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**Democratic Services Section
Chief Executive's Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

21st March, 2017

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following item will also be considered at the meeting to be held at 9.30 am on Friday, 24th March, 2017.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

6. Finance, Procurement and Performance

(c) Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service (Pages 1 - 16)

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Subject:	Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service
Date:	24 March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department
Contact Officer:	Cate Taggart, Community Development Manager Brian Kelly, Community Services Unit Manager

Is this report restricted?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	At the request of committee, to present a funding proposal made by Belfast Advice Group requesting £100,000 to support the continued provision of a citywide tribunal service 2017/18.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the update on the Citywide Tribunal Service and that the Belfast Advice Group have confirmed that they have not secured additional funding for the delivery of the Citywide Tribunal Service for 2017/18.
3.0	Main report
3.1	In February, Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed a potential funding allocation of £100k, from the forecast capital financing underspend, towards a City Wide Tribunal Service for 2017/18. Committee indicated that <i>‘the payment of the £100k to the group would be subject to a further report to the Committee on the receipt and assessment of an application for funding which would detail the achievements to be delivered as well as the plans in place to attract levered funding’</i> .
3.2	The Belfast Advice Group has presented a funding proposal for committee’s consideration, which is attached as Appendix 1.

<p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p>	<p>The proposal details the total cost to provide the service in 2017/18 as £224,997 and seek to secure £100k from Council with a further £124,997 yet to be secured.</p> <p>The group has presented its proposed expenditure over the 12 month period outlining the total cost of the service (Page 8 of the proposal). Based on this information Council will contribute 43% towards the salary costs of seven staff and 51% towards running costs.</p> <p>Having considered the proposal, officers sought clarification from the Belfast Advice Group in relation to expenditure and the plan to attract additional funding. Officers met with group representatives on Monday 20th March.</p> <p>The Belfast Advice Group confirmed they have not secured additional funding for the delivery of the Tribunal service in 2017/18. The group has made initial steps to develop and seek funding for a regional tribunal service incorporating advice groups across all eleven council areas. In the absence of secured additional funding the service will not be viable over a 12 month period.</p>
<p>3.7</p>	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>In assessing the proposal and feedback from the meeting with the representatives, officers would note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current period of extended funding is due to end 31 March 2017. • There is no detailed plan in place to attract and secure the additional funding to provide the service over the 12 months. At the meeting with the representatives, BAG stated that progress had been made with MLAs and DfC officials prior to the recent Assembly election and that they were in the process of re-engaging with all political parties at Stormont. • In response to council correspondence, the Minister for Communities indicated there position on funding of the Belfast citywide tribunal service that is, that tribunal services should be incorporated as an element of generalist advice services for which the advice sector is already in receipt of funding. BAG have indicated that recent engagement with officials confirmed there is no additional budget to support the Belfast service outside of their Generalist Advice grant as part of the Community Support Programme to local government. Any potential funding would be dependent upon identification of need and that the service must be delivered at a regional level. • The Belfast Advice Group has indicated that it has taken on board the information from DfC and has started a process to build support for the development of a regional service.

	<p>The group has contacted Council funded advice services across all eleven Councils. The first meeting with these organisations to discuss a proposed regional service is planned for Friday 24 March.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group has also contacted the Big Lottery and are planning to make an application for the regional tribunal service. • In the absence of secured additional funding for the project, there is significant risk to its viability over the 12 month period.
3.8	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Request for funding of £100K from Belfast City Council for 2017/18</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Proposal for the Belfast City Wide Tribunal Service, from Belfast Advice Group

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Belfast
City Council

Consortium Name	Belfast Advice Group
Programme	Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service
Lead Partner	Ligoniel Improvement Association

Belfast City Council's SP&R Committee (17 February 2017) agreed potential for £100k funding for the Citywide Tribunal Service for 2017_18.

Commitment of the £100k is subject to a further report to Committee on the receipt and assessment of this application for funding which details the programme to be delivered as well as the plans in place to attract levered funding.

