Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	**NI Street League funding**
Date:	22 August 2014
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Jacqui Wilson, Business Manager

	Relevant Background Information
	NI Street League is a charity working with homeless people and marginalised groups in Northern Ireland through the medium of football. Their activities are principally focused in Belfast and their aim is to use football to reach some of the most marginalized people in our society. Using football as a hook they then provide education, training, and volunteer opportunities. In October 2014 the charity is bringing the NI Homeless Football Team to the Homeless World Cup in Santiago Chile and 10 teams from Belfast are attending. In order to do so they have acquired a cocktail of support from several organizations and via fundraising from for example IFA, NIHE, Extern and Comic Relief. The Parks and Leisure Committee were approached to help with overall funding for this event and the shortfall of £4,400. Advice from the Legal Services Manager has indicated that as a general rule district councils do not have any legal power to contribute to the funds of charitable organisations. The only exception to that general rule being where an application for financial assistance is made under criteria which the Council has in place in relation to the incurring of expenditure for special purposes under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 section 37 (previously known as section 115 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972.) The Act permits the council to make payment for any purpose which in its

	opinion is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to: a) the council; b) the district or any part of its district; or c) the inhabitants of its district of any part of its district. The amount of money available under Section 37 is subject to an annual cap and in determining whether any payment should be made the Council must ask whether the benefit would be commensurate with the payment to be made.

	Key Issues
	• The NI Street League has made a request to the Council for a financial contribution to the Homeless World Cup event • An assessment of the request against the criteria agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee in 2004 has indicated that the request would bring a direct benefit to the inhabitants of Belfast. • The Parks and Leisure Committee considered this request at its meeting on 14 August 2014 and is seeking the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to make a contribution of £4,400 to the NI Street League under Section 37 Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011. If agreed it is considered that the benefit obtained will be commensurate with the payment made.

	Resource Implications
	Financial The proposed £4,400 can be accommodated within the current Section 37 limit and if approved will be provided through existing Parks and Leisure budgets Human Resources There are no human resource implications. Asset and Other Implications None.

	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	Given the focus on tackling sectarianism and racism, it is anticipated that this project will have a positive impact on promoting equality of opportunity and good relations.

	Recommendations
	It is recommended that the Committee agrees a contribution of £4,400 to the NI Street League 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."

	Decision Tracking

The Business Manager will be responsible for carrying out the decision of the Committee.

	Key to Abbreviations

None

	Documents Attached

None