

APPENDIX 3

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

**REVIEW OF BELFAST CITY
COUNCIL'S CURRENT ADVICE
AND INFORMATION SERVICE**

FINAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 2008

**Deloitte MCS Limited
19 Bedford Street
Belfast BT2 7EJ
Northern Ireland**

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1 Executive Summary

Introduction

1. Belfast City Council (BCC) commissioned Deloitte MCS Limited in August 2007 to undertake a review of their provision of advice and information services across the city.
2. The terms of reference were to review the Council's current Advice and Information Grant Service, identify best practice changes that are needed to the current delivery model and make recommendations on delivery approach going forward, particularly in light of the new regional strategy.

Methodology

3. The methodology used was a literature and policy review, collation of data from BCC and advice providers, followed by a period of consultation with BCC, delivery organisations, service recipients and strategic stakeholders. Comparative research was undertaken through desk review and follow up consultations, in particular focusing on advice provision mechanisms implemented by Derry City Council and Glasgow City Council.

Context

4. The voluntary sector advice provision context across Northern Ireland has been one of change with growth in the sector followed by a restructuring and tightening of the funding landscape and heightening requirement for transparent standards, modernisation and consolidation. In September 2007 a new regional strategy *Opening Doors - A Strategy for the Delivery of Voluntary Advice Services to the Community* was launched.

Current Model of Delivery

5. The current model of advice and information in Belfast is based on consortia of providers, based on geographical areas (North, South, East, West and Central Belfast). BCC focused funding on generalist providers i.e. those providers who offer general advice services to the community at large rather than on specific topics or to a designated section of the community. A number of essential criteria were required by applicants in order to be considered for funding. Consortia applicants varied across the city with some being assessed as consortia (i.e. South, North and East) whereas others were assessed as individuals (i.e. groups in West and Central). Funding was allocated on pro-rata basis based on a deprivation-weighted population. This equated to 32 per cent in West Belfast, 27 per cent in North Belfast, 16 per cent in East Belfast, 13 per cent in South Belfast and 10 per cent in the city centre. This indicated that North and West Belfast were in the highest need.
6. There has been significant increases in the total amount of BCC and DSD funding provided to advice organisations across the city since 2005, with over 20 per cent increases each year, £505,725 in 2005, £616,450 in 2006 and £782,779 in 2007. Although providers receive funding from other organisations / bodies BCC and DSD remain the core funders of advice and information services in the city.
7. The allocation of funding across the city is based on a weighted deprivation-population measure which was updated in 2005 with the latest super output area deprivation and population figures.
8. Advice provision within Belfast varies between delivery organisations but generally all areas provide basic information, advice advocacy or representation on a wide range of issues including welfare benefits, housing, consumer, health, education, tribunals and money / debt. Partnership working is more advanced in some areas of the city than others. There is a variety of methods of evaluating impact and quality standards across the city between consortia and delivery organisations. The relationship

between delivery organisations and BCC has been predominantly a 'process relationship' in that beyond the application / monitoring returns and delivery of funding there is little contact.

Review of Current Model

9. The Council model of consortium working has helped move a largely organic and un-coordinated delivery of advice services towards a more strategic rationale network of providers. The new strategy however, marks a key opportunity for delivering a further step up in advice services;
10. There are over 20 organisations involved in the delivery of advice services in Belfast across the five sectors of Belfast. This includes a Citizens Advice Bureaux presence across each of the five areas, North, South, East, West and Central;
11. There is a spectrum of partnership working within consortium areas with North and East Belfast having the most developed partnership working arrangements. The partnership in North Belfast before the BCC contract and has benefited from support from the NB Community Action Unit. The Consortium in East Belfast has benefited from good relations between just two providers, which along with Central is the least number of providers across the Consortium areas. West Belfast providers are making concerted efforts to deepen their working relations, including development of a joint constitution. In South a coalition rather than a consortium has remained with a close relationship between independent organisations, but a limited working relationship between this grouping and CAB organisations. The Central area whilst different in nature demonstrates limited evidence of partnership working between CAB and BURC;
12. There are substantial difficulties in assessing performance and comparing performance within and across consortia due to number and range of providers involved and subsequent inconsistencies in recording systems and in monitoring and recording practices. The following indicators can be used to assess an overall picture:
 - a. The benefit claw back compared with amount of grant funding. This has highlighted significant variation between the areas. East Belfast figures suggest significant success in benefit claw back. All sectors report total benefit claw back of more than double the grant funding. This is indicative only as there are issues with consistency of recording systems;
 - b. The quantity of enquiries dealt with compared to funding allocation. What can already be ascertained is that South and West record a lower number of enquiries relative to funding than North, East and Central; and
 - c. Whilst relatively small in number compared to overall use of the service, the qualitative service recipient interviews we have undertaken have highlighted positive feedback from individuals who have used the services.
13. Overall we conclude that current delivery of advice services is making a difference to many individuals in need and evidence suggests value for money for BCC. We also feel however there are significant opportunities for improvement both within certain areas and across the city as a whole.
14. BCC targets need through a number of means including, its method of allocating funding across the city, the application process and the delivery of advice through local providers.
15. BCC's grant allocation process has used an analysis of population and deprivation to decide funding allocations across the city. This is reasonable on the assumption that consortia, with local knowledge and networks in place then implement delivery to target need at the local level and ensure they are easily accessed. This has been worked out differently in different areas – for example in East Belfast there are just two providers one in a health and well being centre located on a key arterial route and one in a more inner city location. North Belfast, in contrast, partly due to its complex

sectarian geography has a higher number of providers, several of which are aligned to particular communities.

16. Therefore criteria for funding sectors of the city should be based on:
 - a. Proportion of population living in that area of the city;
 - b. Level of deprivation in that part of the city; and
 - c. As the central area does not fit with regard to population and deprivation criteria enquiry numbers should be monitored going forward. If there is a substantial difference between proportion of funding (currently 10 per cent) and proportion of enquiries a funding revision for the central service a realignment of funding should be considered.
17. The assessment process criteria provided a reasonable cross-section of requirements relating to delivery of advice services. There is an opportunity to tighten these criteria in order to align with Opening Doors and the future direction of advice services. The timescale for these criteria changes may need to be aligned with regional efforts to converge standards across the sector. The specific criteria that need to be developed are:
 - a. Evidence of previous experience and performance of delivering advice services, including evidence of delivering value for money and partnership working;
 - b. Detail of proposed hub, satellite and outreach facilities – specifying:
 - i. How the consortia can deliver the set of skills and expertise to be available in a primary generalist hub as described in Annex 4 of Opening Doors. (Including dedicated money and debt counselling, tribunal and advocacy work);
 - ii. How areas of need within the area will be targeted. This should include specifics on local populations and levels of deprivation and not rely on informal local knowledge or pre-existing infrastructure. It should also detail existing networks and relationships within the area to be served, and how and where outreach will take place;
 - iii. Evidence of accessibility:
 1. location (e.g. arterial route, on public transport routes);
 2. premises (e.g. physical access);
 3. opening hours (e.g. weekend, evening); and
 4. service delivery options (e.g. use of translation services).
 - c. Consistency of systems within the area - quality assurance standards, case recording systems, IT systems. What steps need to be taken to move to consistency and how these will be taken and a timeframe for doing so; and
 - d. How BCC funding could leverage in other funding – and how together these contribute to sustainability of core advice services and any supplementary services.

Good Practice Identified in Belfast and through Comparative Research

18. The consortium approach in Belfast has resulted in some good practice examples from existing BCC consortia in both general delivery and partnership working. These include:

- a. Regular liaison between organisations to identify needs / trends and also to plan future partnership working;
 - b. Review outreach services. Ongoing and strategically once a year to assess coverage of an area and to ensure outreach services provided by the various partners are complementing each other;
 - c. Sharing specialist skills and expertise across the forum (formally and informally);
 - d. Protocols for referrals (where there are insufficient resources available for one organisation to meet the needs of a client refer on to another within the area);
 - e. The provision of advice services from a perceived 'neutral' venue in the City Centre results in a service accessible to all;
 - f. Regularly capturing service recipient feedback;
 - g. Use of the same case recording system, allowing for better consistency of management information and helping increase equity of service;
 - h. Strategic choice of location for service provision. The deliberate location of modern advice centres within health and well being centres in South and East Belfast works both as a model that provides synergies in terms of clients using both health and advice services and also through helping develop a modern high quality facility; and
 - i. The production of joint publicity materials resulting in economic efficiencies for all organisations involved.
19. The comparative research focused on Derry City Council and Glasgow City Council advice delivery mechanisms. Key good practice findings from DCC were:
- a. There has been a reduction in the number of advice providers within the city;
 - b. A cross-party Advice Service Panel has provided political support throughout the process;
 - c. The funded providers have been required to use the same case recording system and to sign-up to a standard quality code;
 - d. Enquiry numbers are monitored and if service delivery drops the Council include the right to challenge the organisation and potential reduce funding; and
 - e. DCC has moved from grant aid for advice providers into three year service level agreements with local organisations. This approach is likely to run until the new Council structures come into effect.
20. In Glasgow the key good practice findings were:
- a. Area based collaborative working has been developed;
 - b. There is citywide planning with regard to referral protocols, quality issues, management systems, staff training and monitoring procedures
 - c. There is citywide delivery of time-consuming tribunal work.
 - d. There has been an effort to calculate the financial benefit to the city overall;
 - e. A single case management system has been implemented across all advice providers. Training has been provided to ensure it is used consistently;

- f. As management information data is built up and analysed GCC will become able to set meaningful targets for providers; and
- g. GCC has staff dedicated to overseeing implementation and delivery of advice provision.

Recommendations

21. BCC should take the opportunity the regional strategy affords and seek substantial improvements in advice service delivery in Belfast. With this in mind the good practice highlighted above should be considered. In particular the following best practice changes are recommended:

With regard to targeting beneficiaries:

- a. Use consolidation to bring economies of scale to strengthen joint marketing and branding efforts so that potential beneficiaries are more aware of advice provision in an area;
- b. Within consortium areas there should be regular liaison between organisations to identify needs / trends and also to plan future partnership working. This should include setting aims and SMART objectives for service delivery in the area;
- c. Review of outreach services. This should be done on an ongoing basis and strategically once a year. It should also use data on number of enquiries coming at various outreach locations to best target demand. Reviews should also assess outreach coverage of the overall area;
- d. Use of a range of facilities for both main and outreach service provision. The deliberate strategic location of modern advice centres within health and well being centres in South and East Belfast works both as a model that provides synergies in terms of clients using both health and advice services and also through helping develop a modern well designed facility;
- e. Development of potential service delivery channels, in particular more focus on telephony including regular review of telephony service provision and usage; and
- f. The provision of advice services from a perceived 'neutral' venue in the city centre results in a service accessible to all.

With regard to improving consortia working:

- g. Facilitative processes are needed to develop relationships in south Belfast between independents and CAB activity. West are also seeking help in developing a Constitution for the West Belfast Advice Forum. In general facilitative processes should work towards the essential characteristics identified for hubs, and in particular make clear a single lead organisation for each area;
- h. Skills and expertise should be used strategically on an area wide basis. This will require mapping of specialist skills and expertise within structures and working out practices to allow these to be used flexibly within future structures – even if new hub structures include more than one organisation;
- i. To ensure the client receives a quality of service protocols for referrals within area structures should be developed and implemented. These should activate where there are insufficient resources available for one element of the structure to meet the needs of a client, or if the client could be better served by the practitioner with responsibility for a particular specialism in an area (e.g. housing, disability, lone parents, older people, needs of ethnic minorities); and

- j. A city-wide forum should help identify and share good practice between consortia and ensure that where necessary and where possible consortia work well together. This forum should include representatives from lead organisations in each hub and BCC.

With regard to monitoring and evaluation:

- k. Convergence with regard to use of the same case recording system, allowing for better consistency of management information;
 - l. Convergence around training to ensure consistent processes amongst practitioners with regard to use of case recording systems, calculation of claw back etc.
 - m. Provision of regular quarterly reports in electronic and hard copy format from consortium to BCC. Each consortium should analyse data across and within their area to help plan use of their own resources, whilst BCC should analyse data on both a consortium wide area basis and on a city wide basis.
 - n. Key Performance Indicators should include:
 - i. Number and type of enquiries;
 - ii. Breakdown of enquiries undertaken face-to-face in the main office, via telephone, outreach and E-Access;
 - iii. Scale of claw back;
 - iv. Service recipient feedback and satisfaction levels;
 - v. Scale of funding leveraged on the back of the core BCC funding;
 - vi. Staff training undertaken; and
 - vii. Quality standards in place / update on progress to gaining quality standard.
 - o. The collation and analysis of comparable and consistent data will allow for meaningful target setting with regard to enquiries.
22. We suggest that at this important juncture with advice services looking to make strategic changes the role and capacity of resources with responsibility for advice within BCC needs to be enhanced.

There are a range of considerations in the scenario of BCC investing more in the relationship. In the short run (1-2 years) through piloting, implementation of new systems and processes and competitive tendering phases we think there will be need for a dedicated resource from BCC. In the medium term following transition and assuming the improvements in the sector with regard to standards, convergence of case recording systems and consolidation in the sector with regard to delivery structures, it is anticipated that BCC will have to spend less time on process issues. This will give an opportunity for BCC to invest more in the relationship with regard to reviewing outputs and impact, setting and reviewing targets and ultimately to ensure that quality advice services are being provided and are demonstrating value for money, whilst potentially reducing the resource required to undertake this. Therefore, as noted in transitional funding considerations we estimate a dedicated resource for the period of implementation with 0.5 of a manager level in the longer run, post-implementation.

BCC could also consider an Advice Service Panel, bringing together Councillors from across the political parties. This could oversee the implementation of the strategy in Belfast, and potentially help to sustain the momentum of the process when difficult decisions are required.

23. The Opening Doors regional strategy marks a significant opportunity for the sector and for BCC. It is an opportunity for a challenging step-up from the current model which is characterised by significant local variation in partnership working and service delivery.

As a minimum the future model of delivery should take on board the characteristics identified as 'essential characteristics':

- Convergence of standards and systems;
- Use of improved management data for target setting and targeting of resources;
- Tailor hub structure to needs of an area – accounting for pros and cons of number of sites and organisations involved;
- There should be an agreed lead organisation;
- Single brand;
- Representation from each hub on a city-wide advice forum.

With regard to the number of hubs a range of models were put forward. The two given most consideration by delivery agents and stakeholders were a four hub and single hub model.

Taking into account the current delivery structure within Belfast, most importantly the multiple providers and the networks and relationships that they have in place, alongside the consistent view that there should be four hubs rather than one hub and the transitional issues that need to be managed, we recognise that to step directly to a one hub model from the current position would be a large and difficult step. This is particularly so, in advance of any learning from a pilot phase.

Whilst moving to one hub, or indeed fewer than four hubs, may be a step too far at this juncture, this should be further tested through the consultation phase on proposed hub locations for the regional strategy and considered through lessons learned in the piloting phase. If a multiple hub option is taken forward the potential for further convergence should continue to be monitored.

24. All areas of Belfast are to undertake a pilot phase. We recognise that different areas in Belfast are at different stages within their consortium development and face different challenges for example scale of need, sectarian geography and accessibility issues. Therefore if all proposed hubs were piloted, this would allow learning across all variables, whilst also ensuring all areas created forward momentum; and

An evaluation should take place alongside the piloting phase ensuring that lessons from across the pilots are identified, collated and analysed. At the end of the pilot phase, following completion of the review, a service level agreement (SLA) framework should be developed for the preferred hub approach.

25. BCC is to take forward the required actions in line with timescales put forward by DSD with regard to the wider regional advice strategy. Taking into account timescales proposed within Opening Doors and current progress it is likely that the approximate timeline is pilot phase during 2008, implement full model including unified IT and information systems during 2009. Both phases will factor in reviews of progress. We note that the time line may be subject to change depending on progress with certain work streams.

2 Introduction

2.1 Introduction

Deloitte MCS Limited was commissioned by Belfast City Council (BCC) in August 2007 to undertake a review of their provision of advice and information services across the city.

The purpose of this section of the report is to set out the terms of reference for the review and to outline the approach undertaken in completing the review.