Completed form to be returned to bradleyc@belfastcity.gov.uk

Closing date for return of information: Friday 3 March 2017

Opening Hours

Monday	9-5pm
Tuesday	9-5pm
Wednesday	9-5pm
Thursday	9-5pm
Friday	Office Hours 9-2.30pm Appeal Service 9-5pm
Saturday	
Sunday	
Total Hours Per Week	37.5 – 40 per week (Appeals hearing Friday afternoon)

Staffing Details: Staff and Designation including weekly contracted hours

Job Title	Weekly Contracted Hours
Senior Tribunal Rep	37.5
Tribunal Rep 1	37.5
Tribunal Rep 2	37.5
Tribunal Rep 3	37.5
Tribunal Rep 4	37.5
Administrator (F/T)	37.5
Administrator (F/T)	37.5
Administrator (P/T)	16

Projected figures	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of Enquiries	1250	1250	1250	1250
Number of Enquiries Progressed – this would tally with number of appeals referred to service per quarter	200	200	200	200
Number of Appeals	400	400	400	400
Service Promotion Sessions	5	5	5	5
Consortium Meetings	1	1	1	1
SSA Meeting – Disability Forum	1	1	1	1
Advisors Steering Group Meetings	1	1	1	1
Number of Volunteers	2	2	2	2

Please detail achievements to be delivered between 1 April 2017_31 March 2018

Achievements for BCTS and Belfast Advice Group

BCTS

- To represent at 2000 appeals including new benefit PIP.
- To assist with 5000 enquires
- To signpost/refer 250 clients to other services including, debt, advice, employment, specialist services and family support.
- To recruit 8 new volunteers for BCTS
- To promote service at 20 information events and advertise to a further 20 support and community groups
- To attend 4 DFC Disability Forums
- To successfully pass NIASC Quality Standards for second time.
- To highlight social policy issues with regional advice service and DFC.
- All staff will complete 36 hours of training for PDP
- To attend meeting with the Appeal Service on Appeal Reform.
- To deliver four form filling sessions to BAG advice members on PIP.
- To claw back £3 million in entitlement at Appeal Hearing.
- To work in partnership with all BAG advice services.

BAG

- To establish forum for advice representatives from all 11 council areas to discuss Tribunal Representation meeting on a quarterly basis.
- To make a representations to DFC proposing funding for local Tribunal Service including BCTS.
- To seek further funding for BCTS in order to sustain the project between April 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.
- BAG to meet four time per year, produce and agree minutes with action points.
- To work more collectively as a group on areas of social policy.
- To raise awareness of BAG work via social media and events.
- To oversee advisor steering group and follow up work.
- To deliver shared training to staff where possible.
- To provide support network for BAG members working towards NIASC Quality Standards
- To promote BCC funded advice services via promotional leaflets, BCC City matters, events and workshops.
- BAG members to attend DFC Advice workshops as required.

Please list the programme's quarterly outputs.

These targets should be Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic and Timebound.

Q1

BCTS - Operational

- To process all new referrals and reply within 7 days informing of BCTS service, process and agreeing consent.

- All cases should be recorded within 2 days of hearing.
- All cases should be closed within 2 weeks of hearing and outcomes recorded.
- Quarterly supervision meeting with all BCTS staff members
- To provide feedback on service to all stakeholders on quarterly basis i.e. outcome of appeals, client engagement, money back.
- BCTS to be represented at DFC Disability Forums and raise operational issues.
- To recruit two new volunteers for BCTS.
- To refer/signpost to other service and record.
- To respond to crisis intervention and record.
- To record number of appeals and success rates.

Promotional

- To promote service at five in information events
- To advertise the service to 5 new organisations or support groups based in Belfast.

