



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Request for Funding – Harlandic Male Voice Choir (Harland and Wolf Shipyard)
Date:	21 February 2014
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	<p>This report presents a request for financial assistance from the Harlandic Male Voice Choir towards the cost of a representing Belfast and Northern Ireland at the “Voices of the Commonwealth” concert in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on the 1 June 2014 to celebrate the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. As well as being part of the massed male voiced choir consisting of choirs from Scotland and several Commonwealth countries, the Harlandic Male Voice Choir will also sing two pieces of their own at the concert.</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">• The council has the statutory authority to make such payments• Assistance is not available from the remit of another Committee <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>

2.0	Key Issues
2.1	The Harlandic Male Voice Choir has been an integral part of the musical heritage of East Belfast for the last 70 years and includes members from all parts of the Greater Belfast Area.

2.2	The Choir is seeking financial support to enable 46 of its members to perform at the event in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on the 1 June 2014. The Choir have advised that 90% of its members are senior citizens and that for many of these senior citizens the choir is their only means of social interaction. The event will also provide the opportunity for the Choir to represent the City of Belfast at this international event.
2.3	The cost of attending the event is £6,670 and the Choir has sought funding from the Council of £3,000 towards these costs.
2.4	The Town Solicitor has reviewed the request for funding and has confirmed that the request would meet the Council's funding criteria provided.

3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u> The Director of Finance and Resources has advised that a contribution of £3,000 could be met from in year revenue resources and that if approved, the total of approved payments under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 for 2014/15 is within the limit for such payments as advised by the Department of the Environment.

4.0	Recommendations
4.1	It is recommended that the Committee considers a contribution of £3,000 towards the Harlandic Male Voice Choir's attendance and performance at the "Voices of the Commonwealth" concert to be held in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on the 1 June 2014 and, if agreed, passes the undernoted resolution: "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."

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.	