2.2 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for this engagement were as follows:

- to review the Council's current Advice and Information Grant Service which is to include a detailed review of:
 - the consortium approach that currently exists across each of the five geographical areas (North, South, East, West and Central), including a review of the number and location of each consortium;
 - the performance of individual consortia against the terms of offer of grant support, comparing the consistency across individual consortia;
 - the grant allocation process – how funding is allocated across the city, identifying the most appropriate criteria for allocation of resources, to provide a transparent and fair system; and
 - the assessment process and criteria for grant application.
- identify best practice changes that are needed to the current delivery model and approaches for Advice and Information Grant Services in order to:
 - maximise support to target beneficiaries and improve consortia working; and
 - monitor and evaluate the quality of advice services, particularly ensuring compliance with Advice Services Alliance guidelines, highlighting key performance indicators for assessing the effectiveness of the Council Advice Services Strategy.
- make recommendations on:
 - how the Council's approach should be amended to fit into the Department of Social Development's (DSD) regional strategy of how to encapsulate the 'hub' ethos, matching advice provision to community needs;
 - the most appropriate delivery approach for future allocation;
 - suggested template for allocation of funding and targeting of resources within the context of Belfast City Council grant aid policy and future changes;
 - how to improve partnership, networking and co-operation between providers; and
 - the issues and resource requirements of implementing DSD's future recommended approach with suggestions as to how these could be addressed (staff and time-scales etc).

The following project outputs were required:

- a written report evaluating the success of Belfast City Council’s current consortium approach and processes (from an internal and external perspective), identifying the key critical gaps, inconsistencies and areas for improvement with best practice options for overcoming these;
- based on the recommendations of the elements above, liaise with DSD to identify what BCC should include in the application process to be considered as a pilot area hub as part of DSD’s regional strategy;
- liaise with DSD to produce a list of prioritised changes and processes that need to be in place to ensure that BCC’s approach fits into the DSD’s regional strategy for supporting delivery of voluntary advice services to the community;
- carry out a review of the issues, practical considerations and resources required to implement the approach recommended by DSD, and how these can be addressed; and
- identification of how partnership, networking and co-operation can be improved between providers at regional and local level.

2.3 Methodology

The research methodology is summarised in table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Research Methodology

Stage 1 – Project Initiation
A project initiation meeting was held with the Steering Group on 13 th August. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the team, agree the scope, approach, roles and responsibilities and timetable for reporting.
Stage 2 – Evaluation Worksteam
A key element of the assignment was to take stock of the current service delivery approach, and review how effective it has been. In order to do this we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developed and issued an initial information request. This was based on our awareness of data required and on documents and data discussed at the project initiation meeting; ▪ Developed a programme of consultation with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ contracting agent – working closely with BCC staff responsible for issuing grants, the grant terms of offer and the ongoing management of the contracts. Through this we have developed an understanding of the end to end process involved and views on effectiveness of service delivery; ▪ delivery organisations – we met with delivery organisations from each of the consortia on a consortium basis. Holding five sessions, one with members from each geographical consortia; ▪ strategic stakeholders – we consulted with DSD, Citizens Advice and Advice NI, helping to capture views from these organisations as to the Belfast model and establish the challenges going forward in light of the new regional strategy and other issues facing the advice sector; and ▪ service recipients – we worked with consortia to get feedback directly from service users on how effective they believed the service to be. We used service recipient feedback that had already been collected through ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes and

conducted telephone conversations with a number of service recipients.

- Conducted an internal half day workshop to review data collated and develop conclusions on effectiveness of the current approach; and
- Facilitated an interim findings workshop with the steering group to discuss the findings from the initial evaluation workstream analysis.

Stage 2 – Quality, Targeting and Best Practice

Through the evaluation work stream we gathered information on formal quality accreditations in place, accreditations being worked towards and other quality assurance processes applied in practice. We were then in a position to make an assessment on the following:

- quality standards in place and being worked towards; and
- how this position compared with the requirements and expectations of the advice sector.

Through consultation and understanding of the hub model we identified the key criteria that can be applied by BCC to ensure that future funding is targeted optimally.

We then considered best practice within the context of the new strategy direction for the sector and existing practice on the ground in Belfast. We then sought to confirm and identify good practice principles that would apply for:

- best practice in hub style approaches for the delivery of advice and information;
- best practice in working collaboratively;
- best practice in managing the change towards a hub style approach; and
- best practice models of advice and information service delivery from other cities comparable with Belfast.

This review of best practice was undertaken by a mixture of desk research and follow up consultations with representatives from Glasgow and Derry City Councils.

Stage 3 - Reporting

The final stage of the review included preparation and presentation of draft and final reports.

2.4 Format of this Report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

Section 3:	Context of the Advice Sector in Northern Ireland
Section 4:	Current Delivery of Services in Belfast
Section 5:	Outputs, Outcomes, Quality and Partnership Working
Section 6:	Good Practice Comparative Research
Section 7:	Analysis of Belfast City Council's Advice Provision
Section 8:	Conclusions and Recommendations

3 Context

3.1 Introduction

This section describes the advice sector context within Northern Ireland, the development of the regional strategy and policy drivers within Belfast City Council (BCC).

3.2 Advice and Information Services

Advice, information and legal services in Northern Ireland are provided through a range of organisations and bodies.

At present the following organisations provide advice and information:

- government departments and agencies (e.g. Social Security Agency, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Health and Social Service Trusts);
- regional and local voluntary organisations (e.g. Housing Rights Service, Law Centre NI);
- Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB); and
- independent advice services.

Providers are generally members of one or more umbrella organisation. The three key umbrella bodies in Northern Ireland are Citizens Advice (providing support for local CAB offices), Advice NI (providing support for independent advice providers) and the Law Centre NI (support to local providers on legal and welfare issues). Citizens Advice, Advice NI and Law Centre NI are linked through the Advice Services Alliance, the overarching body for networks of independent advice providers across Northern Ireland (and the rest of the UK).

The sector has grown considerably over the past ten years, partly driven by increased availability of funding in the Voluntary and Community Sector. With the funding landscape becoming more challenging and contextual changes related to Investing Together and Positive Steps, it was apparent that change within the sector was needed. The DSD, given its policy responsibility for voluntary information and advice services and alongside sectoral concerns sought to develop an integrated strategy for delivery of advice services.

Work subsequently undertaken by DSD highlighted the potential role of the Advice Services Alliance with its remit including encouraging the sector to work together. It was acknowledged that whilst the three supporting structures Advice NI, Citizens Advice and the Law Centre NI had co-operated on some issues (e.g. training, welfare reform) there is a limited track record of working together, and the organisations had wished to maintain their role and ethos within sector.

A Strategy for Delivery of Voluntary Advice Services to the Community was subsequently released for public consultation by the DSD in January 2006. This document and the results of the public consultation on this document led to the launch of a new overarching strategy for the advice sector in Northern Ireland.

3.3 Opening Doors

Opening Doors - A Strategy for the Delivery of Voluntary Advice Services to the Community was launched by the Minister for Social Development on 10th September 2007.

The *Opening Doors* Strategy proposes a structure for delivering advice services that seeks to ensure increased co-operation between local providers and improved accessibility for the many people who rely on these services across Northern Ireland. Central to the structure is the development of a network of generalist advice providers referred to as area Hubs and Satellites. Specialist provision will be offered separately often at a regional level. Referral mechanisms will be implemented to ensure those approaching generalist Hubs and Satellites will be referred to the correct specialist body.

Whilst the Hub and Satellite model is the focus of this paper it is noted that the strategy is more comprehensive and includes recommendations on:

- High level generalist advice provision (to be aligned with population, deprivation and accessibility factors);
- Maximising access to basic advice provision;
- Resourcing the sector in the future;
- Quality of provision;
- Using existing resources effectively; and
- A monitoring and review plan.

3.3.1 Hubs and Satellites

The *Opening Doors* Strategy sets out a Hub and Satellite approach for frontline generalist advice providers. These are described below.

Primary Generalist Hub

A primary generalist area hub is a locally based advice provider or advice partnership of a complete range of services, including advice, advocacy and high level support on a range of basic and complex general advice issues, open to as many people as possible. It will also offer first line support to those who have specific needs and will refer them to specialist agencies where dedicated specialist advice is needed.

Hubs are to have the following elements:-

- 4-8 advisors able to offer advice on each core area of general advice provision and provide basic advice on particular specialist needs;
- dedicated money and debt counselling and the ability to carry out tribunal and high level advocacy work;
- be sited on main public transport routes, ideally close to where most people live but also open to those in more rural areas;
- meet the highest standards of disabled access and one advisor will have a good level of knowledge in relation to disability issues;
- each advisor will be responsible for one or more specialist area, including disability, housing, the needs of ethnic minorities, older people, lone parents and children. Advisors will not necessarily be experts in these areas but will have sufficient understanding to recognise the particular needs of the client group and to understand how and when to refer clients to regional voluntary bodies.
- be linked to a range of satellite and outreach provision. Hubs will have good links with larger community organisations in the area so that suitable ways to refer clients can be set up. These will enable community based E- access points.

- have well established relationships with relevant regional voluntary bodies and support structures at a Northern Ireland level. These will ensure that Hubs can maintain their quality, through suitable training, access to specialist information, regular updating of general information and provision of staff training.

An Area Hub will be expected to deliver advice/advocacy on a range of issues including:

- Benefits (including Disability Benefits, Income Support, Housing, Job Seekers Allowance, Tax Credits, Pension Credits);
- Appeal and Tribunal support and representation;
- Money and Debt;
- Consumer issues;
- Basic Immigration (with more complex cases referred to specialist organisations);
- Administration of Justice;
- Human Rights;
- Employment;
- Housing;
- Education; and
- Health and Disability.

More complex enquiries relating to employment, housing, education, health and disability, immigration and social security will be referred to suitable specialist organisations.

Satellite Description¹

Outreach and satellite provision, coupled with the use of technology (E-access), will be needed to make sure that people who do not live near the generalist Hubs will still be able to get quality advice easily. They must work as part of the Hub structure and be able to update information, provide training and support for staff and have administrative support to be effective. This is how the strategy proposes they will work:

- **Full-time, permanent satellite advice centres** in other parts of a new council area(s) with high population and an identified community need, as outlined in the mapping exercise.
- **Outreach services in specific community places** at local level such as half-day sessions in community centres, doctors' surgeries, etc.
- **Outreach on an occasional basis** at advice clinics, promotional events, etc. in community centres, leisure centres, schools and other public locations.
- **Outreach home visits** to those who are unable to access advice services.
- **Part-time satellite provision** such as a two day per week session with a part-time advisor located in an area of high demand.
- **IT based community E-access points**, such as single computers within a community centre, library or a community organisation's premises linked by broadband access to the Hubs. They could cover basic advice needs that could

¹ Satellite provision in the strategy is described alongside outreach and E-Access.

be easily dealt with and offer advisors cheaper and faster links to a wide range of people.

- **All satellite, outreach and E-access services** should be directly linked to the primary generalist Hub in the area.

Review of Public Administration

The initial consultation paper on delivery of voluntary advice services indicated that there would be one hub per Council area post-Review of Public Administration boundary changes. This alignment is not explicit in the final strategy, partly as the outcome of RPA with regard to number of Councils remains unknown. In terms of Belfast, the strategy noted that Belfast may need more than one hub (suggesting four) due to “population levels and extent of community segregation²”.

3.4 Belfast City Council

BCC has a long history of providing support for advice giving organisations within the voluntary and community sector. As is the case with other public bodies, BCC is obliged to demonstrate best value in delivery of services and in common with other bodies the Council has found it difficult to determine the most appropriate and fair means of allocating funding to advice providers, whilst remaining cost effective and accessible.

In 2002-2003 BCC commissioned consultants to carry out a review of advice services in Belfast. The review concluded that decisions on advice provision needed to be made on the basis of a number of factors including, funding, quality of service, location and availability of provision in the specific areas. The review also highlighted that advice providers were generally supportive of the development of a strategy which would allow clearer understanding of BCC's expectations and mechanisms for support. The development of the strategy was commissioned in 2005.

In the interim period between the review in 2003 and the development of the strategy in 2005 BCC agreed an allocation of advice services funding across the city. Initially, 10 per cent was allocated to city centre provision (on the basis that some people would seek provision in a neutral venue), with the remaining balance divided on the basis of an analysis of population and deprivation. At this stage BCC also worked with advice providers on the development of consortia through a process of consultation and facilitation.

The development of a strategy in 2005 was set against this backdrop with the aim of providing a long-term framework for advice provision in the city. The values underpinning the strategy required the advice services to be accessible, needs-based, of a quality standard, on appropriate premises, up to date, best value, sustainable, equal, free and independent. The recommendations for future advice provision were that BCC should continue with the consortium approach, supporting this in a manner which encouraged co-operation between providers in each area (North, South, East and West) through the following:

- Determining how best to allocate city centre provision;
- Allocating the remaining funding based on a deprivation-weighted population to indicate need;
- Call for registration of interest from generalist advice providers;
- Early assessment of registrants to determine if they met quality standards;

²Opening Doors, page 14

- BCC would then indicate to those who met standards that a consortium or shared bid should be submitted from the area; and
- Funding allocated on a consortia basis or if a consortia approach can not be agreed funding to be split on a pro-rata basis, using numbers of enquiries for each organisation.

Full details on the Council's advice provision application and assessment can be found later in the report.

The Council's Corporate Plan 2003-2006 set out strategies to help achieve and realise a vision of "Believing in a better Belfast." Specifically the strategies related to:

- **Providing Civic Leadership** - highlighting the challenges that face the city and working with others to achieve co-ordinated solutions;
- **Improving Quality of Life, Now and for Future Generations** - creating a cleaner, more attractive, safer and healthier city, with a strong economy;
- **Promoting Good Relations** - encouraging fair treatment, understanding and respect for people of all cultures; and
- **Delivering Best Services** - providing high quality, value for money services, when and where people need them.

Overarching the four strategies was the need for organisations to work in partnership to make the best use of the resources that currently exist in the City.

The 2007 - 2008 Corporate Plan focuses activities around three key areas:

- Improving quality of life, now and for future generations;
- Providing leadership and strategic direction for shaping, developing and managing the city; and
- Meeting the needs of local people through the effective delivery of quality, customer-focused services.

The current approach to delivery of advice services in Belfast has been in operation since April 2005 and BCC is in its third year of funding advice providers in this manner. In the sections that follow we outline the processes through which BCC has allocated funding across the city and highlight some of the outcomes / outputs from this funding.

Decisions in respect of the allocation of grant-aid to advice providers and the allocation of additional match funding is undertaken by the Community and Recreation Sub-Committee that sits within Community Services. We recognise that Belfast City Council is currently undergoing a review of their Community Services Strategy and that this will inevitably impact on their advice provision in the city in the future. In the later sections we discuss advice provision in the city in the future and discuss BCC's role with advice services within the wider way forward for advice provision.

3.5 Summary

In summary our consideration of strategic context for provision of advice services in Belfast confirmed:

- There are three key umbrella bodies for the provision of advice and information services in Northern Ireland including Citizens Advice, Advice NI and Law Centre NI who are all linked through the Advice Services Alliance;

- A context of change with the considerable growth in the sector followed by a restructuring and tightening of the funding landscape and heightening requirement for transparent standards, modernisation and consolidation; and
- The *Opening Doors* Strategy proposes a structure for delivering advice services that seeks to ensure increased co-operation between local providers and improved accessibility for the many people who rely on these services across Northern Ireland. Central to the structure is the development of a network of generalist providers referred to as area Hubs and Satellites.

4 Current Delivery of Services

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to describe the processes underlying the Council's Advice and Information services.

4.2 Council Approval

In November 2004 the BCC Community and Recreation Sub-Committee met and agreed the funding allocations for the 2005-2006 funding year. This allocation was similar to previous years in that 10 per cent was to be allocated to city centre provision, with the remaining balance divided on the basis of an analysis of population and deprivation. Following this meeting bids were sought via public advertisement from generalist advice providers in the city. Further details on the application processes involved and the funding allocations are set out in section 4.3 and 4.6.

In December 2005, DSD announced that it would be providing a supplementary £152,725 of development support grant funding for allocation for year ending 31st March 2006. In addition, with this news was the request that in subsequent years BCC should match this funding from rateable income starting from the funding year commencing April 2006. The match funding from BCC was agreed through the striking of the rate in February 2006 and the Community Services budget was increased in line with this increase.

Generalist advice providers were invited to a meeting in January 2006 to offer views on distribution across the city, allocation of supplementary DSD funding for 2005-2006 (£152,725), and allocation of all funding for 2006-2007.

Opinions expressed by advice providers are detailed below³:

1. the latest SOA analysis should be used with immediate effect, including overall allocations for the current year;
2. the allocation should remain at 10 per cent in the City centre;
3. the additional DSD funding should be allocated pro-rata on the awards already agreed by Council;
4. advice providers should be permitted to use the additional grant for capital items such as computers and software; and
5. BCC should encourage consortia applications, but where this was not possible Council should facilitate the allocation funding. Where consortia agreement could not be agreed, Council were to negotiate with individual groups to allocate the funding based on advice need and the capacity to meet this need based on the number of enquiries each organisation receives.

