

# Development Committee

Monday, 25th March, 2013

## SPECIAL MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Stalford (Chairman);  
The High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston);  
Aldermen Ekin and Stoker;  
Councillors Austin, Hendron, Hussey,  
Keenan, Kelly, Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhin,  
Maskey, Ó Donnghaile, Ó Muilleoir,  
Reynolds, Spence and Webb.

Also attended: Councillors Haire and Jones.

In attendance: Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;  
Ms. C. Taggart, Community Services Manager; and  
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Aldermen Humphrey and Rodgers and Councillor Thompson.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations were reported.

### Public Consultation on Proposals for the Belfast Community Investment Programme (BCIP)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **"1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 **The '*Building Better Communities - Belfast Community Investment Programme*' (BCIP) is a joint project between the Council and DSD to create a single £5.4 million strategic community development fund for Belfast. The programme will be directly managed by the council.**
- 1.2 **It is expected that BCIP will open for applications from community organisations across the entire city in October 2013 and initially will offer contracts for one year (2014/2015). During this first 'pilot' year the approach to the programme will be evaluated and enhanced prior to a new call for funding from 2015 onwards. A number of the contracts from 2015 are likely to be multi-annual.**
- 1.3 **The funding pot for BCIP will draw on the budget that will become available when DSD and the Council's current community development grant schemes come to an end in**

March 2014. These existing schemes include Community Service's Advice and Information Grant, Capacity Support Grant, Revenue and other small community grants; the Belfast Regeneration Office's Neighbourhood Renewal funding for community development; and the Voluntary and Community Unit's Community Investment Fund in Belfast.

- 1.4 While each of these existing funds broadly support community development activity, they all operate with different approaches, catchment areas, allocation weightings, criteria, application processes, etc. BCIP aims to replace this complexity with a simplified Belfast-wide strategic programme that has new criteria designed to specifically focus on support for community development outcomes for residents and communities.
- 1.5 Both the Council, through its Community Development strategy, and DSD, through its draft Urban Regeneration and Community Development Framework (which will form the basis of the transfer of urban regeneration and community development responsibilities to councils) recognise the importance of a strong community infrastructure in enabling community, social and economic objectives to be achieved in more sustainable and efficient ways. BCIP is about providing effective grant and developmental support to make sure this infrastructure is in place.
- 1.6 Members will recall that, at its meeting on 14 January 2013, Development Committee adopted an 'outcomes framework' for BCIP that defines the impact that the programme is expected to have in the city. This framework proposes two 'strategic' outcomes for community development work:
  1. Residents are active and involved;
  2. Communities are engaged and influential.And three 'programme' outcomes:
  3. Community groups are more resilient and thriving;
  4. People have access to welcoming and inclusive community space;
  5. People have access to services and support.
- 1.7 With these agreed outcomes in place, officers have been working since February to design new grant streams which can directly support these outcomes. This paper presents the grant programme for Members' consideration and outlines plans for both a public consultation and an Equality Impact Assessment on the proposals.

- 1.8 Members should note that both the Council and DSD committed from the outset of BCIP to engaging fully on the design and implementation of the programme. A 'pre-consultation' phase from August 2012 to February 2013 included a series of workshops and other ongoing engagement activities with staff, councillors and the community and voluntary sectors on designing both an outcomes framework and the grant streams for BCIP.
- 1.9 A large scale engagement event was held for the sector at City Hall on 6 February which attracted over 150 representatives. This was an opportunity to share with the sector the outcomes framework (which Council had endorsed the previous week) and to share initial ideas on grant streams. The event attracted substantial feedback which has greatly informed the draft proposal.
- 1.10 This commitment to engagement has been time-consuming but has greatly informed the nature of the resulting proposal and has ensured that stakeholders have been involved in all stages to date.
- 1.11 The draft BCIP proposal is shaped by a number of assumptions and policy considerations:
- It would be based on the council's definition of community development as described in our new Community Development strategy;
  - That it would be designed from the outset to contribute to shared community development outcomes;
  - That we would engage with the sector during each stage of its design;
  - That it would operate across the entire city Council area and would align with the range of other investments being made in the city;
  - The programme would be designed and implemented in a fashion that meets the commitments outlined in the 'Concordat for Relationships between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector', particularly in relation to outcomes-based planning and reducing unnecessary bureaucracy;
  - That it draws on the budget that will become available when DSD and council's previous community development grant schemes come to an end in Belfast in March 2014 (approx. £5.4 million) and that this existing budget will be maintained under the new programme
  - As with other transfers under Local Government Reform, the Government will commit adequate resources to ensure that it is cost neutral to the council

- - The programme will begin in April 2014 as a 'pilot' for one year until the full implementation of Local Government Reform in 2015
  - It would be directly managed by the Council under contract from DSD.
- 1.12 The resulting proposal document has been shaped by these considerations. It has also been greatly influenced by our engagement with Members and with the community and voluntary sector. It has also been shaped by examining best practice both here in Belfast and in other cities.
- 1.13 Rather than provide a range of options, the proposal presented today represents what officers have determined to be the 'best-fit' design for BCIP based on the pre-consultation work described above. However, this is very much a draft and will be adapted to address any relevant issues or challenges that may be raised during the consultation and EQIA processes.

### **3 Resource Implications**

- 3.1 Project costs for the development of BCIP are being jointly supported by Development Department and the Department for Social Development. Staff resources in Community Services and in Development Department's Business Research and Development unit have been realigned to support the new central 'project office' and a Council project co-ordinator has been appointed.
- 3.2 The Council has also provided office space to co-locate this team (which now includes staff from VCU and BRO). Council is also contributing staff support to task and finish groups assigned to deliver aspects of the BCIP project plan.

### **4 Recommendations**

- 4.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Agree the wording of the draft proposal as a suitable basis for consultation with public on BCIP.
  - ii. Agree to officers developing a draft EQIA on the basis of the agreed draft.
  - iii. Agree that a draft EQIA and programme document will be presented at April Development Committee prior to the planned public consultation in May."

The Community Services Manager provided an overview of the draft proposals and outlined the steps which would be taken as part of the equality impact assessment

process. She clarified a range of issues arising from the proposals and pointed out that a draft programme document, together with a draft of the proposed Equality Impact Assessment paper, would be submitted for the Committee's consideration prior to the commencement of the formal consultation process.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairman