



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Request for Funding
Date:	18 September 2009
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services Ext 6083
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Relevant Background Information

This paper presents for consideration a request for funding by the Be Your Best Foundation towards the Belfast Rock Challenge 2010, to be staged in the Waterfront Hall. The Council provided £3,000 sponsorship towards the 2009 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 while highlighting the negative influences of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.

The organisation stages Rock Challenges in some 20 UK cities. Eight schools from Northern Ireland will participate in the 2010 Belfast Challenge, half of which are from the city. (Ashfield Girls, Belfast Model, Little Flower School and St Louise's College)

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. Its overall impact across a range of Council priorities is deemed to make it a special case eligible for consideration by the SP&R committee.

In line with the Council's commitment to address anti-social behaviour and to create a safer city, the Belfast Rock Challenge offers an opportunity to encourage young people to make positive lifestyle choices.

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 2009 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. (See Appendix 2)

The Be Your Best Foundation has informed the Council that it has approached the Dept of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the PSNI for contributions of £7k and £5k respectively, towards staging the Belfast event.

Although not exclusively for the benefit of Belfast it is considered that the project merits support from Belfast City Council. However, as this would be the third year the Council has supported the event, and in light of the financial pressures facing ratepayers, it is recommended that the committee considers a contribution of £3000, the amount provided last year, and not the figure of £4000 requested. Furthermore, the committee may wish to advise the promoters that it is unlikely further assistance will be offered.

Resource Implications

Resources are available from current budget.

Financial

The Committee may wish to consider a contribution of £3,000.
(based on last year's figures, the organisers are expected to pay approximately £11k to the Waterfront Hall to stage the event including hire, services and commissions)

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 2010, 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 2 – Belfast Participants Survey – Results Summary