The BCC Community and Recreation Sub-Committee met again in February 2006 to consider a report from the Head of Community & Leisure Services in respect of the allocation of grant-aid to advice providers and the provision of additional match funding to support DSD's information and advice services strategy. Details of the recommendations set out by the report can be found in Appendix II. Following discussions and questions with the consultants involved in the initial allocation of funding, Council agreed to the recommendations contained in the report.

³ Source: 2006 - Report of Head of Community & Leisure Services Community and Recreation Department

4.3 Application

Application form and completion

By 2005-2006 the funding of advice services in the city had been open to discussion for a number of years. Research conducted on behalf of BCC by external consultants in 2002-2003 was followed by consultation in 2005 with advice providers and as discussed in the previous section led the Council to progress towards supporting advice services on a consortia basis across five areas of the city in 2005. The five areas were to be North, South, East, West and Central Belfast. Effectively therefore, proposals were invited, via an application process, for the provision of advice services across the city. In preparation for this application forms and a scoring pro forma were prepared aimed at assessing whether the consortia could meet the requirements set by BCC.

Table 4.1 below provides a breakdown of the application form including narrative around what details were required in each section of the form.

Table 4.1
Council Grant Application Form

Section Details	Information Required
Consortium Details	Name of consortium; Area Targeted; and Lead consortium member organisation.
List of Consortium Members	Name of individual delivery organisation within consortium; and Membership of A.S.A organisation (i.e. Advice NI / C.A.B).
Area Coverage	Details of area coverage; and Details of any specific advice offered within the area
Gaps in Provision	Current gaps in provision – specifically including accessibility through Public Transport routes, outreach work etc
Addressing Gaps	(1) how the consortium plans to address the gaps; and (2) how individual delivery organisations plan to address gaps.
Access Difficulties	How the consortium intends to address the needs of those who have particular access difficulties (i.e. older people, people with disabilities, those with sight or hearing difficulties and those who don't use English as their Primary Language)
Volume of Advice	Expected number of enquiries by each delivery organisation
Statement of Collaborative Working	Specific information on how consortium members will hold each other accountable for the quality and quantity of their advice work; How members propose to meet, communicate with each other and relate information to ensure they are operating in the most efficient and non-competitive way; and Information on the consortium member that will act as primary contact for the Council – this should also state what they are allowed to do and not to do on behalf of the consortium.
Agreement	Applications are only accepted if they include all members' signatures

Source: Belfast City Council Files

By the end of 2005 applications were sought from all consortia, with over 20 organisations completing the application forms. In January of 2006 these applications were initially assessed in conjunction with BCC by the same consultants who had developed the advice strategy for the council in 2005, full details of the assessment procedures are provided in the following sections.

Grant Application Assessment

BCC's strategy was focused on generalist advice provision, i.e. those providers who offer general advice services to the community at large, rather than on specific topics

or to a designated section of the community. For example, the Rape Crisis Centre was rejected because it did not fit the 'generalist' criteria. Full details of the assessment criteria can be found in Appendix II.

Initially a successful application required an overall minimum score of at least 60 per cent or 120 out of 200. BCC developed a range of criteria against which to score the applications. A summary of the areas that are assessed are outlined below:

- evidence of a 'well run community organisation as defined by BCC';
- geographical boundaries of the area being served;
- description of need within the area for which funding was sought;
- track record of the applicant in advice services provision including current level of services offered;
- details of suitability of information recording system;
- ASA standards – i.e. is the organisation a member of CAB or Advice NI.
- Staff / volunteer training details;
- how the organisation was going to contribute to BCC objectives; and
- details of how BCC funding has attracted or will attract additional financial support from other sources.

Initial Assessment

The approach to consortia working across the city has been varied from the beginning, with different areas having to overcome different challenges / barriers to consortium working. Some areas were able to agree quite readily to the consortium approach whilst others found the whole process needed significant facilitation and deliberation. Details on the types of applications received and methods by which they were assessed are contained in the following sections.

North Belfast and **East Belfast** providers were able to reach agreement and delivered consortium bids in both cases. These bids also met the requirements of including all eligible advice providers in the area and representing both independent and CAB providers.

In **South Belfast**, independent advisors came together as the South Belfast Independent Advice Services Working Group and submitted an application on that basis, whereas a single application was received from the Suffolk and Andersonstown CAB⁴. Both applications did indicate however that they were working towards a consortium and were also prepared to service mutually exclusive parts of the area. Accordingly, these applications were scored together as a coalition.

Providers in **West Belfast**, although making progress towards a consortium approach in recent times, were unable to reach agreement in time for the application to be progressed as a joint approach. All of those that did apply for funding (seven in total) expressed support for the bids from fellow organisations, however, as applications were strictly individual, each was assessed on an individual basis.

In the **Central area**, applications were received from Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre (BURC) and Belfast Central CAB independently and were therefore assessed as such.

⁴ Suffolk / Andersonstown deliver advice services in parts of South and West Belfast. For this reason representatives sit within the consortia of both areas, however, BCC funding for the organisation is delivered through South Belfast allocation.

Given the Council's wish to encourage a consortium approach, the assessment criteria were such that individual applications would generally score significantly lower than consortia. Some of the applications, which were of acceptable quality in terms of their content, fell below the threshold required because they had received no points for being in a consortium, therefore for individual applications the threshold was reduced from 120 to 100. In total, 20 organisations submitted applications either individually or as part of a consortium. The consortia / coalitions in East Belfast, South Belfast and North Belfast all met the minimum threshold score of 120 and were therefore considered for application. In central Belfast, both CAB and BURC met the threshold of 120, meeting the quality requirement. In West Belfast, five of the seven providers met or exceeded the proposed threshold for quality of 100, whilst two, Greater Turf Lodge Residents Association and EPIC both fell short of this target and were rejected. If however, these groups had applied in West Belfast within a consortium bid, all of the providers would collectively have achieved the consortium score.⁵

During our consultation consortium members were asked to give their view on the application form and the majority of the participants stated that the application form was relatively straightforward to complete, whilst they also believed an appropriate amount of information was requested and appropriate questions were asked. This view was upheld when consortium members were asked to compare the BCC application with that associated with other funding / grant providers. The majority indicated that the BCC application process was not as onerous or time intensive as other funding bodies. One organisation did however feel that the application was very two-dimensional in that it seemed to be very 'number orientated' and didn't consider the fact that many of the organisations measure enquiries and service levels in different ways.

In our opinion the application form for the advice funding is relatively straightforward when compared with other funding / grant schemes. The assessment process criteria provide a reasonable cross-section of requirements relating to delivery of advice services. Going forward there is an opportunity to tighten these criteria to align with the Opening Doors strategy and the future direction of advice services, specifically, information on the skills and expertise from consortia (money / debt counselling, tribunal / advocacy work etc) and a more formal approach to analysing local population-deprivation statistics and how services will be targeted to specific areas of need. Further analysis on the application and assessment process can be found in sections 7 and 8.

Prior to delivery organisations receiving funding, advice providers were asked to agree the funding split within each area. Initially, North, South and East because they had agreed a consortia application were asked to agree the split, with the Council facilitating agreement in West and Central. Following the agreed split, a letter of offer was then sent to each applicant outlining what had been agreed. BCC then issued contracts to each organisation with each delivery organisation expected to sign and return. BCC keeps a hardcopy of this agreement as well as other project details within their internal filing system. The funding contract outlines the main contractual agreement between the Council and the advice delivery organisations and includes details on timescales, details of performance indicators required and situations in which funding will be withdrawn by the Council. As is the nature of the consortia, the contracts are different across the city, for instance in West Belfast each individual organisation receives a contract, whereas in North and South the consortia receive contracts. Additionally, two types of contracts are issued, one relating to the standard / core funding provided by BCC and the other relating to the supplementary funding made up of DSD and BCC monies. Full details on the funding arrangements can be found later in section 4.6.

⁵ The two groups who did not meet the quality targets required in the BCC application form remain part of the developing consortium in the West.

4.4 Monitoring

In order to receive funding, delivery organisations must submit a Progress Monitoring Return on a quarterly basis to BCC with the final quarter update to be provided in early April. All projects are provided in advance of their quarterly submission with a progress reporting template which must be submitted by post to BCC and is then retained by the Council in hardcopy in their files.

Projects are required to report on the following areas:

- Description of the group's activities for the year;
- Summary of the group's financial position;
- Details of any constitutional changes;
- How the organisation is contributing to the Council's Corporate Strategic Objectives;
- Details of yearly profile and usage of advice services;
- Geographical focus of the organisation;
- Numbers of volunteers;
- Other Resources Levered; and
- Any other relevant details.

Consortium members were asked to comment on the monitoring information required during our consultations. Respondents stated that the monitoring forms were clear, straightforward and provided a user friendly process. In addition, monitoring information was deemed to be less burdensome and onerous than other funding / grant providers.

Despite this view on ease of completion, BCC noted the difficulty in getting full monitoring information from consortium / coalitions / organisations on a timely basis. For instance, a delay in receiving monitoring information from the North Belfast Advice Partnership resulted in almost six months of delay in commencing planned activity in the area as funding could not be released.

We consider that the requirement for monitoring returns on a quarterly basis is appropriate and the information requested by Council is adequate and provides a reasonable cross-section of detail in relation to consortia / organisation activities throughout the year, however, there is no requirement for delivery organisations to seek service user feedback. Although, some organisations do this as best practice, others do not, the requirement for feedback would sit well within the current and future modernisation of advice services and could help provide better services for advice beneficiaries in the future.

BCC themselves must provide DSD with a return on an annual basis. This annual return must be provided to DSD by mid-April 2007 and predominantly includes details of all enquiries received by consortia / organisations over the course of the year, broken down by the type of enquiry and details of any benefit entitlement 'clawed back' by the client.

4.5 Targeting Need

BCC attempts to target need through a number of processes and procedures. Initially, the agreement to allocate funding based on factors of population and deprivation, strongly indicates that targeting need is a priority. Further details on the specific allocation process can be found in section 4.6. Furthermore, local knowledge

can be very well developed across the city, (gained from experience working in deprived communities and wider areas). The application process requires delivery organisations to identify gaps in service provision and determine how they are going to address these gaps. In addition, the application form requires clear guidance from applicants on how proposed services target local needs. As noted in section 4.3 there is scope in application processes for applicant organisations to analyse population-deprivation statistics within consortium areas and think more strategically as to how services will be targeted to specific areas of need identified.

The method of service delivery is also critical, with the majority of organisations providing outreach services in various areas including peripheral areas and pockets of need, through community centres, leisure centres, tenants associations and health facilities. A number of the central advice providing offices, such as East Belfast Independent Advice Centre on Castlereagh Street and Ballynafeigh Community Development Association in South Belfast are provided on arterial routes, whilst others like East Belfast CAB are provided in close proximity to health services. The two organisations in Central Belfast, Central CAB and BURC are also very accessible to a number of people in the city due to their close proximity to bus and rail networks.

4.6 Funding

As discussed in previous sections, the allocation of funding across the city was made on the basis of an analysis of deprivation and population across North, South, East and West Belfast. The exception to this is the allocation to the Central Area where an arbitrary 10 per cent funding has traditionally been allocated. The central allocation of funding has been done on the assumption that a proportion of BCC residents would choose to seek advice in the City Centre where they either work or can achieve greater anonymity. The remaining balance is divided on the basis of an analysis of population and deprivation as follows:

- The wards in each quarter of the city were categorized according to their extent of deprivation based on deprivation statistics provided in the latest Noble multiple deprivation measures;
- The population in each of the wards was then calculated and from this a deprivation weighted population was calculated for the ward and the quarter of the city as a whole; and
- Funding was then allocated on a pro-rata basis based on the deprivation weighted population.

The percentage allocation of funding for 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 across the city is detailed in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2
Allocation of advice services across the city 2005-2006 and 2006-2007

Area	Percentage Allocation of Funding (%)
North Belfast	27.33
South Belfast	13.51
East Belfast	16.82
West Belfast	32.34

City Centre	10
Total	100

Source: Belfast City Council

According to the deprivation measures West Belfast and North Belfast should receive the highest percentage of funding allocation, indicating that these two areas of the city were in highest need.

In 2005-2006 applications were invited for funding anticipating a total 'standard' fund of £311,000. In early 2006 DSD announced that an additional £500,000 for local advice services across Northern Ireland was to be allocated, of which £152,725 was offered for distribution by BCC. BCC agreed to match this amount from the rates with effect from April 2006.

As discussed in previous sections, advice providers in North, South and East Belfast were asked to agree the funding split within each area, whilst for West Belfast and City Centre the Council allocated the funding across the area as consortia / coalitions could not be agreed. The allocation of funding received by each consortium for the 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 financial years are detailed in Tables 4.3 to 4.5. The additional funding allocation is comprised of a supplementary fund provided by DSD and matched through rate monies by BCC in 2006 and 2007. This additional money is allocated across the city in the same percentages as illustrated in table 4.2.

Table 4.3
Allocation of Funding 2005-2006

Area	2005-2006		
	Funding agreed	Additional Funding	Total Funding
North	£97,044	£38,101	£138,215
South	£46,206	£20,626	£68,323
East	£59,046	£24,114	£85,063
West	£108,384	£51,517	£163,551
City Centre	£42,430	£18,257	£50,573
Total	£353,110	£152,615	£505,725

Source: Belfast City Council

In 2005-2006 standard funding was agreed of £311,000 across the city. Following an appeal by providers in North Belfast an additional £42,000 was approved by Council leaving a standard funding total of £353,110. This was supplemented by an additional £152,615 of monies provided by DSD in March 2006. In line with the percentages illustrated in table 4.2 North and West Belfast receive the highest proportion of funding across the city, which indicates that funding allocation does equate to deprivation-weighted population, in that most funding is provided to areas with the highest need.

Table 4.4
Allocation of Funding 2006-2007

Area	2006-2007		
	Funding agreed	Additional Funding	Total Funding
North	£84,996.30	£83,479.49	£168,476
South	£42,016.10	£41,266.30	£83,282
East	£52,310.20	£51,376.69	£103,687
West	£100,577.40	£98,782.53	£199,360
City Centre	£31,100.00	£30,545.00	£61,645
Total	£311,000	£305,450	£616,450

Source: Belfast City Council

Prior to 2006 it had been traditional for the advice services budget to be increased each year by 3 per cent to allow for inflation. However, as the additional amounts provided through DSD supplementary funding and matched funding from BCC equated to a sum much larger than 3 per cent it was agreed that the base figure for 2005 (i.e. £311,000) be applied in 2006. In addition, DSD supplementary funding of £152,725 was matched by BCC providing an additional £305,450 amount across the city. Again, in line with the percentages in table 4.2 West and North Belfast receive the highest proportion of funding across the city.

Table 4.5
Allocation of Funding 2007-2008

Area	2007-2008		
	Funding agreed	Additional Funding	Total Funding
North	£87,546.19	£126,387.48	£213,933.67
South	£112,435.83	£162,319.81	£274,755.64
East	£53,879.51	£77,784.02	£131,663.53
West	£103,594.72	£149,556.20	£253,150.93
City Centre	£32,033.0	£46,245.0	£78,277.96
Total	£320,330	£462,449.61	£782,779.61

Source: Belfast City Council

In 2007-2008 the three per cent increase was applied to standard funding resulting in a standard grant for that year of £320,330. In addition, DSD increased the additional funding they provide to £309,725 and BCC provided a further £152,725. Overall, West Belfast receives the most funding split between seven delivery organisations. [Note: although there are seven providers in West Belfast only five are funded by BCC – due to two organisations failing to meet required BCC standards] North

Belfast receives the second highest also split between seven delivery organisations, East Belfast receives the next highest allocation split between two organisations, and South Belfast receives the next highest split between the South Belfast Independent Advice Working Group (SBIAWG) and South Belfast CAB. The remaining allocation is split between Central Belfast CAB and BURC in the city centre. Table 4.6 provides a comparison across the three years.

Table 4.6
Allocation of Funding 2007-2008

Year	Amount	Increase from Previous Year	
		£	%
2005-2006	£505,725		
2006-2007	£616,450	£110,615	21
2007-2008	£782,779	£166,319	27

Source: Belfast City Council

As can be seen from table 4.6 there has been significant increase in the amount of funding allocated across the city since 2005 with over 20 per cent increases each year. Although, the funding has increased significantly BCC have not asked for anything additional from advice providers over the course of the three years through monitoring / enquiry information. This is discussed in more detail later in the report.

BCC acknowledged that since the initial funding arrangements there have been a number of expressions of interest from other advice providers in the city. For instance, a church in South Belfast wanted to provide advice for Migrant workers in that area. As with other interested parties BCC advised the provider to speak to the lead consortium partner in the area (in this case SBIAWG). This signifies that although the door is not closed for potential advice providers they need to demonstrate to the consortia for the area what additional value their advice would provide for the area.

