



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Request for Funding
Date:	12 December 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 to the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra for a tour of Italy and Slovenia.

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 City of Belfast Youth Orchestra is drawn mainly from students of the Belfast School of Music which is funded by the Belfast Education and Library Board. There are approximately 90 members in the orchestra aged between 14 and 20 and drawn from all communities in the city. The orchestra has been in existence for over 50 years.

The orchestra is seeking financial support from the Council towards a tour of Italy and Slovenia in July 2009. The cost of the tour is approximately £118k. Participants will contribute approximately £72k and have been asked to raise a 'shortfall' of £46k through various fundraising and sponsorship activities.

Consideration

The request states that the orchestra seeks to

“...show the high quality of local talent and promote a very positive and attractive profile of our city....”

In this context, the Committee agreed to contribute £5k towards the cost of previous tours by the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra in 2007 and City of Belfast Youth Concert Band in 2008.

The Youth Orchestra or other groups from the Belfast School of Music are not in receipt of funding from any Council Department. As in previous years, the Committee has discretion as to whether it wishes to support this request. If assistance was agreed the Youth Orchestra would be required to acknowledge support from the Council in publicity material etc.

Resource Implications

Resources are available from current budget.

Financial

The Committee may wish to consider a contribution of £5,000, the sum provided towards tours in 2007 and 2008.

Human Resources

None.

Asset and Other Implications

None.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee considers a contribution of £5,000 towards the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra tour to Italy and Slovenia and, if agreed, 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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