



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Draft Final Community Support Plan 2008-2010
Date:	13 August 2008
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Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that on 14th November the Development Department submitted a draft Community Support Plan to Members for consideration. At the November Committee Members agreed to accept the draft report and decided that public consultation exercise could commence in January 2008.

Based on the Committee decision, the Department has carried out a public consultation exercise from 15th January 2008 to 08th March 2008 with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders:

- Councillors;
- Community services staff;
- Other internal council departments;
- Community centre management committee members;
- Other statutory organisations; and
- Community and voluntary sector organisations

External consultation was undertaken by Williamson Consulting on behalf of Belfast City Council and the internal consultation was led by the Development Department.

The consultation proved to be successful and indeed constructive. In summary:

- 19 events were held;
- 2001 questionnaires were distributed to householders, 114 returned at 5.7% response rate;
- 52 online responses; and
- 8 written responses were received

During the last few months we have analysed the responses and revised the draft

Community Support Plan to reflect some critical comments from consultees. However, as the majority of responses were positive, there are only minor changes to the document. **Appendix 1** contains proposed Draft Final Community Support Plan.

Key Issues

The majority of consultees felt that while the draft Community Support Plan (CSP) is very comprehensive it needs to be delivered in partnership. It was suggested that the final CSP should highlight more the role that Community Services Unit will take in delivering the actions and meeting the needs and concerns of the sector. A summary of consultation responses and department's feedback can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Based on the consultation we have adjusted actions in the Community Support Plan to ensure the work of the Community Services Unit done reflects the following key areas:

Take a lead role through:

- A partnership approach;
- Co-ordination of Council Departments and projects which are community focused
- Development of a partnership based community development strategy for Belfast
- Evidence based policy responses.

Support groups and citizens through:

- Providing assistance to local groups to access grants and practical help;
- Helping local groups to cooperate with each other;
- Signposting residents and local groups to sources of support where it is available;
- Support for neighbourhood planning;
- Ensuring effective communication within the sector; and
- Ensuring access to facilities such as community centres

A copy of the Draft Final Community Support Plan 2008 -10 has been inserted in **Appendix 1**. Subject to Members' approval of the final Community Support Plan 2008 -10, the new Plan can be published and distributed at the October committee meeting, followed by public dissemination.

Resource Implications

Financial Only the net expenditure for the first year of the plan 2008/09 has been agreed at £7,656,349 million.

Asset and Other Implications No new implications identified.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee approve the final Draft Community Support Plan 2008-2010 for public dissemination.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1: Draft Final Community Support Plan 2008-2010
Appendix 2: Key responses from consultees and Department's proposed actions

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