Other Key Funding Support

Although BCC / DSD remain the core funders of advice and information services in the City many of the delivery organisations have sought funding from elsewhere, in some instances this is for specialist advice delivery, e.g. Belfast CAB have received funding from the Macmillan Cancer Trust towards providing a CAB service to cancer patients and their families at City Hospital. Whilst, in other cases funding has been directly levered based on the BCC allocation, for instance EBIAC has indicated that funding from the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI), Local Community Fund (LCF), Peace II, Investing for Health, South and East Belfast Trust, Lloyds TSB and the Rowan Charitable Trust have all been levered as result of BCC funding. Additional funding sources differ across the city with some delivery organisations receiving from a number of different funders whereas others like the BURC only receive funding from BCC. In the main however the following organisations provide additional funding as identified through the delivery organisations annual monitoring returns.

- DSD - Belfast Regeneration Office [NOTE: BRO are a separate funding stream from the other DSD support, which comes via the Voluntary and Community Unit);
- The Big Lottery Fund;

- Community Relations Council – Counselling Services for victims, their families and carers;
- Lloyds TSB;
- Investing for Health;
- Health Boards and Trusts; and
- The Local Community Fund.

4.7 File Review

As part of the overall review Deloitte carried out a file review of advice services project files at BCC premises. The files consist of a number of colour coded files organised by initial enquiries, quarterly and annual advice returns by each consortia (which is included in a file for each of the areas across Belfast) and a specific file relating to the 2007-2008 funding year which includes contracts for the current year of advice provision.

The consortium files reviewed contained manual copies of the following:

- application forms received from individual organisations;
- funding agreements for 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 for each of the consortia / organisations;
- monitoring returns provided by each consortia / organisation; and
- correspondence to and from BCC.

The files reviewed by Deloitte were largely comprehensive and laid out in a logical manner. Files, however, seem to be missing letters of offer for each of the delivery organisations / consortia. There were no file notes created to log calls with the project or print outs of emails sent or received, given the limited volume of calls and emails this may not be necessary but it may be important if significant issues / problems were to develop in the future. One further issue was if there were correspondence letters they were not held in a separate section of the file. As a result of this a person who is unfamiliar with the project would not be able to determine immediately if there were any letters which dealt with specific issues or other significant matters.

Apart from the issues noted we believe the files are adequate and include a necessary amount of information.

4.8 Summary

This section has provided an overview of the Council's current advice and information service in terms of how it is operated and its main activities. In summary it shows that:

- The current model of advice and information is based on consortia of providers, based on geographical areas (North, South, East, West and Central Belfast);
- BCC focused funding on generalist providers i.e. those providers who offer general advice services to the community at large rather than on specific topics or to a designated section of the community;
- A number of essential criteria was required by applicants in order to be considered for funding;
- Consortia applicants varied across the city with some being assessed as consortia (i.e. South, North and East) whereas others were assessed as individuals (i.e. groups in West and Central);

- Funding was allocated on pro-rata basis based on a deprivation-weighted population. This equated to 32 per cent in West Belfast, 27 per cent in North Belfast, 16 per cent in East Belfast, 13 per cent in South Belfast and 10 per cent in the city centre. This indicated that North and West Belfast were in the highest need;
- There has been significant increases in the total amount of BCC and DSD funding provided to advice organisations across the city since 2005, with over 20 per cent increases each year, £505,725 in 2005, £616,450 in 2006 and £782,779 in 2007;
- Consortia must provide monitoring information to BCC on a quarterly basis, the council then provides details to DSD at the end of the financial year;
- BCC targets need through a number of means including, its method of allocating funding across the city, the application process and the delivery of advice through local providers;
- The allocation of funding across the city is based on a weighted deprivation-population measure which was updated in 2005 with the latest super output area deprivation and population figures; and
- Although providers receive funding from other organisations / bodies BCC and DSD remain the core funders of advice and information services in the city.

5 Outputs, Outcomes, Quality and Partnership Working

5.1 Introduction

This section of the report provides details of management and administration processes that the Council has in place during each stage of the application and funding process. The information contained in this section has been informed based on desk research and information provided by those consulted, including the advice providers in each area, senior officials from Advice NI and CAB and BCC representatives. Full details of all those consulted can be found in Appendix II.

5.2 Overview of Current Structure

As is discussed in earlier sections the current model of advice and information provision in the BCC area is based on consortia of providers, based in geographical areas (North, South, East, West and Central Belfast). Table 5.1 provides details of the five consortia including a breakdown of the delivery organisations involved within each consortium.

Table 5.1
Current Delivery Organisations

Area and Name of Current Delivery Organisations	
<p><u>North Belfast Consortium</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lower North Belfast Community Council (LNBCC) ▪ Ligoniel Improvement Association (LIA) ▪ Ballysillan Community Forum (BCF) ▪ Tar Isteach ▪ Vine Centre ▪ Ardoyne Association ▪ Antrim Road CAB 	<p><u>West Belfast</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corpus Christi Services ▪ Springfield Charitable Association Ltd ▪ Falls Community Council ▪ Greater Turf Lodge Residents Association ▪ Neighbourhood Development Association (NDA) ▪ EPIC ▪ Shankill CAB
<p><u>East Belfast Consortium</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ East Belfast Independent Advice Centre (EBIAC) ▪ East Belfast CAB 	<p><u>South Belfast Coalition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ South Belfast Independent Advice Services Working Group (SBIAWG)⁶ ▪ Suffolk and Andersonstown CAB ▪ South Belfast CAB
<p><u>Central Belfast</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Central CAB ▪ Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre (BURC) 	

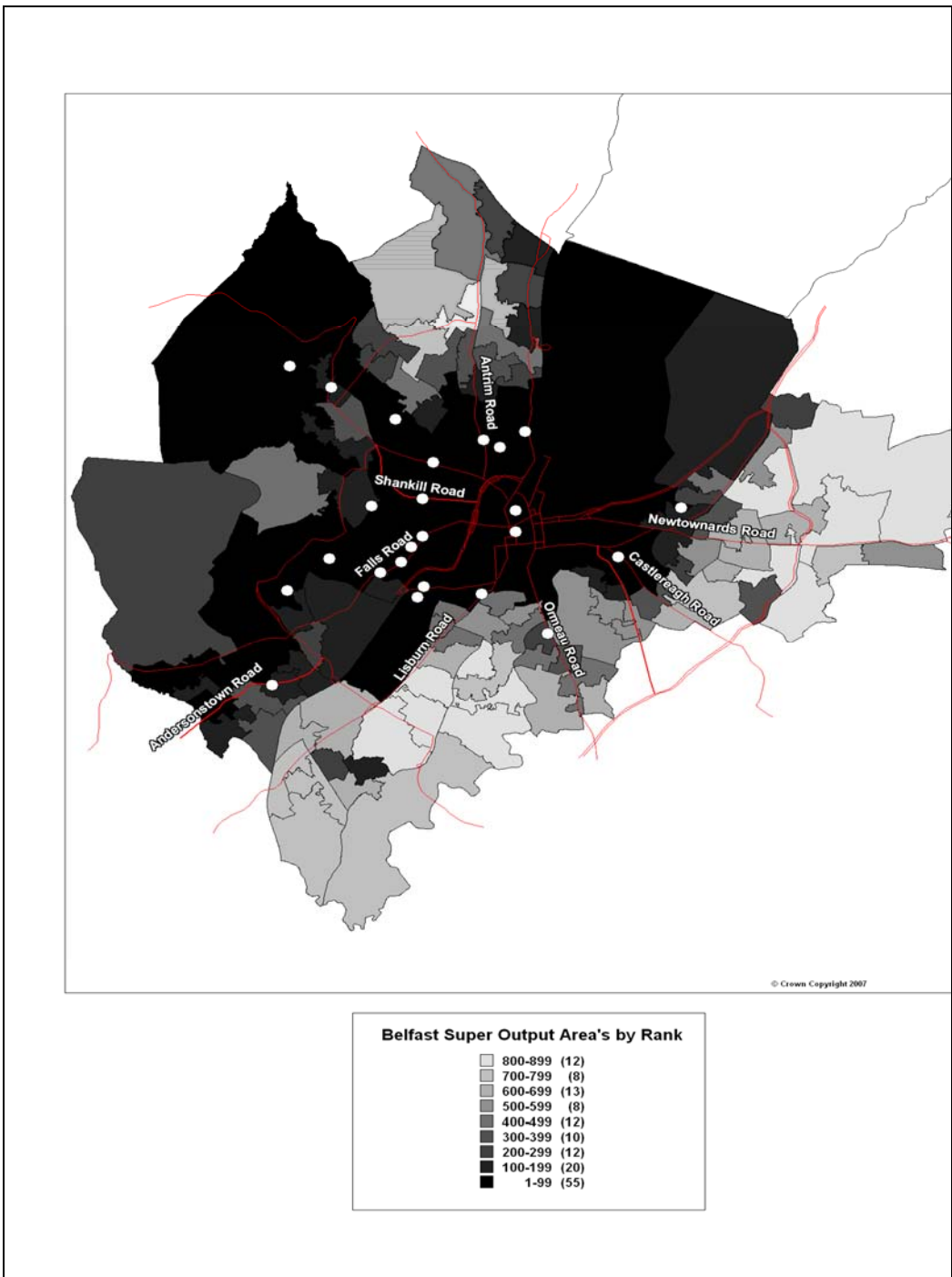
Source: Belfast City Council

Figure 5.2 illustrates the current situation. In particular it highlights relative deprivation levels across the city (based on 2005 Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure). The super output areas⁷ with the darkest shading are most deprived relative to other super output areas. The map also illustrates key routes and locations of current generalist advice providers in the city (represented by the white dots on the map). These are the locations of advice providers currently contracted by Belfast City Council to provide generalist advice services. As can be seen on the map they are well aligned to areas of deprivation and to main arterial routes.

⁶ Includes Ballynafeigh Community Development Association, Windsor Women's Centre and South City Resource

⁷ Super Output Area – A unit of geography used for small area statistical analysis.

Figure 5.2
Deprivation and Current Generalist Advice Provision in Belfast



Advice provision within Belfast varies between delivery organisations but generally all areas provide a range of basic information, advice advocacy or representation on a wide range of issues including welfare benefits, housing, consumer, health, education, tribunals and money / debt. Further detail on the specific provision throughout the City by each consortium is indicated in the sections that follow.

5.3 Scope of Data

Due to the nature of the consortia approach across the city, the data provided varies in quality and detail. In some cases, the monitoring information is provided by the consortium (i.e. North and East Belfast) whereas in other areas the details are provided by individual organisations making comparison by consortia across the city difficult to compile. In addition, a number of other factors must be taken into consideration when considering the information in the following sections, including:

- In many cases clients who receive advice do not return to the Advice provider to give feedback on benefit 'claw back', therefore the figures provided may be grossly underestimated;
- The information provided by some Advice providers does not include telephone enquiries which are recorded separately; and
- Providers do not all record information on the same basis. Whilst, enquiries are generally likely to be comparable across organisations, some may treat a minor enquiry as part of a larger enquiry and therefore not include it, whilst others may record this as a separate enquiry.

In conclusion, although the information in the following section is broadly comparable across providers it is only being used for indicative purposes to highlight trends / patterns across the city. Therefore, in light of these factors it is recommended that the analysis is considered as a reasonable guide but not a wholly accurate picture.

5.4 Outputs

North Belfast

The Parliamentary Constituency of Belfast North encompasses a population of c. 81,736 people according to the NISRA Demography Branch mid year estimates 2005. It is made up of 19 local government wards; 14 of which are within the Belfast City Council area (Ardoyne, Ballysillan, Bellevue, Castleview, Cavehill, Chichester Park, Cliftonville, Crumlin, Duncairn, Fortwilliam, Ligoniel, New Lodge, Water Works and Woodvale).

The North Belfast Advice Partnership (NBAP) has seven main partners as detailed in Table 5.1 and operates throughout the North Belfast area but are concentrated in inner North Belfast in areas of high social and economic deprivation that lack social and community cohesion.

Funding Allocation in North Belfast 2006-2007

In 2006-2007 North Belfast received the second highest allocation of funding across Belfast. As indicated earlier the allocation of funding was according to a population-weighted measure indicating that North Belfast was in considerable need of advice provision. Table 5.2 provides details of the funding split across the area by delivery organisation.

Table 5.2
North Belfast Advice Partnership Funding 2006-2007

Organisation	Percentage of area enquiries	Amount of Total Funding
Antrim Road CAB	44.0	£74,129
Tar Isteach	13.0	£21,902
LNbcc	11.2	£18,869
Ardoyne Association	10.5	£17,690
Vine Centre	8.2	£13,815
LIA	7.1	£11,962
Ballysillan Community Centre	6.0	£10,109
Totals	100	£168,476

Source: Belfast City Council

The allocation of funding in North Belfast per organisation is determined by the number of enquiries that each organisation receives. As such, Antrim Road CAB who received 44 per cent of the enquiries in 2006-2007 also received the highest allocation of funding in the area.

Table 5.3 provides details of the number and type of enquiries received by the NBAP in the 2006-2007 funding period as contained in the final quarterly monitoring return provided to BCC.

Table 5.3
North Belfast Advice Partnership Service Returns 2006-2007

Type of enquiry	Number of Enquiries	% of total enquiries
Benefit	29,370	75.5
Consumer	2,914	7.5
Housing	2,558	6.5
Employment	1,479	3.8
Health	1,443	3.7
Money / Debt	980	2.5
Other ⁸	-	-
Appeals / Tribunals	168	0.5
Total number of clients	18,743	48.2
Total number of enquiries	38,912	100
Total Benefit 'claw back'	£1,988,081	

Source: Belfast City Council

The majority of advice delivered in this period is benefit related with 75.5 per cent in this category. From the information supplied in the monitoring returns the North Belfast Advice Partnership has provided £1,998,081 in client financial gain within the period 2006 – 2007. Taking into consideration total BCC funding in 2006-2007 of £168,475, for every pound that BCC puts into North Belfast, the client financial gain is £11.80. The total number of enquiries at 38,912 is 31.7 per cent of all enquiries in Belfast, the highest amount from a consortium area.

Description of the consortium's activities for the year

After a number of meetings and consultation between the members of the consortium it was decided that funding should be used in following way:

- 1 F/T advice worker post at the Vine Centre and 1 F/T advice worker post at Lower North Belfast Community Council allowing these organisations to continue to deliver generalist advice services and expand outreach services;
- Recruitment of P/T advice assistants in Ballysillan Community Forum, The Vine Centre and Ardoyne Association to enhance existing services in these communities;
- Portable loop hearing systems were purchased for all partners to enable more effective communication with clients who are hearing impaired;
- A subscription was taken out with language line which allows access to a telephone translation service for clients whose first language is not English;
- A promotional DVD was made to increase awareness of the partnership and raise profile;
- The addition of a counselling service allowing all staff to refer clients who were in need of this service to a trained counsellor; and

⁸ Other enquiries include relationship / personal, taxes, utilities, education, leisure, human rights and justice.

- Staff training courses, which entailed refresher courses for all staff resulting in advice provision which is of high quality and relevant to clients.

In summary, the Partnership shows some good progression in terms of the consortium approach as highlighted by their ability as a group to allocate funding and work together to allocate resources across the area. The dominance of benefit enquiries was no surprise in discussion with the Partnership members who noted the extent of benefit related issues across North Belfast, and in particular in inner North Belfast where poor health, high unemployment and some ageing communities are common characteristics. In addition, the significant amount of benefit gain for clients is a positive indicator for BCC in terms of the allocation of their funding. The Partnership highlighted that money and debt issues, despite their relatively low proportion of total enquiries were increasing. Housing enquiries were often related to affordability concerns, whilst health often related to mental health and ageing issues. A key point that was observed is that advice issues are often multi-faceted and intertwined.

South Belfast

The Parliamentary Constituency of Belfast South encompasses a population of c. 92,818 people according to the NISRA Demography Branch mid year estimates 2005. It is made up of 12 local government wards; including Ballynafeigh, Botanic, Blackstaff, Finaghy, Malone, Musgrave, Ravenhill, Rosetta, Shaftesbury, Stranmillis, Upper Malone and Windsor

The South Belfast Advice Coalition has three main partners as detailed in Table 5.1 and operates throughout the South Belfast area, the opening of the South Belfast CAB at the Bradbury Centre in March 2007 has significantly increased the provision of advice in the area, however, as they have only recently opened they are not included in the statistics in this section. Advice provision by Suffolk / Andersonstown CAB covers some parts of South and West Belfast and therefore representatives sit on consortia for both areas. BCC funding for Suffolk / Andersonstown CAB is provided through the allocation for South and for that reason enquiry figures are provided in this section.

