



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Request for Funding
Date:	14 November 2008
Reporting Officer:	David Cartmill, Acting Head of Corporate Services Directorate Ext 6084
Contact Officer:	David Cartmill, Acting Head of Corporate Services Directorate Ext 6084

Relevant Background Information

This paper presents for consideration a request for financial assistance by the Be Your Best Foundation towards the Belfast Rock Challenge 2009, to be staged in the Waterfront Hall. The Council provided £2,000 sponsorship towards the 2008 event also staged at the Waterfront Hall.

Under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, the Council has discretion to consider exceptional requests for financial assistance. A Special Expenditure budget within the Corporate Services Department is available to provide support which may be made available providing:

- (i) The Council has statutory authority to make such payments
- (ii) Assistance is not available from the remit of another Committee.

The criteria for assessing requests for assistance which would fall within the Council's Special Expenditure budget is included at Appendix 1.

Key Issues

The Be Your Best Foundation is a UK registered charity. It organises an annual 'Rock Challenge' as a drug and crime prevention vehicle which takes the form of a performing arts challenge for schools. The scheme aims to increase the resilience of young people and development of their self-esteem without dependence on negative influences of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.

The organisation stages Rock Challenges at cities throughout the UK. Seven schools from Northern Ireland and one from Dublin will participate in the 2009 Belfast Challenge including Belfast Model, Ashfield and Little Flower schools.

The Rock Challenge project is deemed to contribute to several Council agendas including Arts and Culture, Children and Young People, Good Relations and, in particular, Community Safety. Discussion has been held with staff responsible for the above areas. It is accepted that the proposal may not score highly under specific

Council support schemes. (Small grants schemes for Community Safety and Good Relations are currently closed). However, its collective impact across a range of Council priorities is deemed to make it a special case which is eligible for consideration.

In line with the Council's commitment to creating a safer city the Belfast Rock Challenge offers an opportunity to encourage young people to make positive lifestyle choices. Moreover, recent public consultation has highlighted that underage drinking and antisocial behaviour continue to be key concerns for residents of the city. A survey of Belfast participants in the 2008 Rock Challenge event indicated a higher percentage consumed alcohol, smoked or used drugs compared to participants across the UK. The vast majority of those questioned responded that they had either stopped or reduced consumption as a result of Rock Challenge. It is anticipated therefore that this event would complement ongoing work within Council such as its Safer Neighbourhoods Pilot and warden schemes as well as the Get Home Safe campaign and presents an opportunity to engage with young people in a positive environment.

Although not exclusively for the benefit of Belfast it is considered that the project merits support from Belfast City Council and that the benefits accruing to the city would be, at least, commensurate with a donation of £3,000. However, as this would be the second year the Council has supported the event, and in light of the financial pressures facing ratepayers, it is recommended that the promoters are advised that it is unlikely that further assistance will be offered.

Resource Implications

There are minimal implications for Belfast City Council and resources are available from current budget.

Financial

The Committee may wish to consider a contribution of £3,000.

Human Resources

None.

Asset and Other Implications

None.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee considers a contribution of £3,000 towards the Belfast Rock Challenge 2009, a not for profit event, to be staged in the Waterfront Hall and passes the under-noted resolution:

That the expenditure in respect of the aforementioned event be approved under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, it being the opinion of the Committee that the expenditure would be in the interest of, and would bring direct benefit to the District, and inhabitants of the District, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefits so accruing would be commensurate with the payments to be made.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Criteria for the assessment of requests for financial assistance.

APPENDIX 1

B Policy and Resources Committee,

2772 Friday, 18th June, 2004

Special Expenditure Budget - criteria to be applied in the assessment of requests

- (1) whether there are sufficient funds remaining in the Council's Special Expenditure budget for the relevant financial year;
- (2) whether the application for financial assistance links to any of the Council's Corporate Objectives;
- (3) whether the direct benefit to be obtained is specific to the Council or its district or inhabitants;
- (4) whether the activity or initiative in respect of which assistance is being sought is being promoted by a person or organisation living or operating, or otherwise having a direct connection with, the City;
- (5) whether the request for financial assistance relates to an event or initiative which falls within the remit and statutory power of any other Committee of the Council (in which case it should be so referred);
- (6) whether the request relates to a specific event, activity or initiative as distinct from a request for a contribution to general funds;
- (7) whether the benefit to be obtained will be commensurate with the payment to be made.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Council would nevertheless reserve to itself the right to give special consideration to any particular request for financial assistance if the Members consider that special circumstances apply and legal advice has been sought where appropriate.

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