



Subject:	Active Belfast Partnership & Funding Update
Date:	Tuesday 10 th January 2023
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services, CNS
Contact Officer:	Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager, CNS Kim Kensett, Belfast Health Development Unit

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
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	Members will be aware, as part of a previous update report presented to Committee in April 2022, that approval was sought and given for the Active Belfast partnership to develop a participatory budgeting pilot in 2022/23. This report provides an overview of progress to date, outlines the planned timeframe for application, assessment and award and notes that further spend against delivery of the PB pilot will occur in the 23/24 financial year.
1.2	A further report will be brought to Committee in March/April 2023 which will outline the broader work undertaken by Active Belfast in 2022/23, as well as outlining the partnership's proposed plan for 2023/24.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The committee is asked to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the content of the report – particularly the work undertaken to date in developing the PB Pilot approach and the planned timeframe for promotion, application, assessment and delivery; and • To agree that part (26K) of the overall BCC contribution (90K) to Active Belfast in 23/24 is utilised towards covering the costs of project delivery (i.e. allocation of funding awards) in 23/24 – alongside 38K of the PHA allocation (146K) for 23/24. • Active Belfast partnership intends to hold a planning session early in the New Year to identify and agree priorities for 23/24, alongside associated spend profiles, for the remaining budget (172K) – which is currently subject to Council discussions and decisions on discretionary spend, and thus a further report will be brought to committee in March/April 2023.
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Main report</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Active Belfast (AB) is a multi-agency partnership supporting physical activity and healthy eating in Belfast. It is jointly funded by BCC (£90,000) and Public Health Agency (£146,000) per annum. Thus, the overall funding allocated for work in support of Active Belfast is £236,000 per annum. Physical activity and healthy eating remain priority areas within the refreshed Belfast Agenda as well as wider health-focussed strategic documents. Active Belfast therefore, both as an approach and as a partnership, is vital in relation to us being in a position to work collaboratively with key partners to take forward relevant actions and to test out novel approaches and ideas.</p> <p><u>In-year Progress against PB Pilot action</u></p> <p>3.2 Both Belfast City Council and the Belfast Community Planning Partnership (BCPP) are committed to enhancing civic engagement and participation. This commitment is articulated in both the Belfast Agenda and the BCC Corporate Plan as well as other key documents such as the inclusive growth and consultation & engagement frameworks.</p> <p>3.3 In December 2020, Council launched a new engagement platform, Your Say Belfast, which offered greater opportunity for ongoing and deliberative methods of engaging. However, it was also recognised that more participative and innovative methods are required to be developed across our services . Council’s 2022-23 Improvement Plan includes a commitment to piloting Participatory Budgeting (PB) within Belfast. PB is a democratic process in which citizens decide how to spend part of an allocated public budget. It began in Brazil but is now used across the world as a mechanism to encourages people to get involved in local decision making and democracy. It helps increase levels of involvement and community empowerment</p>

by bringing people together at local events or online and giving them a direct say about what happens in their community.

- 3.4 At the People and Communities Committee People meeting held on 10th May 2022, members agreed to pilot PB in collaboration with the Active Belfast Partnership. Unfortunately, we significantly underestimated the amount of work that had to be put in, in advance of actually being in a position to implement the PB approach. Therefore, action in-year has focussed on learning more about PB – raising awareness, exploring best practice, skilling up staff, securing external support and designing relevant processes, systems and paperwork, etc.
- 3.5 Staff within the Belfast Health Development Unit leading on this initiative, assisted by colleagues in community planning, engaged Community Places to provide expert advice and design support both in-year through to November 2023. Community Places has the experience of designing and facilitating Participatory Budgeting (PB) processes locally and regionally.
- 3.6 General awareness briefing sessions, facilitated by Community Places, were held on 23 August 2022 and 7 September 2022 with the aim of increasing awareness of what PB is and how it can be used in Belfast. This was followed by the set-up of an Active Belfast Design Team made up of a small team of representatives who are overseeing the design and implementation of the Active Belfast Participatory Budgeting Pilot in 4 geographical areas of Belfast.
- 3.7 The Design Team has agreed a theme '**Move More and Eat Well – To Feel Better**' and drafted a shared purpose, as follows:
- Empower and support communities to have a voice in decision making in their areas
 - Reduce barriers to participation and increase access to funding
 - Promote agreed Active Belfast messaging
 - Promote eating healthy message
 - Test something new, collaborate and learn together from the process
 - Raise awareness of PB
- The broader approach for the Active Belfast Participatory Budgeting Pilot is outlined as follows:

3.8

Project Application Criteria

- Safe, Legal & Feasible (timeframe and budget)
- In keeping with the theme - one or both parts (move more and/or eat well)
- Benefiting people within the Belfast City Council area
- Attendance at the Celebration Event (attendance at this will be used to monitor the outcomes/benefits to the local community).