South Belfast receives the least allocation of funding across the four quarters of the city at £83,282 with only city centre providers receiving less. The split in the area between South Belfast CAB providers and SBIAWG is determined by the number of enquiries each of the organisations received as indicated on their application forms in 2006. SBIAWG then meet independently and through negotiation and discussion split the funding allocation between member organisations.

Table 5.4 provides details of the number and type of enquiries received in the South Belfast area in the 2006-2007 funding period as contained in the final quarterly monitoring return provided to BCC. For indicative purposes the figures for SBIAWG and Suffolk / Andersonstown have been added together to give a South Belfast wide perspective. As the Bradbury Centre CAB only opened in March 2007, their figures were included in this analysis.

Table 5.4
South Belfast Advice Coalition Returns 2006-2007

Type of enquiry	Number of Enquiries	% of total enquiries
Benefit	3,957	58.4
Money / Debt	1,031	15.2
Employment	212	7.3
Housing	493	4.4
Health	93	3.1
Consumer	299	1.4
Appeals / Tribunals	58	0.9
Other	688	10.2
Total number of clients	3,572	52.8
Total number of enquiries	6,772	100.00
Total Benefit 'claw back'	£950,203	

Source: Belfast City Council

Benefit related advice represents the majority share of advice provision in South Belfast with over 58 per cent of all enquiries in this area. The number of money / debt related enquiries are also significant at 15.2 per cent of all enquiries in the area.

In addition, from the information supplied in the monitoring returns the South Belfast area has provided £950,203 in client financial gain within the period 2006 – 2007. Taking into consideration the total BCC funding in 2006-2007 for South Belfast of £83,282, for every pound that BCC puts into South Belfast, the client financial gain is £11.42.

The scale of benefit enquiries was no surprise as representatives from South Belfast noted the dominance of benefit related advice across the area. In addition, recent years has seen a marked increase in the demand for debt / money advice - those consulted indicated that there has been a significant increase in the level of debt that people are seeking advice on, resulting in more challenging and time intensive cases for advice workers in the area. Advice provision for the elderly population, which tends to be more resource intensive due to the requirement for home visits, is also quite significant in the area.

Representatives also acknowledged that gaps have been identified in a number of areas of South Belfast that each of the members are trying to fill in accordance with the application sent to the Council in 2006. More specifically, these gaps relate to advice provision for ethnic minorities and migrants, this issue is seen as a priority given the increase in residency within the area of the Chinese population, Eastern Europeans and other minority and ethnic groups. The additional demand for advice brings its own challenges – specifically in terms of tribunal, advocacy and representation services which tend to increase the pressure on existing resources as the cases tend to take much longer to resolve. Since April 2005 there has been no dedicated advocacy and representation service and there is a need for specialism in employment representation and Social Services Advice.

Methods of service delivery within the area include home-visits, appointments, drop-in facilities and outreach services (Suffolk / Andersonstown CAB provide outreach services in Finaghy, whilst SBIAWG provides outreach in the Markets, Mornington, Donegal Pass, Toughmonagh and Suffolk). Telephone and a limited email advice service are also provided by some of the delivery organisations. These services do vary quite significantly between the delivery organisations. Although the coalition has access to language line they did acknowledge that this service was very expensive and increased volunteers from ethnic minority communities may go some way to enabling greater advice access for ethnic minority groups.

East Belfast

The East Belfast Advice Partnership is comprised of the East Belfast CAB based at Holywood Arches Health and Well Being Centre and the East Belfast Independent Advice Centre which is based in Castlereagh Street. East Belfast is defined within an area that runs from the River Lagan going east as far as Dundonald and Ballybeen and from Belfast Lough south to Braniel estate with a population of approximately 81,000.

The area contains some of the most affluent areas in Greater Belfast and yet within the inner East area there are four of the most deprived wards (Ballymacarrett, The Mount, Island and Woodstock) in Belfast and indeed Northern Ireland. This combination of best and worst has resulted in pockets of deprivation that are masked. According to various statistics these four inner East wards display high levels of need including:

- High levels of ill health;
- Higher than average levels of children with disabilities;
- High numbers of lone parents; and
- High benefit dependency and lack of awareness of benefit entitlement.

The combination of these characteristics indicates a strong need for advice services in the East Belfast area. In addition an increase in the ethnic minority population has resulted in an increasing focus on migrant working rights. As translation costs are considered to be too expensive the partnership are reliant on community groups and friends / family of the clients to help with language barrier issues. This situation is far from ideal within the area.

Each of the delivery organisations provide a number of methods through which contact by clients can be made. EBIAAC offer a drop-in, telephone and email advice service from their offices in Castlereagh Street, an arterial route ensuring accessibility for residents of inner and outer East Belfast. Outreach services are provided to the residents of Lower Ravenhill, Woodstock, Short Strand and Tullycarnet. A home visit service is also available to those unable to access the service due to a physical or mental health problem, or as a result of caring responsibilities.

The East Belfast CAB operates from one central venue at the Holywood Arches with multiple outreach venues across the area including Castlereagh, Knockbracken, Island and the HIV support centre. Whilst the traditional methods of advice delivery remain – face to face and telephone – the bureau has also developed e-mail advice. Home visiting has also developed and this ensures that the bureau is able to reach out to clients who are not able to access the services locally due to ill health or disability.

East Belfast receives a total of £103,687 between the two advice providers in the area. Although the number of enquiries between organisations would indicate that CAB should receive twice as much funding an agreement was made between the two organisations to receive funding in a 50:50 split. Table 5.5 provides details of the types and number of enquiries provided within the East Belfast area as indicated on the 2006 – 2007 monitoring returns for each of the delivery organisations in the area.

For indicative purposes the figures for both organisations have been added together to provide an East Belfast wide perspective.

Table 5.5
East Belfast Service Returns 2006-2007

Type of enquiry	Number of Enquiries	% of total enquiries
Benefit	18,814	66.3
Consumer	2,246	7.9
Health	1,650	5.8
Housing	1,132	4.0
Employment	922	3.3
Money / Debt	740	2.6
Appeals / Tribunals	237	0.8
Other	2,821	9.9
Total number of clients	14,883	52.4
Total number of enquiries	28,830	100
Total Benefit 'claw back'	£3,521,811	

Source: Belfast City Council

Two-thirds of enquiries in the East Belfast area relate to benefits. From the information supplied in the monitoring returns the East Belfast area has provided £3,521,811 in client financial gain within the period 2006 – 2007. Taking into consideration the total BCC funding in the period of £103,687, for every pound that BCC puts into the East Belfast Advice Services, the client financial gain is £33.97. This is the highest rate of return across all the consortium areas.

West Belfast

The Parliamentary Constituency of Belfast West encompasses a population of c. 85,028 people according to the NISRA Demography Branch mid year estimates 2005. It is made up of 16 local government wards, 13 of which are in Belfast City Council's remit including Andersonstown, Beechmount, Clonard, Falls, Falls Park, Glencairn, Glencolin, Glen Road, Highfield, Ladybrook, Poleglass, Shankill, Upper Springfield and Whiterock.

West Belfast has seven main partners as detailed in Table 5.1 and operates throughout the West Belfast area but more specifically in areas of high social and economic deprivation that lack social and community cohesion. As discussed earlier only five out of the seven partners receive BCC funding as they did not match the Council's applicant assessment standards.

Funding Allocation in West Belfast 2006-2007

In 2006-2007 West Belfast received the highest allocation of funding across Belfast. As indicated earlier the allocation of funding was according to a population-weighted measure indicating that West Belfast was in considerable need of advice provision.

Table 5.6 provides details of the funding split across the area by delivery organisation.

Table 5.6
West Belfast Advice Partnership Funding 2006-2007

Organisation	Percentage of area enquiries	Amount of Total Funding
NDA	31.2	£62,200
Springfield CA	35	£69,776
Falls Community Council	5.2	£10,367
Corpus Christie Services	4.8	£9,569
West Belfast and Shankill CAB	21	£41,865
Totals	100	£199,360

Source: Belfast City Council

The allocation of funding in West Belfast per organisation is determined by the number of enquiries that each organisation received according to the application submitted to council in 2006. As such, Springfield CA who received 35 per cent of the enquiries also received the highest allocation of funding in the area.

Table 5.7 provides details of the types and number of enquiries provided within the West Belfast area as indicated on the 2006 – 2007 monitoring returns for each of the delivery organisations in the area. For indicative purposes the details for each organisation have been added together to give a West Belfast wide perspective.

Table 5.7
Combined West Belfast Service Returns 2006-2007

Type of enquiry	Number of Enquiry	% of total enquiries
Benefits	18,737	59.7
Housing	3,705	11.8
Employment	2,672	8.5
Consumer	1,581	5.0
Health	1,389	4.4
Debt / Money	1,100	3.5
Appeals / Tribunals	400	1.3
Other	1,650	5.3
Total Clients	16,717	53.2
Total Enquiries	31,404	100.00
Total Benefit 'claw back'	3,445,968	

Source: Belfast City Council

* An additional 1,100 enquiries were received by telephone through Greater Turf Lodge Residents Association which were not broken down by type of enquiry

In West Belfast, the majority of enquiries in the area relate to benefits equating to 59.7 per cent of the total enquiries. Significantly, the number of housing related enquiries is also substantial indicating the degree of housing need in the area.

From the information supplied in the monitoring returns the West Belfast area has provided £3,445,968 in client financial gain within the period 2006 – 2007. Taking into consideration the total BCC funding in the period of £199,360, for every pound that BCC puts into the West Belfast Advice Services, the client financial gain is £17.29.

The providers in West Belfast highlighted changing characteristics in advice provision. They noted that the average time spent with each enquiry was rising. They perceived this change to be driven by increasingly complex legislation, especially regarding benefits alongside other factors such as literacy and language problems particularly with ethnic minorities, the increase of migrant workers and the location of Traveller community members within West Belfast.

Central Belfast

Central provision of advice services is split between Central Belfast CAB and the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre.

Historically the need for a neutral venue for advice provision has meant that city-centre providers tend to receive enquiries from all over the city. The close proximity to bus, train and rail networks as well as the city centre location means that it is ideally suited for people seeking advice throughout the BCC area. In 2006-2007 Central Belfast received 20,494 enquiries and had contact with 9,723 people. There are eight volunteers working within the central Belfast CAB service equating to approximately 3,200 hours of advice provision per year.

The key areas of need in Central Belfast are reflected in the types of enquiries received. Historically these tend to be focussed around the following areas:

1. Consumer Advice;
2. Benefits;
3. Housing; and
4. Employment Issues.

In recent times the increase in ethnic minorities moving into the city has resulted in an increase in immigration advice enquiries. This has resulted in language difficulties and has pressurised resources as enquiries of this nature can be time consuming. The central Belfast CAB offices also get a number of referrals from the Chinese Welfare Association. In terms of service delivery in the area advice provision is offered through drop-in, telephone, email, appointment and outreach facilities.

Table 5.8 provides details of the combined Central Belfast advice provision, completed using figures supplied by CAB and BURC on their annual monitoring forms to BCC in 2006 - 2007. For indicative purposes details on both organisations have been added together to give a Central Belfast perspective.

Table 5.8
Combined Central Belfast Service Returns 2006-2007

Type of enquiry	Number of Enquiries	% of total enquiries
Money / Debt	10,926	53.31
Benefit	4,472	21.82
Employment	1,580	7.71
Consumer	1,231	6.01
Housing	929	4.53
Health	866	4.23
Appeals / Tribunals	984	4.8
Other	2,670	13.03
Total number of clients	9,723	47.44
Total number of enquiries	20,494	100
Total Benefit 'claw back'	£131,297	

Source: Belfast City Council

The pattern of enquiries is quite different from other areas. Money / Debt issues are the main type of enquiry received in Central Belfast at 53.3 per cent. This may reflect the additional anonymity a central advice provider could be perceived to offer to such clients. Only one in five enquiries (21.8 per cent) are benefit related a much smaller proportion than the other areas.

In addition, from the information supplied in the monitoring returns the Central Belfast CAB has provided £131,297 in client financial gain within the period 2006 – 2007. Taking into consideration the total BCC funding in 2006-2007 for Central Belfast of £45,741, for every pound that BCC puts into the Central Belfast, the client financial

gain is £2.87.⁹ The lower proportion is somewhat expected due to the lower proportion of benefit related enquiries.

City-wide Summary Analysis

In this section we present a 'snapshot' of advice delivery across the city in 2006-2007 using enquiry details provided by advice providers on monitoring returns in that funding period. Table 5.9 sets out details of the type of enquiry and the percentage of enquiries in each area as a proportion of the city totals. As is noted at the beginning of this section caution must be used in the interpretation of these figures, providers do not record information in the same way and therefore these figures are for indicative purposes only.

Table 5.9
Percentage City-Wide Statistics 2006-2007

Type of Enquiry	% enquiries across Belfast				
	North Belfast %	West Belfast %	South Belfast %	Central Belfast %	East Belfast %
Benefits	39	25	5	6	25
Consumer	35	19	4	15	27
Health	27	26	2	16	30
Employment	22	39	3	23	13
Housing	29	42	6	11	13
Debt / Money	7	7	7	74	5
Other	0	21	9	34	36
Appeals / Tribunals	9	22	3	53	13
Total Clients	29	26	6	15	23
Total Enquiries	31	25	5	16	23
Total Funding	27	32	14	10	17
Benefit Clawback	20	34	9	1	35

Source: Belfast City Council

Key points to note:

- In terms of benefit enquiries North Belfast receives the highest number of enquiries across the city with 39 per cent of all benefit enquiries in the City in that area. North Belfast also receives the highest enquiries in relation to consumer related enquiries;
- West Belfast receives the most housing related enquiries, with 42 per cent of all enquiries across the City received in this area (likely linked to housing demand issues in the area). West Belfast also receives the most employment related enquiries;
- In East Belfast the number of Health related enquiries is significantly higher at 30.3 per cent than across the City, although the location of the East Belfast CAB within the Arches health centre will significantly impact on the number of enquiries in this area;

⁹ These figures relate to funding and enquiries for Central Belfast CAB independently of BURC in the area and are for indicative purposes only. Currently, BURC has no means through which to monitor client benefit entitlement and therefore for comparative purposes across the city we have calculated leverage in the Central area using Central Belfast CAB figures independently.

- 74 per cent of all money / debt related advice is provided in Central Belfast, indicating that people may prefer to travel into a more neutral / anonymous area in order to receive money / debt advice;
- Central Belfast undertakes the most appeals / tribunal enquiries with more than half (54 per cent) of all Belfast enquiries in the central area – this is significant as appeals / tribunal work tends to be more resource intensive. Additionally, this may indicate that significant numbers of appeal / tribunal work is referred from other providers or that clients prefer the anonymous nature of city-centre provision.

Funding is allocated according to population and deprivation (with the exception of the central area). The number of enquiries compared to funding can be used as an approximate indicator for how appropriate this is. The points below highlight that the formula appears broadly validated on the basis of enquiry numbers, with South Belfast showing the greatest deviation from this.

- In **North Belfast** the number of enquiries dealt with is higher (at 31 per cent) than the actual funding allocation of 27 per cent;
- In **East Belfast** the number of enquiries dealt with is significantly higher (at 23 per cent) than the actual funding allocation of 17 per cent;
- In **West Belfast** the number of enquiries dealt with is lower (at 25 per cent) than the actual funding allocation of 32 per cent;
- In **Central Belfast** the number of enquiries dealt with is higher (at 16 per cent) than the actual funding allocation of 10 per cent; and
- In **South Belfast** the number of enquiries dealt with is significantly lower at 5 per cent than the allocation of funding of 14 per cent.

5.5 Service Recipient feedback

As part of the evaluation work stream consortia / delivery organisations were asked to provide recent client feedback in relations to services requested / provided. It is not an essential requirement for delivery organisations to obtain customer feedback and therefore some of the organisations do not have this data available. In this case, consortia were asked to provide details of a number of clients from each of the areas who were contacted by phone and asked to comment on the service they had received from the organisation and the quality of advice provision.

East Belfast CAB provided summary details of a recent client satisfaction survey, which had been carried out over a ten day period with personal callers calling into the bureau. EBIAC provided ten samples of two separate comment forms completed by clients after receiving advice provision in the centre, in addition EBIAC provided contact details for six clients who were contacted by telephone. SBIAWG, also provided details of ten clients who were contacted by telephone.

We recognise this is not a statistically significant result from which we can make definitive recommendations; however, it does provide us with an indication of client satisfaction.

Use of the Advice Services

A range of services had been accessed by the various service recipients, with advice sought ranging from general money advice to more specific benefit related enquiries and enquiries relating to employment law issues following work disputes. The majority of clients found out about the advice services offered through family and friends who had previously accessed the service, indicating previous clients had a positive experience with the services offered and were happy to signpost relatives / friends to use it. Other methods by which clients had found out about the services

included, through social workers, public services and local community groups indicating that the service is relatively well advertised locally among other agencies.

