



Subject:	Requests for use of the Council Chamber for Northern Ireland Schools Debating Competition
Date:	23 February 2024
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <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/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider a request of the Council Chamber from Belfast Building Trust for NI Schools Debating competition on Friday 3 May 2024.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to approve the application by Belfast Building Trust to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the chamber and function rooms, no room charge applicable due to charity status. • offer tea and coffee hospitality reception.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that Committee approval is required for the use of the Council Chamber by an outside body. Although such approval is rarely sought, the Committee has previously approved to use the council chamber for similar events.</p> <p><u>Belfast Building Trust request</u></p> <p>3.2 A request has been received from the Belfast Building Trust for the use of the Council Chamber on 3 May 2024 for the Grand Final of the Northern Ireland Schools Debating Competition.</p> <p>3.3 The Northern Ireland Schools Debating Competition is an annual event, founded by Lord Lieutenant Fionnuala Jay-O’Boyle in 1993 to encourage mature debate and civic engagement amongst young people. Thousands of students have participated in the competition, with over 80 teams from across Northern Ireland entering annually. Topics range from foreign affairs to planning. It is organised as part of the civic charitable work of Belfast Buildings Trust.</p> <p>3.4 The normal venue for this competition is the Senate Chamber at Stormont but this venue is unavailable due to refurbishment. Given the significance of the Competition, it is vital that the participants have the opportunity to debate in a true debating chamber, hence the request to use the Council Chamber at City Hall.</p> <p>3.5 Annually two guest judges attend from national political, legal, or media environment; Professor John Bew of Kings College London and Gavin Robinson MP have been invited for this years debate. Other attendees include the Competition’s regular panel of judges, BBT Trustees, students, teachers, parents, and other family members.</p> <p>3.6 The Finals consist of two debates - a Best Individual Speaker Final and the Main Debate Final - involving a total of 10 sixth form students. Guest attendance is up to 120 people. The Belfast Building Trust have also requested the use of the Reception Room for a judging room and Banqueting Hall for refreshments for the guests. Due to the charitable nature of the</p>

	<p>organisation, the committee may wish to approve hospitality in form of tea and coffee reception up to value of £500 from existing budget.</p>
3.7	<p>Democratic Services who manage the use of the Council Chamber have been consulted about this event. As the debate takes place in the evening of 3 May 2024 the hosting of this debate will not affect daytime delivery of public and private tours of which chamber access is integral to the tour route and script.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.8	<p>The Belfast Building Trust are a charity, under the current charging matrix no room hire fee will apply. If committee is minded to approve tea and coffee hospitality, monies would be provided from existing budget.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None