



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Children and Young People - Application to Corporate Thematic Fund
Date:	10th June, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Director of Development ext. 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager ext. 3525

Relevant Background Information

At its meeting on 23 January 2009, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed the revenue estimates for 2009/10. These estimates included £500,000 for the establishment of a corporate strategy budget to finance those elements of cross-cutting work which could not be solely delivered within functional budgets. COMT has already agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee will have overall control of the thematic budget and any proposals or recommendations made to the Committee must come through Chief Officers' Management Team. Chief Officers were asked to make applications for funding through the budget for consideration by the team at its meeting on 6 April.

Applications were to be assessed in line with the principles agreed by COMT on 9 March, which were:

- It must be clear that funds do not exist in departmental estimates to carry out the work proposed;
- Bids must include activity which will incur the expenditure of the entire budget applied for within the period 2009/10;
- Bids should clearly state the way in which the funding will help achieve the objectives within the corporate plan, with a focus on the difference the activity will make on the ground for people and communities;
- Bids should encourage cross-council or inter-agency working;
- They should have an element of innovation.

The Director of Development has submitted an application to further the Council's work for children and young people in the city. An initial assessment has been carried out by COMT and the programme proposal has been agreed in principle.

The Children and Young People proposal seeks funding of £100,000 to give impetus to the formulation of a strategy for Children and Young People and a related year long

programme (A programme overview is attached) of developmental intervention that builds on professional expertise, better integrates and aligns existing service provision, and uses the Council's political influence to shape the delivery of a range of services to children and young people by other public bodies and community based organisations. Utilising the reopening of City Hall as a showcase occasion, a series of events, debates and performances will highlight and promote the contribution of young people to the social and civic fabric of the city. The high profile event will provide a platform both for Council and for young people to convey a clear message of the importance of young people to the future development of the city and of Council's intent to act as a champion for their rights, responsibilities and achievements.

Potentially, all of the children and young people of the city could benefit from their participation in a wide range of programmes, events and activities organised across Council Departments and through attendance at showcase events such as the reopening of City Hall. Over the longer term, the strategy and related programmes would seek to promote personal development, social, recreational and educational knowledge and skills amongst the population of young people in the city.

Individual programmes will be expected to set and monitor performance indicators tailored to each specific context.

The purpose of this paper is to outline the draft programme to Committee and seek their endorsement and further recommendation to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Key Issues

In the absence of a corporate strategy, we propose to prioritise the following key areas of work in line with the three main categories contained within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the OFMDFM 10 year Children & Young People's Strategy. These are:

Provision

To position Council as a champion for Children and Young People and to use its political influence to shape policy and better integrate service provision in conjunction with other providers in the statutory and community and voluntary sectors;

Protection

Council is committed to service delivery which promotes good practice and protects children and vulnerable adults from harm.

Participation

To promote citizenship and civic participation by linking young people to governance decision-making structures and processes at neighbourhood, city, national and international levels;

Our proposed programme presents council with an opportunity to offer a dynamic and credible city wide programme which will appeal to young people in general, many of whom may previously have perceived themselves to have minimal contact with BCC.

The programme purpose is:

- To put in place a strategy for Children & Young People in BCC and for Belfast
- To create awareness of the range of services and facilities available to Children & Young People in BCC
- To enhance the participation of young people in BCC and Belfast.

The programme will have 2 main areas of activity:

- Evidence, Advocacy and Strategy
- Activity and Participation.

A draft programme is attached, however, this is under development and officers are working with key partners to maximise activity at both a neighbourhood and city level and where possible attract levered funds to grow the programme.

The key elements of the programme are:

- To collate and brand current services in order to promote the BCC programme in a way which will allow services to build and extend on current provision and offer new opportunities for collaborative working both internally and with external providers.
- To provide additional activities in neighbourhoods across the city. Via our work with the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, we will identify a range of projects which can be programmed during the summer period and which will complement the existing whole city play scheme.
- To provide additional activities in the city. We will build on and expand our current work with the Urban Trans programme to include a number of events and participative projects including an Ulster Hall event. Events will include a mix of free and low cost activity.
- A number of key events are planned for children and young people at the reopening of the City Hall including a carnival day, a family fun day, Oh Yeah concert and a youth performance (subject to Council agreement). We will work with the programme organisers to develop linkages to the 'B part of it' summer programme.
- The Youth Forum will be refreshed taking into account the recent review of its practice.
- Importantly, this proposal will develop a platform for a new approach and strategy. As indicated, the reopening of the City Hall marks a key point in the life of the city and an opportune moment for Council to mark a new beginning in our engagement and work with young people and our changing and developing role as a consequence of RPA. We will host a major conference for key stakeholders by March 2010 offering a high profile engagement opportunity for the BCC Children and Young People Strategy.
- The programme will be launched during early July 2009.

The full sum of money would impact both on a broad and a targeted level across the geography of the city and the range of priorities.

Resource Implications

Financial

An application was submitted by the Director of Development to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for £100,000 funding.

Human Resources

The programme will be co-ordinated by the Development Department. In order to maximise the opportunities for collaborative working an internal project steering group has been established.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

1. Note and endorse the outline Children and Young People Programme as detailed in the attached Appendix.
2. Recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that £100,000 is allocated for the Children & Young People Programme within the Corporate Plan thematic budget
3. Agree to a programme launch in early July 2009
4. Approve officer engagement with key stakeholders to lever in partner funds for the programme.

Decision Tracking

Further to approval and ratification, a report outlining the programme and associated impacts will be presented to the Development Committee.

Time line: April 2010

Reporting Officer: Catherine Taggart

Key Abbreviations

BCC- Belfast City Council
COMT – Chief Officer's Management Team
NRP – Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership
OFMDFM – Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
RPA – Review of Public Administration

Documents Attached

Programme Overview