Level of satisfaction with respect to the relevance of the advice available

The overall feedback received from clients, both through surveys and telephone feedback, around the relevance of the support available was very positive with the majority stating that they were very satisfied with the relevance of the advice provided. None of the clients stated that they were dissatisfied.

In all cases clients stated that their knowledge prior to receiving the advice was very limited indicating that after the advice service they were now better informed. In addition the majority of clients indicated that they were better off as a result of the advice either directly through increased benefits or indirectly through a reduction in debt issues.

Positive client comments include:

"I found the advice and information very helpful and would not have known about the options available to me without this centre"

"The advice was straightforward and easy to understand, not like other places that confuse you with long words and nonsense"

"I would be very happy to call back for future advice and will certainly be recommending the services for others"

Benefits of Support

Clients were asked through the telephone calls to comment on their satisfaction with the benefits that have resulted from the advice support as well as the specific benefits received. All of the respondents indicated that they were very satisfied with benefits accrued, most of those consulted had received financial 'claw back' in terms of benefits that they were either unable to claim before or unaware of, whilst others were just happy to know that someone was available for them to speak to if required. Sample responses from clients include:

"I'm much better off knowing that someone is available to help me understand the benefit forms and what I am entitled to"

"Financially I am better off as my debts are now manageable and I can see light at the end of the tunnel"

Additional Comments

The majority of respondents indicated that if the local advice centre was not there they would be unaware of alternative local sources to seek this kind of advice. All clients also indicated that, if needed, they were very likely to seek support from the advice centres in the future, illustrating satisfaction with the services provided.

Finally, service recipients were asked to indicate if they felt there were any gaps in provision or if there was anything else that the organisations could have provided. Overall the comments received were very positive, however, some people suggested that additional childcare provision would be helpful, whilst one client indicated that a translation service would have been very useful.

Summary of Service Recipient Findings

To summarise, the results of the survey highlighted a number of important findings;

- overall in terms of promotion, previous service recipients play a key role in the promotion of the advice services;

- with regard to the relevance and quality of the advice services, clients indicated that they were generally very satisfied with provision;
- the benefits received as a result of support range across a number of financial and non-financial means; and
- without the service offered many of the clients would not have known where else to seek help.

5.6 Evaluating Impact

Although Belfast City Council themselves do not formally evaluate impact, individual delivery organisations are required to outline the additional benefit entitlement that clients have claimed back on their yearly monitoring returns, full details of this impact across the city can be found in section 5.4.

From our analysis of the monitoring information it is clear that considerable return is generated across the city in terms of ‘claw back’ claimed by clients following advice provision. Last year for instance the network of advice providers across the city secured around £9.5m benefit ‘claw back’ – often money that people didn’t even know they were eligible for. By implication, the advice services increases the spending power, particularly for those who may suffer or be vulnerable to living in poverty in relatively deprived areas, and has a positive impact on the local economy.

Whilst the claw back indicator is central to current advice provider analysis on impact, it is clear from our analysis that there are many enquiries not related to benefit advice. Other advice provided (e.g. health, housing) can also have an impact helping people become better informed, make better decisions and have a better quality of life.

5.7 Quality assurance

Previous research by Deloitte into support organisations within the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) indicates that there are a range of accredited and non-accredited approaches to quality amongst voluntary and community organisations. Examples include:

- Investors in People (IIP);
- Practical Quality Assurance Systems for Small Organisations (PQASSO);
- ISO 9001;
- Charter Mark;
- Kite Mark; and
- European Foundation Quality Model (EFQM).

In the advice sector efforts have been made by umbrella organisations to develop quality standards for advice and information services. The Advice Services Alliance (ASA) was established in 1980, and is the umbrella organisation for independent advice services in the UK. A key aim for it has been the development of quality standards within the sector.

In Northern Ireland Citizens Advice and Advice NI have taken different routes with regard to quality standards.

The CAB Membership scheme sets out the quality assurance standards to which all bureaux are expected to operate and is fully convergent with the Community Legal

Service General Help Level Quality Mark¹⁰. All bureaux in Northern Ireland have been accredited under this scheme. The quality assurance standards are made up of four sections as follows:

1. Membership agreement – highlighting service standards and how they will be monitored and how things will be put right in the event of failure;
2. Core advice services and social policy – defining the standards to which all bureaux must operate in delivering advice services to clients;
3. Quality of Advice – sets the standard for monitoring the quality of advice delivered to clients by bureaux; and
4. Organisational quality – details the quality standards and the requirements to which bureaux should operate in order to function as effective, efficient and economic organisations.

Advice NI secured funding from DSD under Building Sustainable Prosperity Measure 3.2 to take forward the issue of quality assurance. Following research of Quality Standards compatible with the advice networks, Advice NI selected Investors in People as the standard on which to form the basis of the Advice NI Quality Management System. The criteria for a suitable standard were based upon the following:

- A recognised standard able to raise the profile of Advice NI and the independent advice sector;
- A standard to support development of a quality assurance framework enabling members to engage in quality initiatives;
- A standard encouraging system and people development;
- A standard with an integrated quality approach that will reduce duplication;
- A standard that is linked to The Quality Mark or requirements of The Legal Services Commission; and
- A cost effective standard in terms of resource requirements and accreditation fees.

Delivery Organisation Approach to Quality Assurance

As an essential requirement within the application for funding, applicants were asked to indicate whether the level of provision provided by the consortia / coalition or individual organisation was to ASA standard, whether that be Advice NI or CAB.

¹⁰ The Quality Mark is a quality standard for information, advice and specialist legal services used by the legal services commission in England and Wales. The standards which make up the Quality Mark are designed to ensure that a service is well run, and has its own quality control mechanisms that monitor the quality of the information, advice or other help provided.

There are five different levels within the Quality Mark – Self-help Information, Assisted Information, General Help, General Help with Casework, and Specialist Help. Standards for Self-help Information are basic, with organisations needing to ensure that information is up to date, that it is meeting client needs, and that the Quality Mark logo is displayed on their premises. At the other end of the spectrum, at Specialist Help level, there are minimum requirements for supervisors, for independent review of the legal advice and services provided, and for case management, as well as management standards relating to the running of the organisation.

In addition many of the organisations are members of other organisations providing access to their training and information resources. For instance in South Belfast, all members of the coalition are members of the Law Centre and the Housing Rights Service. BURC in central Belfast are actively involved on the management committees of Law Centre NI and have also embarked on the Investors in People award. The EBAIC in East Belfast are members of the Law Centre NI, Housing Rights Service, Disability Action and Child Poverty Action Group. Membership and Active participation all enable these organisations to ensure their service is accurate, up to date and of a high quality.

In South Belfast the SBIAWG has developed a 'Fit for Purpose' framework for service delivery and have employed a consultant to explore systems in relation to quality and delivery – the CAB are not involved in this framework. The purpose of the baseline quality framework is to bring all organisations involved in the SBIAWG up to an equal standard. Although there are no formal meetings between the South Belfast Consortium and other consortia in Belfast, there is an ongoing contact between BCDA and North Belfast Consortium in regards to the sharing of best practice quality standards.

5.8 Partnership Working

The grant application for advice services requires consortia / organisations to outline a statement on how they intend to work, specifically giving details on:

- How they intend to hold member organisations accountable for the quality and quantity of their advice work;
- How cooperative / consortium members intend to work to ensure that advice provision is maximised; and
- Which organisation will act as primary point of contact for the cooperative / consortium and what they are empowered to do on behalf of the consortium?

South Belfast

SBIAWG have a consortium agreement which was drawn up in January 2006. The consortium meets bi-monthly and recognises that by sharing resources and working collectively, they can complement each others' work and reach out to the vulnerable elements of society. The Working Group works to ensure effective and efficient use of services in South Belfast by sharing resources, signposting, referral mechanisms and information exchange. These regular meetings provide an opportunity for communication and dialogue between organisations and to highlight any issues they may be facing. The CAB serving South Belfast however are not within this group and meetings between the South Belfast Coalition as a whole are less regular, tending to only occur when funding requirements are being negotiated.

East Belfast

The Partnership approach in East Belfast has provided an opportunity to find out more about each other and the work that is carried out by each organisation. By working together the partnership believes that they can maximise the impact of advice services for the communities of East Belfast. The Consortium meets bi-monthly and focuses on operational issues and identification of needs and trends. In addition there are regular meetings between the management committee in order to discuss the partnership and planning future partnership work. Since the inception of BCC funding and the requirement for partnership working both organisations within the consortium stated that they have been much more strategic in their approach to advice rather than working in isolation and on a case by case basis.

A partnership agreement between the two organisations is in place with the aim of providing:

- A comprehensive advice service in East Belfast available at different access points and varying levels, which responds to its users more efficiently and effectively;
- A top quality advice service through which the people of east Belfast can access professional advice which supports their decisions and a service which inspires confidence in the delivery of advice, irrespective of the agent;
- Provision of a seamless range of services with no gaps in provision; and
- Best use of resources and effective working relationships in the interests of the wider client base.

The Consortium approach appears to have worked effectively in East Belfast. One organisation noted that:

“It is very important that in looking forward we do not lose the existing expertise / networks” (East Belfast Advice Partnership)

Benefits of the consortium identified include:

- Bridging gaps in advice provision in the area;
- Protocol for referrals – referrals can be made between organisations where there are insufficient resources available to one of the organisations. The amount of referrals are monitored and collated by the partnership;
- Joint promotional material resulting in reduced economic costs; and
- Information shared on funding applications.

North Belfast

A key driver in the development of partnership working in North Belfast situation was the Dunlop Report. This report considered the social and community environment in North Belfast and highlighted isolated efforts working on common themes. Working together on these themes was recommended as a way forward with regard to better serving the area and building capacity. A government unit, the North Belfast Community Action Unit, (NBCAU) was developed to help co-ordinate efforts at community capacity building. A primary mechanism was through 13 Community Empowerment Partnerships (CEPs) across North Belfast. It was in this context that the North Belfast Advice Partnership was initiated in 2003. The CAB joined the Partnership in 2005. Therefore the North Belfast Advice Partnership was already up and running when the BCC contract requiring consortium working was put forward.

The Partnership had undertaken joint funding bids, most notably to the NBCAU, which provided funding for two advice co-ordinators, two specialist advisers and two part-time administration posts.

There are approximately 15-17 full-time equivalent staff employed across the Partnership. The Partnership meets regularly and there is substantial informal contact between members. The consortium negotiates the funding allocation annually, agreeing what proportion of the North Belfast funding each partner should receive. The lead partner in terms of contact for BCC is LNBCC. LNBCC has played a key role in maintaining this partnership through some difficult circumstances. LNBCC administers the funding from BCC to the various partners and also collates the activity returns. CAB, whilst working with the Partnership, maintains a separate line of contact with BCC.

The context in North Belfast will change over coming years as the CEP initiative is integrated into DSD’s wider Urban Regeneration and Community Development Group. The NBCAU is also expected to take on a reduced form. This will likely remove some level of funding and infrastructural support within the area. As noted

some short term funding from NBCAU is supporting staff within the North Belfast Advice Partnership. Therefore there will likely be challenges with staff funding and potentially the wider community infrastructure of which the Partnership is connected to.

Good practice partnership working was identified within North Belfast. For example:

- The Partnership includes Money Advice expertise and Tribunal Representation service that can be made available to clients across the Partnership. Looking forward the Partnership is seeking to develop a more strategic approach to their skills and expertise base. Identifying what skills and expertise they have amongst their members and using them more strategically across the Partnership.
- The partnership has held residential and annual reviews to develop thinking on how to act more strategically in North Belfast;
- All partners use the same case recording system (the CAB's CARMA system). This links into equity of service and easier comparison of activity;
- If outreach is unable to take place somewhere in one week, people can be directed to alternative outreach services. Also the annual review includes consideration of where outreach takes place as "*needs can change*";
- Advice workers meet monthly. Expertise and experience is also shared informally as needed by telephone and email;
- Joint training allowing for economies of scale; and
- Consortium is cross-community working across the polarised sectarian geography of North Belfast.

West Belfast

As previously noted advice providers in West Belfast were unable to reach agreement in time for the application to be progressed as a joint approach. Therefore despite BCC's requirement for a Consortium approach, the applications were from separate organisations. Since the BCC contract has come into place the providers have been developing a consortium approach, establishing themselves as the West Belfast Advice Forum. The BCC contract was critical in getting this process started as previously there had been no meaningful networking.

This move towards becoming a consortium is apparent through a number of activities. The organisations now agree what proportion of west Belfast funding each organisation should get (BCC, however, then have to allocate funding directly to each organisation and collect activity returns from each organisation). The organisations meet monthly and have set up working groups to consider fund-raising, policy and terms of reference. The Forum has established a mission statement, statement of values, strategic goals, and a balanced scorecard addressing customer service, internal processes, learning and growth and financial issues. The Terms of Reference working group has been set-up to developing a Constitution and Memorandum and Articles to make the Forum a legal entity. They feel this will be advantageous in sourcing funding from a wider range of sources.

The activity undertaken highlights that the direction of movement is toward a single consortium for the West of the city, Whilst the development of this is still occurring a number of benefits and good practices from partnership working have been identified. These include:

- More strategic planning of provision across West Belfast rather than acting in competition;

- Referral of clients to organisations who have expertise or specialist skills in particular areas; and
- The various organisations act as a support network for one another in formal and informal ways. Notably day to day the relationships in place allow for regular sharing of knowledge and experience.

City-Wide

It was noted in consultations that a Belfast-wide advice forum had been in place but had not been sustained. This brought representatives from across the city. Consultations highlighted support for a city-wide forum. It was suggested that it would be useful for sharing good practice and developing relationships and working practices, for example in boundary areas.

5.9 Relationship with BCC

The relationship between consortia / coalitions / delivery organisations and BCC tends to be predominantly a 'process relationship' in that beyond the application / monitoring returns and delivery of funding there is little contact. Although, as a minimum this is all that is required from the Council, there is potential to develop the relationship for mutual benefit in the future.

We recognise that personnel have changed in the Community and Leisure Services team and that as an ongoing process they are considering how this role fits within the wider Development Department.

During the consultation programme, consortia and delivery organisations were asked to comment on this relationship. The majority of those consulted indicated that this approach from the Council worked well, with the organisations being left to concentrate on delivery of service rather than unnecessary administration / bureaucracy, however, one organisation did state that they were 'unclear as to who had the decision making power in terms of advice funding' and that this would need to be made more transparent in the future delivery of funding in the sector.

5.10 Summary

This section has provided an overview of the management and administration processes in place, providing a number of points to note, including:

- Advice provision within Belfast varies between delivery organisations but generally all areas provide basic information, advice advocacy or representation on a wide range of issues including welfare benefits, housing, consumer, health, education, tribunals and money / debt;
- Partnership working is more advanced in some areas of the city than others;
- There is a variety of methods of evaluating impact and quality standards across the city between consortia and delivery organisations; and
- The relationship between consortia / coalitions / delivery organisations and BCC has been predominantly a 'process relationship' in that beyond the application / monitoring returns and delivery of funding there is little contact.

Forward looking analysis of this information is provided in section 7.

6 Good Practice Comparative Research

6.1 Introduction

The section is structured to provide an overview of the Advice services in Londonderry and Glasgow identifying lessons for potential application within the proposed model and good practice principles for collaborative working.

6.2 Description of Case Studies

6.2.1 The Derry City Council Area

Background

Derry City Council (DCC) is one of the largest of the twenty-six district councils in Northern Ireland, serving a population of approximately 107,000. A large percentage of the Council area is rural in nature with 509 farms registered to addresses in the area in 2004 and a total agricultural labour force at that time of 1044 persons.

The city offers a wide range of attractions for visitors including the historic walls, and the Tower Museum and is an important centre for the arts, accommodating the Millennium Forum, the Nerve Centre, the Playhouse and a diverse range of community arts groups as well as staging numerous events such as the Halloween Festival, the Doire Feis and the Jazz festival.

Despite these strengths, not everyone in the district has shared its success. Disadvantage and exclusion is evidenced by higher than average levels of unemployment, widening income differentials and the polarisation of communities. The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005 (NIMDM 2005) identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivations across Northern Ireland. According to the measure DCC has an extent of 46 per cent, meaning that 46 per cent of the DCC population live in the most deprived super output areas in NI. On the same measure BCC has an extent of 48 per cent. Overall, DCC is ranked as the third most deprived Local Government District (LGD) in NI, with Belfast ranked as one (the most deprived LGD in NI).

