



**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion to fund International Men's Day Event</b>
<b>Date:</b>	22 September August 2014
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Siobhan Toland, Lead Operations Officer, H&ES Department Ext. 3281
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Nicola Lane, Good Relations Manager , Ext. 6020

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	At its meeting on 1 July the Council passed the undernoted notice of motion , which was moved by Alderman R Patterson and seconded by Alderman Robinson.
	<b>International Men's Day</b>
1.2	<p><i>This Council recognises that the first ever event in Northern Ireland and Belfast to celebrate International Men's Day will take place on 19th November and that the theme will be 'Working Together for Men and Boys';</i></p> <p><i>It welcomes the fact that the day will highlight some serious issues such as domestic violence /abuse, poor educational attainment for some young boys and men, equality, a focus on men's health and well-being, a celebration of men's contribution in the workplace, family life and society, discrimination against men, the bullying of men in the workplace, the promotion of men as role models and improving gender relations and gender equality; and</i></p> <p><i>It notes that other organisations and individuals from the private sector, the public sector, charities, local celebrities, men, women and children are all taking part to promote this worthy and important event.</i></p> <p><i>Accordingly, the Council agrees to consider setting aside funding in order to hold an event at the City Hall in November to celebrate International Men's Day in a similar way in which it has supported International Women's Day in previous years."</i></p>
1.3	This motion was referred to Strategic Policy and Resources for consideration at its meeting on 22 August 2014. The Committee requested that a report including details and costs be provided to its meeting on 19 September 2014.

1.4	Men's Rights N Ireland has requested that the Council provides £10,000 to organise a one day conference on the theme of "Working together for boys and Men " to take place on International Men's Day, 19 November 2014, in City Hall. (The Great Hall I is currently available for the morning only on this day). The intention is to heighten awareness around the extent that domestic violence and abuse is an issue for men, the lack of support that is available for men and the consequences that stem from this lack of support, for example, mental health issues and increasing numbers of suicides.
1.5	Alderman Patterson has requested that consideration of this request is given parity with the funding that was previously agreed to support the International Women's Day public rally every year.
1.6	Annual funding of £6,000 for the International Women's Day public rally was approved by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 24 January 2014. Alderman Patterson also asked that this request is considered under Section 37 of the Local Government Act.
1.7	Council officers met with Alderman Ruth Patterson and a representative of Men's Right's Northern Ireland, on 5 September 2014 to discuss how the motion could be taken forward.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	Addressing gender inequality has been a council goal for many years and in 2006 the Women's Steering Group was established to oversee the development and implementation of the Gender Action Plan, the aim of which is to seek to address the under representation of women employed in the Council, particularly in senior roles and the under representation of women in politics.
2.2	In general terms the Council's support for International Women's Day has focused on issues affecting women in the workplace and women in political life as there is ongoing and recent evidence to suggest women are significantly under-represented in elected office; significantly under-represented on public bodies; underrepresented at manager, directors and senior official level; that 80% of part time workers are women, but only 24% of self-employed are women; and there remains a gender pay gap in favour of men.
2.3	It was agreed that the Council's support for the annual International Women's Day public event would demonstrate the Council's acknowledgement of this special day and its commitment to work towards greater equality of opportunity for all women in Belfast.
2.4	The aim of International Men's Day is to focus on men's and boy's health, promote gender equality, celebrate male achievements and contributions, in particular for their contributions to community, family, marriage, and child care and to highlight positive male role models. International Men's Day is an annual international event celebrated on 19 November.
2.5	These aims are aligned to Council priorities around health and well being in the city and raising awareness on the issue of domestic violence and abuse. Work in

	<p>relation to these issues includes the South DPCSP Partnership's support for Men's Advisory Project working to raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse towards men and our ongoing implementation of a Domestic Violence and Abuse policy for both male and female employees. It is recognised that domestic violence and abuse is an issue for men and that awareness needs to be raised.</p>
2.6	<p>The objectives of the proposed event would meet the Council's criteria for special expenditure under Section 37 of the Local Government Act.</p>
2.7	<p>Issues to be considered are :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men's Rights Northern Ireland is a recently formed organisation, currently comprised of three men with personal experience of domestic abuse.</li> <li>• While Men's Rights Northern Ireland has provided information on speakers, and costs that will be incurred, a detailed breakdown of costs would be required.</li> <li>• Other established men's advocacy groups work across the city to support men who are affected by domestic violence and abuse as well as the mental health, financial and societal issues that stem from it.</li> </ul>
2.8	<p>It is proposed therefore that a detailed programme for an event for International Men's Day to raise awareness around the men's issues highlighted in this report is developed by staff from the Good Relations Unit, Health and Environmental Services and Corporate Human Resources with Men's Rights Northern Ireland and other key stakeholders from across the city</p>
2.9	<p>High level indicative costs for a Council lead event would be:</p> <p>Staging, audio and lighting - £3,000  Catering - £1,500  Video production and promotional materials – £1,500.</p> <p>It is unlikely that speakers at the event would incur a cost.</p>
3.0	<p>Members are asked to agree funding to a maximum of £6,000 to be made available through Section 37 of the Local Government Act, an amount equal to that provided for the annual International Women's Day public rally.</p>

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p><u>Financial</u>  The Director of Finance and Resources has advised that funding of £6,000 could be met from in year revenue resources and that if approved, the total of approved payments under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 for 2014/15 is within the limit for such payments as advised by the Department of the Environment.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p>

3.2	A Council led event will require a working group comprising staff from Good Relations, Health and Environmental Services and Human Resources .
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<b>4</b>	<b>Equality Implications</b>
4.1	There are no equality issues.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	<p>Members are asked to agree that staff should work with Men’s Rights N Ireland and other key stakeholders from cross the city to develop an event for International Men’s Day to raise awareness around the men’s issues highlighted in this report and that a budget of up to £6,000 is allocated for the event.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Committee agrees to fund this event and, if agreed, passes the undernoted resolution:</p> <p>“That the expenditure in respect of the aforementioned event be approved under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, 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 its inhabitants of the District, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefits so accruing would be commensurate with the payment to be made.”</p>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>

<b>7</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1: Criteria for Special Expenditure