



<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	International Women's Day – Council support for public rally
<b>Date:</b>	Friday 24 January 2014
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Director of Health & Environmental Services, ext 3260
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, ext 6020

<b>Relevant Background Information</b>	
1	The Committee will be aware that the Council at its meeting on 2 December 2013 unanimously passed the following Notice of Motion by Councillor B Kelly:
2	“International Women’s Day on 8th March is acknowledged globally as a day on which to celebrate the achievements of women across the world. For the past four years, the women’s sector in Belfast has marked this special day with a public rally to the City Hall. This public event has become popular recently and, in 2013, the Council provided some financial support for it.
3	The Council has recognised that, within the City Hall, the role of women has not been fully recognised, in terms of memorabilia. Providing support to an annual public event would be a simple way of demonstrating our acknowledgement of this special day and pledging our commitment to working towards greater equality of opportunity for all women in Belfast.”
4	This Notice of Motion was referred to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee by the Council at its meeting on 6 January 2014.

<b>Key Issues</b>	
5	The Committee may recall that the 2013 financial support referred to by Councillor Kelly was provided under the <i>Decade of Centenaries</i> programme, since one aspect of that programme focused directly on the role of women and the campaign for women’s suffrage a century ago.
6	Last year’s funding was used to cover the costs of a temporary stage and sound system for the public rally at the front of the City Hall and the Council also met the costs of a modest lunch for 150 of the rally participants.
7	The women’s sector in Belfast is very keen that the Council should maintain its support for International Women’s Day and has provided estimated costs for similar provision this year, along with musicians and drummers to encourage public participation and for signers at the rally to ensure the inclusion of those with hearing impairments.

8	The Committee may also recall that it has already agreed, at its meeting in April 2013, that the City Hall should be illuminated appropriately to mark International Women's Day i.e. in purple.
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	<b>Resource Implications</b>
9	<p>The cost of an appropriate temporary stage and sound system along with signers, music, drummers is estimated to be in the region of £4,500. The cost of the lunch would be an additional £1,500, giving a total of £6,000.</p> <p>The Director of Finance &amp; Resources has indicated that this can be met from within existing budgets.</p> <p>The Committee is requested to note that this is likely to be a recurring annual expenditure.</p>

	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b>
10	<p>This proposal has been agreed by the Council's Women's Steering Group.</p> <p>It is in line with the Council's stated aims as set out in its gender equality action plan and will be screened in the normal manner; any implications will be positive and it is likely to be screened out.</p>

	<b>Recommendations</b>
11	The Committee is requested to grant approval to the provision of funding for various aspects of support for the public rally to mark International Women's Day, as outlined above.

12	<b>Officers to contact for more information</b>
	<p>Suzanne Wylie, Director of Health &amp; Environmental Services, ext 3260  Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, ext 6020</p>