



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Use of City Hall grounds for Red Bull Formula One event
Date:	5 th March 2010
Reporting Officer:	George Wright – Head of Facilities Management – Ext.5206
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Relevant Background Information

As Members will be aware, the Committee has delegated authority for routine requests for use of the City Hall grounds etc. to the Director of Property & Projects, on the basis of an agreed set of criteria. However it was recognized that there would still be occasions on which the nature, scale and/or scope of the request means that it is appropriate to place the matter directly before the Committee. The request detailed below falls into this category, and the direction of the Committee is therefore sought.

Members should note that the following request is necessary due to the fact that the organisers have only very recently made contact with the council. Late reports are always regrettable, however this report is necessary at this time because the event itself is scheduled for 20th March 2010. Clearly, even if the Committee is minded to grant permission for this event there will be no time for ratification by full council, and members will doubtless have this in mind when assessing this application.

A request has been received from the Red Bull Formula One (F1) racing team to use the grounds of the City Hall for a promotional event on **Saturday 20th March 2010**. This event would involve bringing the well-known F1 racing driver David Coulthard and the Red Bull F1 car and team to Belfast, in order to give potentially thousands of spectators an opportunity to experience a formula one car close-up in Belfast city centre and to meet a current F1 driver. This is one of only two such events worldwide.

Members will be aware that F1 is a high-profile, internationally recognised sporting brand, with an estimated 350m people watching each grand prix event in nearly 200 countries. The Red Bull team had its best season to date in 2009, with six wins (including four one-two finishes) and ended the season in second place overall in the constructors' championship. The organisers are predicting a total potential audience on the day of between 12,000 and 16,000 people. It is estimated that it will cost in excess of £75,000 for Red Bull to stage this event, but there is no financial contribution sought or expected from the council.

In terms of the modalities of the event, two Red Bull cars plus a high-tech support vehicle and team would be in place in the grounds from approx. 10:00 until 16:00 to showcase the cars, at which time David Coulthard will be in attendance to meet and greet visitors. At approx. 20:00 the two F1 cars will drive to and from Wellington Place/Chichester Street (DRD and PSNI have agreed to close the roads) a number of times and the event will end at around 20:45. The site will be cleared by midnight at the latest. No access to the main building is requested, although temporary access to the electricity supply may be required and this would not present a difficulty.

While the proposed event is not a BCC-funded or supported one, the Events unit of the Development Department feels that this event would offer a number of important benefits, most notably to:-

- showcase Belfast as a vibrant and multi-faceted city;
- help the local economy by sourcing all equipment & resources from local businesses with a knock-on effect in terms of the accommodation, food and entertainment sectors;
- generate significant local, national and international media coverage; *and*
- portray the council in a positive light and at no cost to the rate-payer.

It should be noted that, as this event has only very recently been notified to us, we have not as yet had the usual opportunity to discuss with the organisers their ability to provide the necessary assurances in respect of any and all obligations and indemnities the council may require; consequently any permission granted by the Committee must be subject to these conditions being satisfactorily met and contracts with BCC being executed.

From a practical point of view there would be minimal potential disruption to the normal routines within the City Hall grounds, although it should be noted that a charity event has been organised under the auspices of the Deputy Lord Mayor on the same evening in the Great Hall, and this will need to be adequately addressed by the organisers in their planning.

Key Issues

The usual necessary assurances will be required of the organisers, most notably:-

- that an appropriate level of indemnity in respect of loss, damage or personal injury will be provided for the Council;
- that the impact on the normal operation of the grounds will be minimal;
- that all incidental costs associated with the event, including additional stewarding costs, will be borne by the organisers; *and*
- that the lawns will be kept intact so far as possible, and any damage made good where necessary.

It should also be noted that there will be no opportunity for any decision of the Committee to be ratified by the full council.

Resource Implications

Financial

There are no direct costs for the council associated with this request.

Human Resources

No additional resources are required, as any additional security and stewarding staff would be the responsibility of the organisers.

Asset and other implications

There are no significant implications for the integrity of the Councils assets.

Recommendation/Decision

The Committee is asked to consider whether or not to make the grounds of the City Hall available for the event outlined above. Should permission be granted, this will be subject to the Director of Property & Projects being satisfied as to the level of indemnity and other necessary safeguards and obligations offered by the organisers.

Documents Attached

None.