3.9

Who can apply?

- Both constituted and non-constituted groups can apply
- Non-constituted groups will require a sponsor organisation
- Anyone under the age of 18 will need a sponsor adult to assist them through the process and to hold funding
- A maximum of two applications can be received from each group.

3.10

General principles

- Applicants will complete a short application form detailing their project idea. Applications will open on Monday 6 February 2023 for 6 weeks and will close on Monday 20 March 2023. Information sessions will be arranged, and it is suggested that there are 2-3 Information Sessions per area, plus online sessions.
- Design Team agreed that groups can self-select the area in which they want to submit their application – choosing the area where their project idea will be delivered and be of benefit. This will be particularly important for groups who are located on the edge of one area but serve the needs of people in an adjacent/wider area.
- Criteria Check w/c 20 March 2023 and selected groups will be given notice and invited to Decision-Making Events.
- Selected groups will be invited to Market Stall Decision-Making Events in each geographical area in April 2023 where the community will vote for the projects they want to progress.
- Successful groups will be issued a Letter of Offer along with Terms & Conditions which they must formally accept and return.
- Each award could be up to the value of £1,000.
- 90% of the award will be paid upfront with the remaining 10% being paid on completion of the Project outlined in the group's application and confirmation of attendance at the Celebration Event in Autumn 2023.
- Attendance/presentation at the Celebration Event is mandatory and will form part of project monitoring as monitoring returns will not be required.

- Utility costs, core salary costs, commercial events, purchase of alcohol, political activities, religious activities, memorials, high risk activities e.g., bouncy castles, fireworks will not be funded.
- A sample of groups will be selected for vouching, and this will be on a risk-based approach i.e., groups that have not received funding from BCC will be selected for vouching.
- Administration and support will be provided by the Design Team, BHDU and CNS Finance.

3.11 **Timeline**

Nov 22 – Feb 23	Soft launch and ongoing promotion
Feb 23 – Mar 23	Monday 06 February: applications open for 6 weeks Information Sessions will be arranged during first 2 weeks of February 2023 Applications close on Monday 20 March
Mid-End Mar 23	Criteria checks will commence w/c 20 March 2023 and successful groups will be given notice and invited to Decision-Making Events w/c 27 March (in advance of the Easter Break)
Mid-End Apr 23	Decision-making event dates will commence on 17 April 2023 or the beginning of the following week commencing 24 th April 2023
May – Oct 23	Project delivery (6 months)
Oct/Nov 23	Showcase and Celebration Events
Ongoing	Learning and evaluation

3.12 Given that this is piloting a new approach to awarding funding for Council, The Design Team will continue to liaise closely with Belfast City Council colleagues in Finance, Legal and Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) in relation to the project design and processes.

3.13 Up to date information on the initiative can be found at:
<https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk/hub-page/participatory-budgeting>



	Financial and Human Resource Implications
3.14	Subject to Council and PHA approval/agreement (and specifically discussions ongoing within Council around discretionary spend), a budget of £236,000 will remain available to support this work in 22/23.
3.15	Belfast City Council's £90K contribution towards the £236K total will be included within the revenue estimates for 2023/24 and therefore does not represent any growth. In relation to the ongoing review of discretionary spend, Officers would make the case that our ability to contribute £90K towards Active Belfast is vital to ensure that PHA continue to contribute £146K enabling evidence-based work and projects to be developed in support of Council, Health and most importantly Community Planning priorities which would otherwise not be able to be achieved/supported.
3.16	Officers are requesting member approval to earmark £64K (26K BCC/ 38K PHA split) of the 236K total towards delivery/implementation of the PB pilot in 2023/24. This will enable £16K to be allocated per area – North, South, East and West and a minimum of 16 projects (up to 1K per project available) to be supported per area.
3.17	Active Belfast partnership will be holding a planning session early in the New Year to look at other priorities and resourcing requirements and a further report re. same will be brought through to committee.
3.18	Kim Kensett (PHA) and Grainne McMacken (BHSCCT) will continue to lead on this work within the BHDU. Oversight will continue to be provided at organisational level by Kelly Gilliland within BCC and David Tumilty within PHA, as well as at a partnership/thematic level with the stakeholders involved in the Active Belfast Partnership.
	Equality or Good Relations/Rural Needs Assessment
3.19	Equality screening has been completed.
3.20	PB should have a positive impact across the various Section 75 groups as it strengthens and promotes inclusive civic voice and participation. Positive steps will be taken to ensure the PB process is promoted amongst all section 75 groups, but particularly those who are under-represented in traditional consultations (i.e. young people, older people, disabled people, new [ethnic and migrant] communities).
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None