BAG

- BAG will re- elect Chair of BAG and agree meeting dates for the year.
- BAG will establish working links with advice partners from the other 10 council areas to discuss regional tribunal services for the advice network, and will draw up a proposal to DFC seeking funding for tribunal services.
- BAG will seek a meeting with DFC regarding funding of BCTS
- BAG meeting with minutes and agreed actions.
- BAG will hold an Advisor Group meeting with a focus on the new Quality Standard mark.
- To host one shared training event for all advisors.
- Representation from BAG at DFC workshop.
- Identifying other funding sources to fund BCTS, with a focus on DOJ
- Seek meeting with DOJ
- Identify charitable trusts and submit applications
- To work with local elected reps on areas of funding and seek their support for any proposals.

Q2

BCTS - Operational

- To process all new referrals and reply within 7 days informing of BCTS service, process and agreeing consent.
- All cases should be recorded within 2 days of hearing.
- All cases should be closed within 2 weeks of hearing and outcomes recorded.
- Quarterly supervision meeting with all BCTS staff members
- To provide feedback on service to all stakeholders on quarterly basis i.e. outcome of appeals, client engagement, money back.
- BCTS to be represented at DFC Disability Forums and raise operational issues.
- To recruit two new volunteers for BCTS.
- To refer/signpost to other service and record.
- To respond to crisis intervention and record.
- To record number of appeals and success rates.
- To provide Advice NI and BCC with Council report

Promotional

- To promote service at five in information events
- To advertise the service to 5 new organisations or support groups based in Belfast.

BAG

- BAG meeting with minutes and agreed actions.
- BAG will hold an Advisor Group meeting with a focus on the new Quality Standard mark.
- To host one shared training event for all advisors.
- Representation from BAG at DFC workshop.
- To work with local elected reps on areas of funding and seek their support for any proposals.
- To ensure monitoring completed and returned to BCC.

Q3

BCTS - Operational

- To process all new referrals and reply within 7 days informing of BCTS service, process and agreeing consent.
- All cases should be recorded within 2 days of hearing.
- All cases should be closed within 2 weeks of hearing and outcomes recorded.
- Quarterly supervision meeting with all BCTS staff members
- To provide feedback on service to all stakeholders on quarterly basis i.e. outcome of appeals, client engagement, money back.
- BCTS to be represented at DFC Disability Forums and raise operational issues.
- To recruit two new volunteers for BCTS.
- To refer/signpost to other service and record.
- To respond to crisis intervention and record.
- To record number of appeals and success rates.

Promotional

- To promote service at five in information events
- To advertise the service to 5 new organisations or support groups based in Belfast.

BAG

- BAG meeting with minutes and agreed actions.
- BAG will hold an Advisor Group meeting with a focus on the new Quality Standard mark.
- To host one shared training event for all advisors.
- Representation from BAG at DFC workshop.
- To work with local elected reps on areas of funding and seek their support for any proposals.

Q4

BCTS - Operational

- To process all new referrals and reply within 7 days informing of BCTS service, process and agreeing consent.
- All cases should be recorded within 2 days of hearing.
- All cases should be closed within 2 weeks of hearing and outcomes recorded.
- Quarterly supervision meeting with all BCTS staff members
- To provide feedback on service to all stakeholders on quarterly basis i.e. outcome of appeals, client engagement, money back.
- BCTS to be represented at DFC Disability Forums and raise operational issues.
- To recruit two new volunteers for BCTS.
- To refer/signpost to other service and record.

- To respond to crisis intervention and record.
- To record number of appeals and success rates.
- To provide Advice NI and BCC with Council report

Promotional

- To promote service at five in information events
- To advertise the service to 5 new organisations or support groups based in Belfast.

BAG

- BAG meeting with minutes and agreed actions.
- BAG will hold an Advisor Group meeting with a focus on the new Quality Standard mark.
- To host one shared training event for all advisors.
- Representation from BAG at DFC workshop.
- To work with local elected reps on areas of funding and seek their support for any proposals.
- To ensure monitoring completed and return to BCC.

Please detail plans to attract levered funding that have been initiated and are currently in place including expected response times.

