



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Request for Funding
<b>Date:</b>	23 November 2012
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	<p>This report presents a request for financial assistance from the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra towards the cost of a tour to Italy.</p> <p>Under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the council has discretion to consider exceptional requests for financial assistance. A small, special expenditure budget (Grants and Subscriptions) within the Finance and Resources Department makes provision for such requests providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The council has the statutory authority to make such payments</li><li>• Assistance is not available from the remit of another Committee</li></ul> <p>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 1.</p>

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	The City of Belfast Youth Orchestra is made up of 83 players between the ages of 14 and 21 who are drawn from communities across the City.
2.2	The Orchestra is seeking a contribution towards a tour to Italy which will include performances in Rome, Florence and Pisa.
2.3	The cost of the tour is approximately £120k and participants are expected to undertake fundraising and sponsorship seeking activities to help defray expenses.

2.4	<p>The request states that</p> <p>“The members of the orchestra are excellent ambassadors for the City and are always proud to represent the young people of Belfast.” and “The City of Belfast School of Music and its students make a significant contribution to the cultural life and reputation of the City.”</p>
2.5	<p>On previous occasions the Committee accepted there was benefit to be gained from assisting annual overseas tours undertaken by the students from the Belfast School of Music and contributions of £5k towards tours by the City of Belfast Youth Concert Band and the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra have been made.</p>
2.6	<p>The City of Belfast Youth Orchestra or other groups from the Belfast School of Music are not in receipt of funding from any other council department. As in previous years the committee has discretion as to whether to support this request. If assistance is agreed the Youth orchestra will be required to acknowledge the support from the council in publicity material etc.</p>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The committee may wish to consider a contribution of £5,000, the sum provided towards previous tours. Resources exist within the current budget.</p>

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
4.1	<p>It is recommended that the Committee considers a contribution of £5,000 towards the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra tour to Italy 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>5.0</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
<p>The Director of Finance and resources will confirm the decision of council and arrange payment and conditions if agreed.</p>	

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
<p>Appendix 1 – Criteria for the assessment of requests for financial assistance.</p>	