



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	2014 Third Level Education Gaelic Sports Festival Funding Request
Date:	19 November 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officers:	Gerry Copeland, City Events Manager, ext 3412

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	In July 2013 Officers received initial details in regard to the above project. In order to progress the item to a level for presentation to Committee additional information was requested. This has now been received and the following report is designed to allow Members to assess whether it should be financially supported by Council to the sum of £10,000.
1.2	The GAA Clubs at Queen's University have secured the right to host all of the third level education men's and women's Gaelic sports finals in 2014. This comprises of: Sigerson Cup (Mens Gaelic Football); Fitzgibbon Cup (Mens Hurling); O'Connor Cup (Ladies' Football) and Ashbourne Cup (Camogie). The tournaments would be spaced over a number of weekends in February and March 2014.
1.3	Queen's University see this as an ambitious and unique initiative as no third level education establishment has ever hosted the four major tournaments in the same academic year. They also see this as an opportunity to develop Gaelic sports Belfast, while creating additional economic activity for the city as all games would be hosted at Queen's Sports facilities at Upper Malone.
1.4	Members are asked to note that one element of the project, the Fitzgibbon Cup, has been offered, £5,472 via the Council's Support for Sport scheme. Thus the £10,000 would be in addition to this (total £15,472).
1.5	In addition Members are reminded that the outline City Events Unit budget for the period, nor the specified reserve for special events, has any finance earmarked for such a project.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>The proposed tournaments would take place over four consecutive weekends with all competitions happening at Queen's facilities at the Dub on Upper Malone:</p> <p><u>Weekend starting Friday 14th February – Ashbourne Cup</u> Three tiers of competition, including twelve teams from Ireland and the UK.</p> <p><u>Weekend starting Friday 21st February – Sigerson Cup</u> Three tiers of competition, including twelve teams from Ireland and the UK.</p> <p><u>Weekend starting Friday 28th February – Fitzgibbon Cup</u> Three tiers of competition, including twelve teams from Ireland and the UK.</p> <p><u>Weekend starting Friday 7th March – O'Connor Cup</u> Three tiers of competition, including twelve teams from Ireland and the UK.</p>
2.2	In addition to the competitions, it is proposed that the festival would also include a program of events across all four weekends. The purpose of these would be to celebrate university sport, student achievement and Gaelic games.
2.3	The organisers estimate the number of participants, over the four weekends, to be 2,200. They have stipulated that this assessment is based on previous participant numbers. They also state that participants and support teams would stay two to three nights, which would generate up to £300,000 for the city's hotel sector. Queen's also estimate that up 10,000 spectators would attend over the four week period.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u> The total cost of the event is £130,000. The majority of funding will be generated from the governing body, industry partnership, sales and merchandising and fundraising among Queen's GAA alumni. However, the tournament organisers are seeking a level of support from the Council (£10,000), Sport NI and DCAL.</p>
3.2	Given that £5,472 has already been allocated from the Support for Sport fund for the Fitzgibbon Cup, if Members approve the funding request for £10,000 it would bring the Council's total contribution for the event to £15,472.
3.3	Whilst there is no budget available within neither the City Events budget nor the specified reserve for special events, the Quarter 2 Finance Report (reported earlier in the meeting) details a forecast under spend of £28,000 at year end. If Members are minded to support this request it could be recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 22 November 2013 that the funding request be supported and resourced through the Development Department forecast under spend.
3.4	Members are reminded that, neither, the outline City Events Unit budget for the period, nor the specified reserve for special events, has any finance earmarked for such an event.
3.5	<p><u>Human Resources</u> No additional resources would be required and any agreed support would be dealt with via a legal contract.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no relevant equality and good relations implications. However, with all major events, like the above, have the potential to bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and therefore promote good relations in the city.

5	Recommendations
5.1	If Members decide to support the funding request then a recommendation to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee should be agreed which would request that SP&R approve the funding through the Development Department forecast under spend as part of the review of the corporate quarter 2 forecast.

6	Decision Tracking
<p>If the above recommendation is agreed then the Director of Finance and Resources will include the recommendation as part of the Quarter 2 forecast which will be presented to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 22 November 2013.</p> <p>If funding was approved, Officers will provide updates on progress of the project and provide post-project details as part of the Development Department's annual review. These outcomes will be presented to Members as part of the City Events Unit key performance indicators.</p> <p>Timeline: March 2014 Reporting Officer: Gerry Copeland</p>	