Please detail developing levered funding plans with actions and associated timeframes.

BAG have been engaging with DFC regarding match funding for BCTS, and to ensure a consistent approach to tribunal representation across all 11 council areas we have invited advice manager from both the independent sector and CAB to discussions on how we can draft a proposal to DFC. There is a real need for tribunal representation in the advice sector that is provided alongside front line services, and we know for definite that there will definitely be an increase for tribunal representation across all areas. The WRSP will be unable to provide this service as it is too support front line advisors with form filling and face to face to enquiries, the Law Centre have acquired two specialist workers as a shared resource for the entire sector and their remit is to take on complex cases, testing case law and taking cases to the commissioner. Therefore leaving a void across the entire sector for tribunal representation.

The success of BCTS and the Deloitte report on the service we hope will start discussions that the sector can then take forward as proposals to DFC and DOJ in order to address this gap in service provision.

We have the first meeting planned for 9th March and hope to have a proposal with DFC by the first week in April 2017.

1st Quarter

Proposal from regional advice manager to DFC on supporting tribunal services.

We hope to meet with DFC in the first quarter with a proposal for match funding of BCTS alongside funding for a more regional network of tribunal representation services.

In addition to this we have approach Big Lottery for a further conversation on funding a regional tribunal service, led by front line advice services and based on a consortium approach, we are in the process of drafting a first stage application based on the Big Lottery three stages.

We will also lobby new elected MLA's to support this service at Assembly level.

In the first quarter we will develop a funding strategy to ensure sustainability of the service.

This will allow us to plan for further work and development as the year progresses.

FINANCES

Salary costs Per Quarter

Item of Expenditure	Q1 expenditure	Q2 expenditure	Q3 expenditure	Q4 expenditure	BCC funding £	Other sources of funding £	Name of Funding source
Senior Tribunal Rep	7,868	7,868	7,868	7,868	15,736	15,736	
Tribunal Rep 1	6,996	6,996	6,996	6,996	13,992	13,992	
Tribunal Rep 2	6,996	6,996	6,996	6,996	13,992	13,992	
Tribunal Rep 3	7,060	7,060	7,060	7,060	14,120	14,120	
Tribunal Rep 4	7,060	7,060	7,060	7,060		28,240	
Administrator (F/T)	4,297	4,297	4,297	4,297	8,594	8,594	
Administrator (F/T)	4,337	4,337	4,337	4,337	8,674	8,674	
Administrator (P/T)	2,371	3,382	1,716	1,716	5,753	3,432	
Total salary costs	46,985	47,996	46,330	46,330	80,861	106,780	

Core / Running Costs Per Quarter

Item of Expenditure	Q1 expenditure	Q2 expenditure	Q3 expenditure	Q4 expenditure	BCC funding £	Other sources of funding £	Name of Funding source
Travel expenditure	850	850	850	850	1,632	1,768	
Telephone costs	910	930	890	870	1,840	1,760	
Insurances	388	388	677	400	776	1,077	
Subscriptions	-	70	-	-	70	-	
Hosting costs	2,890	2,890	2,890	2,890	5,780	5,780	
Printing & stationery	540	1,320	390	1,390	1,860	1,780	
Postage	290	300	290	220	590	510	
Computer costs	360	360	360	360	720	720	
Professional fees	1,260	1,161	1,161	1,161	2,421	2,322	
Audit fees	-	-	950	-	950	-	
Management fees	1,250	1,250	1,250	1,250	2,500	2,500	
Total running costs	8,738	9,519	9,708	9,391	19,139	18,217	

Programme / Support Costs Per Quarter

Item of Expenditure	Q1 expenditure	Q2 expenditure	Q3 expenditure	Q4 expenditure	BCC funding £	Other sources of funding	Name of Funding Source

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Total Programme Expenditure 1 April 2017_ 31 March 2018 **£224,997**

Please use this page to provide any other information relevant to BCTS programme.

Signed

Position

Date

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