



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Request for Funding – First Steps Early Years Group
Date:	25 October 2013
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance John Walsh, Legal Services Manager

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	At the meeting of Council on the 1 October 2013, it was agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to consider a funding request of £8,000 from the First Steps Early Years Group under Section 37 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
1.2	A copy of the report presented to the Development Committee has been included as Appendix 1.
1.3	Under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the Council has discretion to consider exceptional requests for financial assistance.
1.4	The criteria for assessing requests for assistance which would fall within the Council's special expenditure budget were approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on the 18 June 2004 and are included as Appendix 2.

2.	Key Issues
2.1	The First Steps Early Years Group delivers early years provision to pre-school children. The group have submitted a request for funding support of £8,000 from the council.
2.2	The funding request is to cover salary costs, following the withdrawal of previous funding from the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) which was previously provided under the Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG).

2.3	Section 6 of the assessment criteria for special expenditure requests was agreed by Elected Members to ensure that special expenditure funding was not used to support recurrent running costs of organisations, especially in a situation where alternative sources of funding were no longer available to the group and bridge funding was being sought from the Council.
2.4	Legal Services have reviewed the application for funding and are of the opinion that the application would not meet section 6 of the assessment criteria approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on the 18 June 2004 as the provision of funds to cover salaries and other running costs would be a contribution to general funds for the provision of a service rather than funding for a specific event, activity or initiative.

3.	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u> The request for £8,000 funding is being considered under the special expenditure authority which is covered by Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

4.	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report.

5.	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that the Committee does not agree to the request for funding under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 as the request does not meet the criteria for assessing such requests as agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee on the 18 June 2013.

6.	Decision Tracking

	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Development Committee Report, 17 September 2013 Appendix 2 – Criteria for assessing Special Expenditure requests