DCC has four neighbourhood renewal areas for the city including Cityside, Outer West, Outer North and Waterside. BCC has twelve taking in five areas of West Belfast, four in North Belfast, two in South Belfast and one in East Belfast. Although comparing favourably with BCC in terms of deprivation it is clear that DCC faces a number of challenges. These challenges inevitably mean that demand for advice services in the area is substantial.

Delivery of Advice Services

A DCC official explained that up until a few years ago there were up to 16 organisations providing advice across the city. A period of substantial consolidation has been undertaken and now only five organisations are funded by DCC to provide advice services.

The process including a review of current delivery and development of a framework in which advice service delivery was to move forward. The review included discussion with Advice NI, Citizens Advice, Law Centre NI, ASA and local providers. An Advice Service Panel, comprising councillors from across the political spectrum, was also set-up to oversee the process and ensure political approval for decisions made.

Guidance on what was expected from delivery organisations and criteria was provided and an application process was developed in which certain criteria were set. Organisations applied and had to score a certain amount to qualify for funding

support. The funding was subsequently allocated on the basis of a formula based on population, deprivation and centrality. The official said the process was not pain free as some organisations were not subsequently funded. Associated with this the official highlighted the importance of the Advice Service Panel to ensure political support throughout the process and to ensure that decisions were taken collectively.

With regard to convergence of quality standards, all organisations signed up to a code of service which was developed in consultation with ASA and agreed by the Advice Service Panel. Meeting this code was part of the application process. The new approach required funded organisations to use the same recording system (the CAB CARMA system). Use of a consistent case recording system was considered essential for monitoring and evaluation. The number of enquiries and claw back are monitored. Notably DCC highlighted that if organisations delivered below a certain number of enquiries they would be challenged on this and it could potentially affect their funding. DSD confirmed that no additional funding was provided from the regional block for this period of transition and consolidation.

The five organisations that DCC currently funds are:

- Londonderry CAB;
- Neighbourhood Assist / Dove House;
- Galliagh Integrated Advice Services;
- Rosemount and District Welfare Rights Group; and
- Carnhill Resource Centre.

Details on funding received by each of these organisations across the city can be found in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1
Allocation of advice services funding across DCC 2005-2006

Organisation	DCC electoral area	Allocation of Funding (%)
Londonderry CAB (total funding = £88,781.84)	Cityside North	13.11
	Cityside South	34.09
	Waterside	40.72
	Rural	37.09
	Central & Level 2	100.00
Dove House Community Trust (total funding = £32,902.78)	Cityside North	18.72
	Cityside South	51.24
	Waterside	16.97
	Rural	14.61
Galliagh Integrated Advice Services (total funding = £12,631.57)	Cityside North	25.17
	Cityside South	3.46
	Waterside	10.54
	Rural	12.53
Rosemount and District Welfare Rights Group (total funding = £3,243.10)	Cityside North	0.95
	Cityside South	6.06
	Waterside	15.89
	Rural	17.88
Carnhill Resource Centre (total funding = £19,940.71)	Cityside North	42.05
	Cityside South	5.16
	Waterside	15.89
	Rural	17.88

Source: Derry City Council

(N.B: Level 2 = Specialist Advice – including the provision of support to other Generalist providers)

Londonderry CAB received the highest allocation of funding in 2005-2006 at £88,781.84 and is also the only provider of advice in the Central area of DCC. Londonderry CAB also receives the highest allocation of funding in the Waterside and Rural electoral areas. The highest allocation of funding in the Cityside North electoral area is Carnhill Resource centre, with 42 per cent of the total allocation in that area.

In terms of Cityside South, Dove House Community Trust receives the highest allocation of funding at 51 per cent.

In recent years, Londonderry CAB has taken the decision to merge with two other local advice organisations – Waterside Churches Advice Centre and Derry Community Social Services. These mergers were thought to be the first in NI between advice organisations. A review of activity highlighted that the mergers have resulted in:

- Sharing of resources between organisations;
- Improved services for local people; and
- Increased demand for services.

This also represented a consolidation in advice providers across the city.

Key Messages

- There has been a reduction in the number of advice providers within the city;
- A cross-party Advice Service Panel has provided political support throughout the process;
- The funded providers have been required to use the same case recording system and to sign-up to a standard quality code;
- Enquiry numbers are monitored and if service delivery drops the Council include the right to challenge the organisation and the potential to reduce funding;
- The five funded providers work across various parts of the city. It is not divided into five geographical sectors;
- Londonderry CAB has consolidated its position through its central geographical position and through merger activity;
- RPA will have a significant impact on the advice services in DCC with the new Council area for the region consisting of DCC and possibly Limavady Borough Council, Magharafelt DC and Strabane DC; and
- DCC has moved from grant aid for advice providers into three year service level agreements with local organisations. This approach is likely to run until the new Council structures come into effect.

6.2.2 The Glasgow City Council Area

Background

Within the Glasgow City Council (GCC) area the development of welfare rights provision, social welfare law, and money advice services has occurred at different stages and through different routes. Although the generic nature of the CAB have been in existence in Glasgow since 1940, the late 1970's and 1980's saw the burgeoning of money and legal advice provision in the city, developing organically in deprived communities where the services were needed most. The result was the emergence of a fragmented and variable picture of provision across the city.

In 2002 and in light of this patchy provision GCC commissioned external consultants to review advice services assessing the existing provision across the city and considering options for future delivery. Overall, the review recommended that GCC, in conjunction with key partners, put in place the infrastructure to enable the development of a strategic system for delivering high quality money and legal advice services.

Following the review a city-wide Strategic Planning Group (SPG) was set up consisting of all the main advice funders across the city, including GCC, Scottish Enterprise Council, the Legal Aid Board and Glasgow Alliance as well as representatives from CABx, Money Advice Agencies and Law Centres. A GCC official explained that the setting up of this group has been instrumental in driving the strategy for co-ordinated advice provision forward.

Co-ordination

Initially, in addition to the city-wide SPG, nine Area Implementation Groups (AIG's) were set up with the aim of bringing all agencies within each area together on a regular basis, to assess supply and demand in their area, to look at gaps in provision and to plan how demand is to be met and gaps filled. These nine AIGs were based on the Council's social work boundaries. These have since been consolidated to five in line with the GCC wide community planning initiatives as follows:

- North Glasgow AIG;
- South West Glasgow AIG;
- West Glasgow AIG;
- East Glasgow AIG; and
- South East Glasgow AIG.

The city centre is included geographically within West Glasgow AIG. In addition to these five geographical areas a city-wide co-ordinating AIG was also established for operational and planning purposes. It is made up of representatives from the lead organisations in each area. Operationally it offers some city-wide service delivery in particular more time-consuming tribunal work. Planning wise the city-wide AIG has the aim of delivering referral protocols, quality issues, management systems, staff training and monitoring procedures. It has the authority to do this planning role as it is made up of lead organisations from each area.

The city-wide AIG links up with one representative from each of the organisations represented on the city-wide SPG and comes together under the guise of Glasgow's Advice and Information Network (GAIN). This acts a brand for the advice service across the city.

Delivery of Advice Services

Within the GAIN brand there are currently 27 money and legal advice and information agencies operating in the voluntary and community sector across the GCC area including CABx, Law Centres, Law and Money Centres and Independent Money Advice Centres. A GCC official explained that although significant, this number of advice providers across the city has been relatively consistent and is unlikely to be consolidated in the near future. These advice providers are all involved in their individual area's AIG and are funded through the AIG's lead organisation.

GCC have a small team within Council dedicated to administering advice service provision. GCC has invested around £2.7 million in the last year to support money and legal advice services in the statutory and voluntary sector. This investment generates returns of approximately £25 million annually directly to individual citizens, by way of benefits and other income claimed, increased, or safeguarded. The current provision of advice and information in Glasgow is wide ranging in terms of its content and context, for example in the type of advice and information provided, the specific issues it aims to tackle (drugs misuse, debt, homelessness etc) and how and where it is delivered.

Details on funding received by each of the AIGs as well as the city-wide AIG can be found in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2
Allocation of advice services funding across GCC 2007-2008

Area Group	Amount funding (£)	Allocation of Funding (%)
North AIG	311,031	11.32
South West AIG	399,012	14.53
West AIG	445,177	16.21
Citywide AIG	659,015	23.99
East AIG	667,908	24.31
South East AIG	264,773	9.64
Total	2,746,916	100.00

Source: Glasgow City Council

A GCC official explained that debt advice, benefits maximisation, income maximisation and negotiating with creditors tend to be the most sought after advice services across the city. To a lesser degree but still of great importance are benefit appeals and individual advocacy which also take up a significant amount of the enquiries in the area. Legal advice is also offered by a smaller number of the organisations but due to the “specialist nature” of this type of advice it tends to be to a lesser degree.

It was recognised during the 2002 review that interpreting and analysing the accuracy of data supplied was a significant issue within the sector. For example, the definition of a client, an enquiry or a case varied from organisation to organisation, as did the methods they use to record the services they provide. In an effort to co-ordinate this GCC paid for and distributed a case management system across all advice providers in the city and provided training in order to promote commonality. This included payment for IT equipment where necessary.

A GCC official commented that this consistent approach to enquiries has made a significant difference to their management of advice services across the city. GCC now have access to the system and therefore can monitor the inputted data centrally. The official noted that this system and the monitoring and evaluation processes are still being embedded (notably this has taken several years since the review). As management information data is built up and analysed GCC will become able to set meaningful targets for providers.

It was noted that the change of system did encounter initial friction. In order to manage this as well as providing financial support to assist transition, GCC have stated that organisations, whilst having to use the new system, could retain their existing system and operate it in parallel.

Key Messages

- Area based collaborative working has been developed;
- As well as the various area groups:
 - there is citywide planning with regard to referral protocols, quality issues, management systems, staff training and monitoring procedures; and
 - there is citywide delivery of time-consuming tribunal work.
- There has been an effort to calculate the financial benefit to the city overall;

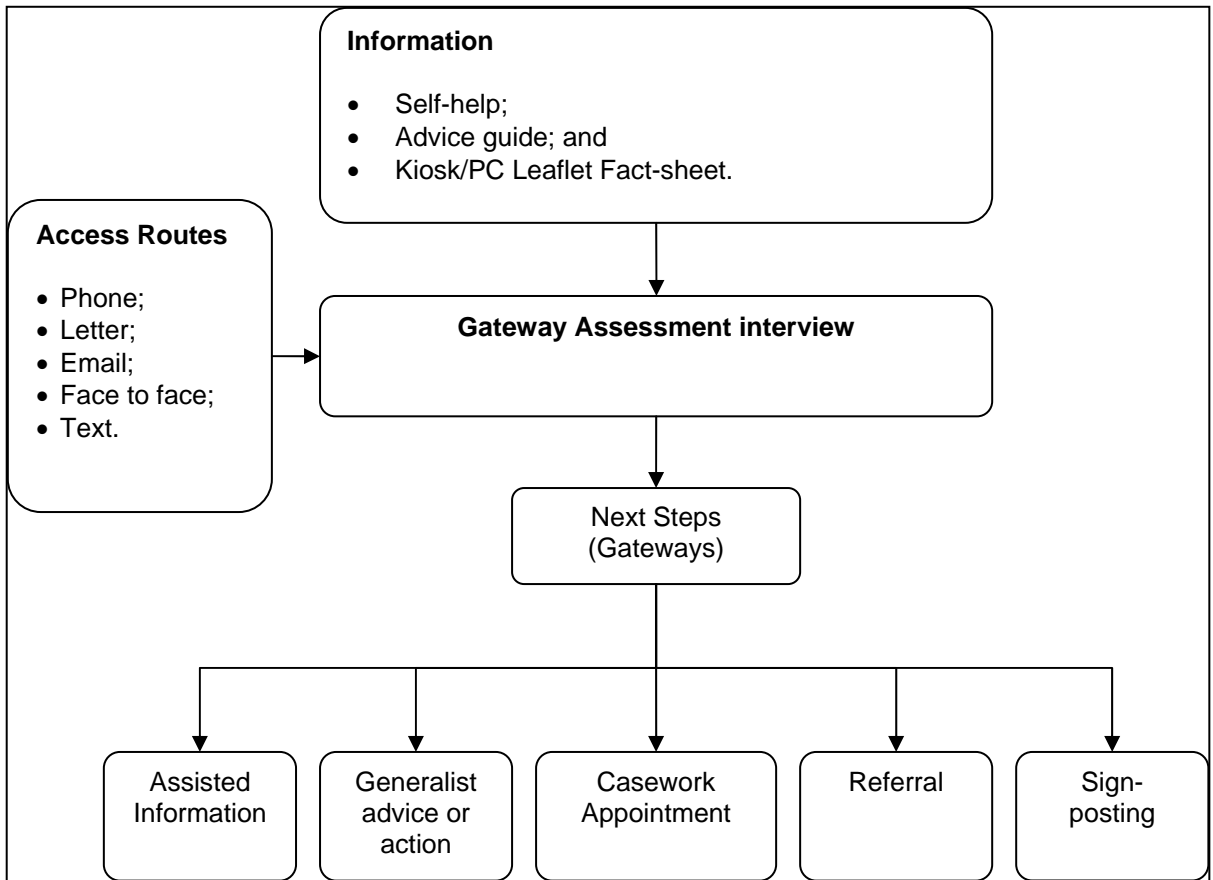
- GCC has implemented a case management system across all advice providers and provided funding for implementation and training to ensure it is used consistently;
- As management information data is built up and analysed GCC will become able to set meaningful targets for providers;
- The implementation of the uniform system has taken several years; and
- GCC have a small team dedicated to overseeing implementation and delivery of advice provision.

6.3 The Gateway Assessment Approach to Service Delivery

During 2006 – 2007 a number of CAB offices in England piloted a ‘gateway’ assessment approach to service delivery. The approach provides a number of clearly defined and integrated routes into the CAB service and, regardless of the route used, allows service users to access information, advice or casework services quickly, efficiently and at an appropriate level.

At the heart of the approach is a gateway assessment interview used to identify the next step that needs to be taken as illustrated in Figure 6.1. This assessment interview is critical to the effectiveness of the process.

Figure 6.1
The Gateway Assessment Approach to Service Delivery



Source: Citizen's Advice

Each 'gateway' provides clients with access to the level of information and advice that is appropriate to them. For instance, those who can help themselves are provided with the resources required to do so, those who need preliminary advice receive it and those who need more detailed advice and / or work carried out on their behalf (casework / tribunal etc) also have this facility available to them.

The approach acknowledges that there are other agencies which are better equipped to deal with particular problems or groups of people and therefore in a number of cases clients will be signposted to the appropriate organisation for advice.

6.4 Good Practice – Partnership Working

Previous Research by Deloitte has found that certain criteria and conditions are required to ensure the effectiveness of partnership working. This is important in the context of a hub and satellite model that could be delivered by more than one organisation. The research suggested that the factors shown in Table 6.1 should be in place from the outset.

Table 6.1

Facilitating factors for implementation of effective partnership working

Facilitator	Explanation
Partnerships should complement and not displace other efforts	Clarity with regard to geographic remit both overall and also in targeting services within areas.
Early identification of goals	So that the partnership can work towards clearly defined, mutually valued, shared goals
Put in place mechanisms by which the partnership can measure progress	So that progress can be measured against the set goals and initiate remedial action when necessary to put the effort back on track. Consistency in case recording processes and systems.
Strong leadership	This recognises the complexities of group working, builds up motivation and trust and resolves conflict as it arises
Sufficient and appropriate resources	Needs to be available from partnership initiation, including skills, guidance and advice

Source: Deloitte

As the partnership develops, Table 6.2 describes facilitators that are considered particularly important.

Table 6.2
Facilitating factors important for development of effective partnership working

Facilitator	Explanation
Positive working relationships	Required to develop mutual support and trust and a sense of shared responsibility
Sufficient flexibility	The organisations that make up the partnership need sufficient freedoms and flexibility to contribute effectively to the partnership. In the advice sector this could include staff with expertise moving from location to location as needed.
Time	Building partnerships and achieving change is time-consuming. It is essential that partnerships are realistic about what they can reasonably achieve in the short-term.
Appropriate incentives	In order to reinforce joint working: high degree of fit between the objectives of the partnership and partner organisations
Recognition of the unique contribution of the different partners	This has been found to be important as this challenges the potential for inequalities when partners have differential access to resources. This has particular importance in areas where a local group has networks / relationships in place that others would be unable to replicate.

Source: Deloitte

Research suggests that the factors outlined in Table 6.1 and 6.2 above, if achieved and implemented, will facilitate a successful genesis for new partnerships and help established partnerships develop and achieve their goals.

