e. income is essential in meeting the basic cost of opening.
3. Services from the Library of Birmingham have been severely curtailed as a result and the original vision of offering a high quality, exciting and inspirational programme, opening up the archives and collections and creating partnerships with the cultural sector to bring the building alive, needs resourcing.
4. In trying to retain the breadth and depth of service to the public as far as possible, every effort is being made to drive up income from commercial activities.
5. The external lighting covers the entire latticed frieze of the building and has the potential to be sold as a tool to promote products, events and services. It has been used in the past to support a number of religious, cultural, charity and commercial events. These have included:



- St. Patrick’s Day (Green)
- Vaisakhi (Orange)
- Aston Villa FC (Claret and Blue)
- Jeff Lynne’s inauguration into the Broad St ‘Walk of Stars’ (Blue for Birmingham City FC)

6. Sadly in recent times, as one of the city's most recognisable and iconic buildings, and one of few local buildings with the capability for lighting in this way, the Library has been called on several times as a focus for the city's reflection on international incidents (for example in Paris, in Brussels and Lahore). This is an important role civic role.
7. Library of Birmingham staff are able to programme a reasonable number of lighting configurations but more complex colour combinations require the services of an external company, with subsequent costs.
8. One of the initial purposes of the lighting was to provide an income stream for the Library. A number of technical issues have meant that the external lighting has largely not been used as a promotional tool for approximately 12 months.
9. The lighting system is now operational and has been used for high profile occasions, giving rise to a huge increase in requests for lighting to be used for a range of causes.
10. These requests are difficult to manage, not least because they sometimes conflict. They can be made, or championed, by senior officers or elected Members or MPs. They can be for registered charities, nationally nominated days, or semi-commercial interests. Increasingly they come from individuals seeking recognition for personal causes.
11. All requests impact on staff time as there is no specifically assigned role for managing the LoB external lighting. There is staff involvement at many different levels throughout the 'journey' of the request from it being made right through to the lighting event itself. This includes clarifying the request, cost discussions, assessing suitability, assessing need for external help, system configuration, testing, and checking the creation of the event itself on the agreed date. This needs to be reflected in the charging rates (Appendix C)
12. It is an appropriate time to devise a clear and coherent policy for handling lighting requests so that everyone is clear of the conditions under which requests can be accepted.

### **Proposed Policy**

13. Requests to light up LoB come via all of the normal enquiry channels. This includes emails, telephone calls, letters and personal visits. All requests, no matter what format or where they originate, should be directed to a short statement on the Library of Birmingham web site explaining this policy and the associated costs. If the enquirer is still interested in lighting up LoB they can submit a request through the normal email or telephone enquiry routes.

14. All requests should be made at least four weeks in advance of the first date required for lighting up LoB.
15. All requests for lighting up LoB will be passed to the Facilities & Systems Manager. If the enquirer is willing to accept the policy and its associated fees then the request will be accepted as long as it conforms to the General Principles governing advertising on the city council web site [birmingham.gov.uk](http://birmingham.gov.uk) – these principles are attached in Appendix A.
16. Any agreement to light up LoB in a colour should not be seen as an endorsement of the requesting organisation, or any of its associated campaigns or initiatives, by Birmingham City Council (BCC), i.e. this should be a commercial transaction. All booking arrangements will carry an explicit disclaimer to this effect.
17. Charities are not entitled to free lighting events simply by virtue of them being a charity.
18. If the requesting person or organisation is unwilling/unable to pay to have LoB lit up in their preferred colour then the request will be denied unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated which may include:
  - a. Initiatives linked to the strategic priorities of BCC
  - b. National campaigns in which BCC is involved
  - c. Charitable causes where the request is linked to (a) or (b) above.
19. In the event of conflict between requests, preference will be given to organisations which are paying for the service.
20. Any organisation claiming exceptional circumstances must submit their request on the form attached as Appendix B to the Head of Library Resources.
21. Requests relating to (18) above will be considered by the Assistant Director, Culture & Visitor Economy who is responsible for the service and its budgets.
22. The point of appeal will be to the Deputy Leader, owing to the Library's role as a civic asset and the Deputy Leader's responsibility for overseeing finance and advertising assets.

### **Communications**

23. The BCC Press Office must be informed that LoB will be lit as a result of a request as soon as the date is confirmed with the requester.

24. LoB staff should be informed by Newsletter (currently News in Blue) or email at least one week in advance of any agreed external lighting events.

**Charging**

25. The scale of charges is dated and included as Appendix C.

26. If LoB accepts a lighting booking and is for any reason unable to fulfil all of the agreed timespan, all funds barring a 10% administration fee will be returned.

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### **Appendix A – Advertising policy for birmingham.gov.uk**

#### **General Principles**

The placement of advertisements within the site will be coordinated to ensure they do not compromise the prime purpose and functionality of the website.

The Council reserves the right to refuse to promote or to remove any individual advertisement, which, in the opinion of the Council is considered inappropriate. The suitability of individual advertisers may be checked with the Council's Trading Standards department.

All adverts must adhere to the codes of conduct laid down by the Advertising Standards Authority and must not conflict with the Council's aims and priorities. The Advertising Standards Authority's Code includes provisions that marketing communications:

- Must be legal, decent, honest and truthful
- Must not bring advertising into disrepute, in addition must not bring the council into disrepute.
- must conform to the Code
- must respect the principles of fair competition
- Advertising will also be subject to the Code of Practice on Local Government Publicity and the requirements of the Financial Services Authority.

The promotion of any advertisement on the Council's website should not be seen as an official endorsement or recommendation of that advertiser's products or services.

The Council is not responsible for the quality or reliability of the product or services offered within any advertisement. The Council would never knowingly run an advertisement that is misleading, offensive, untrue or fraudulent.

Birmingham City Council does not support or endorse any company or organisation advertising on its website

The Council does not accept responsibility for errors, omissions or for any consequences arising when visiting third party websites having followed advertising links.

Most products and services may be promoted on the Council's website, however, some specific categories of products and services are prohibited.

This list is not comprehensive and may be changed at any time.

#### **Prohibited Organisations:**

- Lobby groups
- Manufacturers and distributors of alcohol and tobacco products
- Manufacturers and distributors of drugs and pharmaceutical products
- Manufacturers and distributors of weaponry and related products

- Organisations in financial or legal conflict with the Council
- Political organisation

**Prohibited products and services include:**

- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Gambling and betting
- Loans
- Pornography and adult services
- Tobacco
- Weaponry or violence

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**Appendix B – Exceptional Circumstances form**

<b>LoB external lighting request – Exceptional Circumstances form</b>	
<b>Name of Event</b>	
<b>Date of Request</b>	
<b>Date of Event</b>	
<b>Lighting Colour/s and/or pattern details</b>	
<b>Description of event</b>	
<b>Reason for non-payment</b>	
<b>Other details</b>	
<b>Contact name and details</b>	

**Please send this form to the Head of Library Resources - [david.potts@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:david.potts@birmingham.gov.uk)**

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**Appendix C – Scale of Charges 2016-17**

<b>Library of Birmingham – External Lighting charges</b>	
1 day (part or whole 24 Hours)	£500
Each additional day	£150 per day/part day e.g. 2 days would be £500 + £150 = £650 3 days would be £500 + £300 = £800
Other additional costs	When an external company is required to provide extra programming for the lighting system, there will be one-off additional charge of £300 regardless of duration and will be advised on a case-by-case basis

These charges will be reviewed on an annual basis.