

Appendix



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Request for Funding – NI Hospice
Date:	22 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	This report presents a request for financial assistance from the Northern Ireland Hospice towards the cost of the re-development of the hospice at Somerton House, Belfast.
1.2	The redevelopment will provide 18 beds in single en-suite rooms with supporting facilities for staff, families and volunteers. It will also create a dedicated Education and Resource Centre and a new Day Hospice facility capable sustaining the current level of support and clinical interventions in an enhanced environment.
1.3	The cost of the project is estimated at £11m with plans by the Hospice to raise approximately £3m from a public capital appeal over the next 3 years.
1.4	Under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the council has discretion to consider exceptional requests for financial assistance. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council has the statutory authority to make such payments• Assistance is not available from the remit of another Committee
1.5	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.

2.0	Key Issues
2.1	The people cared for at Somerton House include some of the most economically and socially deprived in Northern Ireland.
2.2	The facility provides regular employment for some 111 staff and is a focal point for around 321 local volunteers, who give regularly of their time and talents in the service of the hospice.
2.3	The local community has invested heavily in the facility over the years generating revenue of over £5m each year in voluntary funds.
2.4	<p>The request submitted by the NI Hospice states that the project supports Belfast City Council's Corporate Strategic Objectives in the following ways:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The NI Hospice cares for people at a time of great need and engenders a sense of confidence that the City will look after its citizens – from cradle to grave." • "Hospice volunteers contribute to a strong sense of community in the local area." • "The Hospice is a rare shared place in North Belfast and promotes positive relations amongst the whole community both through care received there and in fundraising for the service." • "Investment in the hospice is an investment in North Belfast – an area of tremendous need." • "Internationally, the Hospice has a remit around education and research, with links in palliative care, education and training in the USA, India and Asia and aspires to be a world leader in palliative care developing models that can be replicated worldwide." • "The NI Hospice is founding member of the All-Ireland Institute of Palliative Care." • "The NI Hospice is the largest hospice (by income/expenditure) in the UK and trains all junior doctors in Northern Ireland in Palliative care as well as a range of healthcare professional from both private and public sector."
2.5	Legal Services have reviewed the request for funding and have advised that the proposal would fall within the criteria agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee on the 18 June 2004 and that the request may therefore be considered by the Committee for funding support.

3.0	Resource Implications
	<u>Financial</u>
3.1	<p>In addition to the specific circumstances under which the council may consider a request for an exceptional payment, Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 also limits the total amount of payments that can be made by the council in any year, to the aggregate of:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the product of a rate of 0.596p in the pound on the rateable value of all hereditaments in a NAV list in the district; and b) the product of a rate of 0.00082p in the pound on the rateable capital value of all hereditaments in a capital value list in the district.

3.2	On the basis of the above limit and the exceptional payments already approved by the council during 2012/13, the council could consider a payment of up to £200,000 to the NI Hospice Project without exceeding the current limit as defined by the Finance Act. Such a payment could be funded through the use the forecast departmental under spend being considered by the committee as part of the Quarter 3 financial report.
3.3	Officers are aware that the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and High Sheriff designate specific charities for support during their period of office; however the NI Hospice Capital Appeal would provide the opportunity for staff within the council to engage in fund raising activity which would add to the approved donation by the council itself. Staff fund raising activities could be supported in ways such as allowing the free use of the Great Hall on a number of occasions during the year for fund raising events.

4.0	Recommendations
4.1	<p>It is recommended that the Committee considers a contribution of £200,000 towards the redevelopment of the NI Hospice, Somerton Road, Belfast 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>
4.2	It is also recommended that officers explore the potential for other fund raising activity by staff within the council and that a further report is presented to committee which outlines the way in which the council could support this fund raising process.

5.0	Decision Tracking
The Director of Finance and resources will confirm the decision of council and arrange payment and conditions if agreed.	

6.0	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Criteria for the assessment of requests for financial assistance.	