6.5 Good Practice Identified in Review of Advice Delivery in Belfast

As discussed a 'context of change' in the advice sector sets an agenda for the sector of restructuring to reduce duplication and gaps in service delivery, demonstrating quality standards and value for money, and developing new ways of working via collaboration and strategic alliances.

In Belfast, there is a spectrum of partnership working across the city. As discussed elsewhere some of this is relatively well developed and some is limited. Nevertheless, the nature of the consortium approach in Belfast across the city has resulted in some good practice examples from existing BCC consortia in both general delivery and partnership working. These include:

- Regular liaison between organisations to identify needs / trends and also to plan future partnership working;
- Review outreach services. Ongoing and strategically once a year to assess coverage of an area and to ensure outreach services provided by the various partners are complementing each other;
- Sharing specialist skills and expertise across the forum (formally and informally);
- Protocols for referrals (where there are insufficient resources available for one organisation to meet the needs of a client refer on to another within the area);

- The provision of advice services from a perceived 'neutral' venue in the City Centre results in a service accessible to all;
- Regularly capturing service recipient feedback;
- Use of the same case recording system, allowing for better consistency of management information and helping increase equity of service;
- Strategic choice of location for service provision. The deliberate location of modern advice centres within health and well being centres in South and East Belfast works both as a model that provides synergies in terms of clients using both health and advice services and also through helping develop a modern high quality facility; and
- The production of joint publicity materials resulting in economic efficiencies for all organisations involved.

7 Analysis

7.1 Introduction

This section considers the key issues for BCC as it seeks to re-position advice services in line with Opening Doors, the new regional strategy for advice service provision.

7.2 Moving from Consortium to Hub Approach - Key Issues

The review of current provision of advice services in Belfast considered in light of the Opening Doors strategy raises questions around the following dimensions:

- Should a hub be a single site?
- Should a hub be a single organisation?
- How can equity of service be ensured?
- How could a hub be best piloted in Belfast?
- How many hubs should there be in Belfast?
- Could services be provided by the private sector rather than the voluntary and community sector?
- What is the role for BCC and how can this be best located within the Council's organisational structure?
- How should the transition from the current situation to the desired arrangement be managed?

These key issues cannot be easily considered in isolation from one another as they often have cross-cutting implications.

7.3 Design Principles

In order to best answer the questions posed the following design principles are proposed. These highlight principles aligned to the Opening Doors strategy and to good practice identified within this research including:

- Services that are accessible to all, and targeted at those most in need;
- Services that can be sustained in the long-term;
- Services that can demonstrate value for money;
- Services that can demonstrate appropriate quality of provision; and
- Transparency of service standards driven by consistency of quality assurance, record management and IT systems.

Taking these good practice principles as criteria we can assess current position and the proposed direction of movement through the various questions posed above.

7.4 Overview of Current Position Assessed against Design Principles

- Services that are accessible to all, and targeted at those most in need;

The key drivers used within the regional strategy for targeting need are deprivation, population and accessibility. BCC has allocated funding on the grounds of population and deprivation analysis. The provision of services within the consortium areas of Belfast is subsequently driven by informal local knowledge relating to deprivation, population and accessibility but also practical reasons such as available, affordable premises.

In particular the current delivery structure in Belfast reflects the fact that several of the providers have arisen out of community organisations. As a result there are several small scale organisations largely based around geographical communities. This is particularly the case in North, West and South Belfast. Several providers are based on main arterial routes (e.g. Ormeau, Falls, Shankill and Crumlin Roads) bringing high levels of accessibility. West Belfast providers commented that there may be too strong a concentration of providers on the (mid) Falls Road. Some of the current facilities whilst accessible by public transport are not all that suitable with regard to their own physical access. For example people visiting the Citizens Advice Bureau on Callender Street in Belfast are required to climb a flight of stairs with no option of a lift available. More recently two newly developed Citizens Advice Bureaux premises, in East and South Belfast, are located within health and well-being centres. This has been a deliberate move which provides modern, high quality facilities but also a strategic location where many people in need of advice will be able to access and will be accessing for other reasons. The multi-functioning venue can disguise where people are going and can remove any stigma, real or perceived, attached to going to advice providing locations.

The more flexible side of targeting includes outreach services and home visits offered by providers in Belfast. Outreach often occurs on a regular scheduled basis (e.g. weekly, fortnightly, monthly) in venues such as community centres, health centres, hospitals, church halls. The venues and needs are established through the extensive local networks of many of the providers.

Some consortia noted that outreach is reviewed annually as needs change. Consultees noted that it was hard to predict how many would come along to a particular venue on a particular day. Therefore whilst annual reviews are needed, improved service delivery data could be used to manage how outreach is planned and delivered more efficiently. Our review has highlighted some concerns with outreach on the periphery of West Belfast (Andersonstown and Suffolk CAB, supported by BCC, having to outreach into Lisburn City Council areas of Twinbrook and Poleglass).

A final customer channel that requires comment is telephone. Research undertaken within the sector by Citizens Advice has shown that there is room for substantial improvement with regard to telephony services. One stakeholder organisation noted that an increase in delivery of advice via the telephone should be viewed more positively by the sector as a way of making the service more accessible. It would also have efficiency and cost saving implications.

- Services that can be sustained in the long-term;

The funding provided by BCC alongside DSD funding is central to the delivery of advice services across Belfast. Several of the providers also noted other funding sources (e.g. Big Lottery, Neighbourhood Renewal, North Belfast Community Action Unit, SSA, DETI), whilst several practitioners are also part of larger voluntary or community organisations.

In several instances the current delivery of services, whilst funded primarily by BCC and DSD, is often tied into a complex cocktail of largely short term funding. Whilst the core of the advice service would not likely be affected, it is apparent that these other funding streams often are on the back of the core funding and do add value to the overall service. In this respect some of the surrounding added-value services are likely to be affected by sustainability challenges.

- Services that can demonstrate value for money;

Currently whilst organisations are asked to provide activity returns these are not assessed at local, consortium and city-wide levels to provide a picture of outputs and outcomes and allow understanding of what value for money BCC is getting. Our analysis (see Section 4 and 5) found that advice providers were providing substantial claw back for clients, including some that indicated substantial financial returns. In addition, there are a number of broader quality of life issues, relating to mental health, housing etc that are very difficult to measure but are vital, especially for those who are vulnerable and most in need of advice and support. Service recipient feedback provided evidence of the importance the advice made, not just financially but sometimes in their state of mind which subsequently improved their quality of life.

The returns that are provided are based on different case recording systems which are acknowledged to be similar but not exactly the same, and also can require some subjective interpretation when inputting data. Therefore in order to ensure that value for money based on this indicator is demonstrated accurately there is a need for more consistent management information practice amongst providers.

- Services that can demonstrate appropriate quality of provision;

This research found that only a minority of organisations have formal quality assurance accreditations. Whilst the review found practitioners to be focused and dedicated, and service recipient feedback to be positive, a one-off review is unable to ascertain the quality of the product across all the delivery organisations. Therefore a gap exists, acknowledged by practitioners, in delivering a quality service and being able to demonstrate quality of service through a formal quality accreditation.

- Transparency of service standards driven by consistency of quality assurance, record management and IT systems.

Across the city the current situation is one of organisations moving towards greater partnership working within their sector of the city. CAB has been involved in this to varying degrees and has also been developing a city wide approach. Unfortunately a Belfast wide advice working group involving providers from all areas was not sustained.

The BCC contractual arrangements have encouraged partnership working at a consortium area level. The level of partnership working has developed further in some parts of Belfast than in others. For example North Belfast has a formal partnership which includes all the delivery organisations. With regard to equity of service they use the same case recording system and undertake training together. They do not however share a standard quality assurance accreditation or a unified management and reporting structure. Our view is that whilst North Belfast is a stronger example of partnership working across the five current consortia areas, there is still likely to be several, perhaps minor, variations across its multi-organisation structure. Within areas and across the city the current model is unable to demonstrate equity of service provision.

7.5 Current Providers' Views on Future Structures

The consistent view from practitioners is that:

- There was a feeling that the consortium approach was bedding-in and having positive impacts in delivery;
- There was support for some further consolidation in that central Belfast could be consolidated so there would be four hubs overall. There was support amongst South Belfast partners for taking on central Belfast. South Belfast also appears to offer the most natural links with the city centre;

- From practitioners there was no support for a move to one hub. One strategic stakeholder, however, saw significant potential in moving to one hub;
- The consistent view was that current consortia / coalitions are best placed to become hubs;
- Current delivery structures have networks and relationships in place. Not just with one another but also with community organisations, health providers etc. through whom clients are referred and through whom outreach services are provided. In several cases, the current delivery structures have been in place for a significant period of time and local residents know what services are available and who to go to for advice; and
- In areas where providers are currently not working in close partnership, the view is that barriers to partnership working can be overcome through a facilitated process.

7.6 Future Position - Options

We put forward the essential characteristics before considering various options, starting with the four hub model referred to in the Opening Doors strategy. All would be supported by satellite, outreach and E-Access provision as per the Opening Doors strategy. Following description of the options, there is a discussion of transitional issues and BCC's role before we put forward our overarching finding.

Essential Characteristics of All Models

All models would include the following characteristics:

- *Convergence* regarding quality assurance standards, customer recording systems and IT systems. This could potentially be driven by BCC (e.g. make it a requirement of funding and potentially financially support it) or by efforts within the wider advice sector. The standards and systems should be comparable, allowing BCC to analyse data on a city-wide basis and for data to be transferred if clients seek to access advice from a different provider;
- Improved management data should assist with *targeting* (e.g. either via permanent or part-time satellites or outreach services). For example particular populations of deprivation such as Shankill and Outer West Belfast will likely require full-time satellites. Improved management data should also be used to *develop meaningful targets*;
- Hub structures should be tailored to meet the need in the area served. Therefore in models with more than one hub, *hub structures may differ*. The differences may be appropriate considering need, geography, networks etc;
- The rationale as to whether the hub is a single site or a single organisation is similar. There are pros and cons of both and it will be up to organisations to make their case, one organisation focused on one site would bring clarity with regard to management structure and processes, and the contractual relationship with BCC. The positive of a multiple organisation hub would be breadth and depth of local knowledge, networks and relationships with community groups, service providers and individual clients;
- There needs to be a lead organisation within a hub structure. Where there is more than one organisation within a hub structure, one needs to be identified as the lead organisation. This should be agreed amongst the delivery organisations and this organisation should take responsibility for managing the contract with BCC;

- A single brand should be applied to strengthen the profile of advice delivery throughout the city; and
- Establishment of a city-wide advice forum with representation from each hub and BCC.

Four Hub Model:

A four hub model could deliver benefits with regard to demonstrating value for money, sustainability, quality of provision and equity of service. The realisation of benefits in this model would be dependent on the improvement and convergence of systems within hubs.

The four hubs should be based in North, East, South and West Belfast ideally on main arterial routes (e.g. Antrim, Newtownards, Lisburn and Falls Roads). The city centre should have a fit for purpose building. This will be important in particular for debt counselling (associated with the need for anonymity), but could also house a tribunal service which could be available for customers from across the city. Whilst South Belfast is considered to have the most natural links with the city centre, the four areas should be given the opportunity to put forward their case for taking on the city-centre service.

The challenge for the four hub model would be to ensure that the model actually did represent a step forward with regard to consolidation and a consistently improved service offered by convergence around heightened standards of quality, case recording, branding and management processes.

In the scenario of a four hub model, a city-wide advice forum with representation from each of the hubs should be developed and sustained to ensure all areas would be served agreement of co-ordination issues especially referral protocols and sharing of knowledge in relation to trends and best practice.

Five Hub Model:

A five hub model would be as per the four hub model described above with the exception of the city centre remaining a distinct hub.

The city centre hub could provide generalist services, in particular debt counselling (associated with the need for anonymity), but could also house more complex and time consuming tribunal service which could be available for clients from across the city. Delivery organisations in other hubs could refer clients to this service. One benefit of the convergence of systems is that the city centre hub should have access to the initial information recorded in the other hub for the person being referred and hence they would not have to retell their situation.

Two or Three Hubs:

The current criteria for assessing demand for advice services are deprivation and population. This highlights the greatest need for services to be in North and West Belfast, Deprivation is evident in East and South Belfast but it is restricted to smaller areas. Considering this the hub areas could be reconfigured to merge South and East Belfast and North and West Belfast or alternatively to merge South and East Belfast but to leave North Belfast and West Belfast separate due to their additional scale of need (Table 5.9 shows that South and East combined in 2006-2007 had similar client numbers and enquiries to North Belfast).

As per four and five hub model a city-wide advice forum with representation from the different hubs would be established.

This model would have advantages with regard to economies of scale and through a reduced number of contracts for BCC to administer.

One Hub Model:

A single hub model would be in a strong position to ensure equity of service across the city as it would bring operational consistency through requiring use of one case recording system and one quality assurance standard. Consistency could also be ensured through a single management structure and processes. The single hub could deliver economies of scale for example with regard to training, marketing, branding, banking, telephony provision etc. A single hub and its satellites and services could also be given a single brand to strengthen their profile throughout the city. The economies of scale could allow the release of more funding for front line service delivery functions.

A concern raised regarding a one hub option in our field work was how accessible it would be to end users. Our view is that a central hub supported by appropriate full-time and part-time satellites and outreach services could also target those most in need and provide high levels of accessibility. An improved telephony service within a single hub model could also increase accessibility and service to the client. Face-to-face advice including through outreach and home visits would still play a critical role for those unable or having difficulty in accessing advice over the phone, by internet or in a central position.

We feel that one hub for Belfast would need to be significantly larger than the scale of hub described in the Opening Doors strategy (which suggested an upper limit of eight providers). The hub should be based in the city centre, with easy access for the public, and have permanent satellites across North, East, South and West Belfast ideally on main arterial routes (e.g. Antrim, Newtownards, Lisburn and Falls Roads).

7.7 Transitional Issues

Key issues needing to be addressed in order to move from the current position to the future structure includes the following.

Pilot Phase

- Piloting – Identifying a potential pilot hub and satellite structure in Belfast. Piloting in order to identify key lessons in advance of full implementation. Ideally all areas of Belfast could be put forward for a pilot phase. We recognise that different areas in Belfast are at different stages within their consortium development and face different challenges for example scale of need, sectarian geography and accessibility issues. Therefore if all proposed hubs were piloted, this would allow learning across all variables, whilst also ensuring all areas created forward momentum; and
- Learning the lessons – an evaluation should take place alongside the piloting phase ensuring that lessons from across the pilots are identified, collated and analysed. At the end of the pilot phase, following completion of the review, a service level agreement (SLA) framework should be developed for the preferred hub approach.

Regional Synergies

- There are significant overlaps in issues critical to Belfast that are central to implementation of the regional strategy. In particular these issues include convergence of systems and standards. The ASA has been tasked with developing and getting agreement on agreed standards of training, quality assurance, case recording systems and IT systems. Working groups have recently been set-up to consider these issues. BCC should keep plugged into these developments and seek to realise potential synergies.

Funding

- Funding – BCC currently provides approximately £1.77 per head of population in the City. Looking forward, the Opening Doors Strategy has recommended that council funding should be increased to a minimum of £2 per capita.¹¹ Through an analysis of current funding allocation across the city it is apparent that in order for £2 per capita to be delivered there would need to be an increase of approximately £70,000¹² from BCC. Early indications are that the funding available from DSD through the Community Support Programme has not been affected by the Comprehensive Spending Review. The budget for next year is still in draft status, therefore whilst this is not guaranteed the funding from DSD to BCC is not expected to vary significantly.
- Additional Costs – There will be costs associated with the moving from the current structure and system to the new one. In particular this will include costs for:
 - Areas where facilitation is required between consortia members, we estimate facilitation services cost up to £1500 per day;
 - Additional BCC staff resource (see following section discussing BCC role). We estimate a dedicated staff member during transition (approx £40,000 per annum for 1-2 years). Post-transition the resource requirement should be maintained at 0.5 of a manager level plus part-time administration support (approx £30,000 per annum);
 - Costs relating to implementing consistent case recording and IT systems across all service providers will result in additional costs including training provision and capital requirements. The total cost of implementing the system will depend on a number of factors, for example what system is chosen, how many organisations need new systems and training requirements. One regional system in Northern Ireland cost over £1.5 million to implement. This highlights that implementation costs across Belfast would likely be considerable when considering the current annual funding for advice providers in the city; and
 - (Potential) adaptation of premises or (potential) purchase / rental of new premises. These changes need not necessarily be included within the short term changes but medium-long term needs should be clearly identified.
- Funding for additional costs - As noted it is not likely that any additional funding will be available from DSD's Community Support Programme. It will however be within BCC's control to use the funding it gets from DSD differently for example to meet these costs, or indeed to increase the funding it inputs from rates. In addition we are aware that there are regional initiatives looking at IT systems, training and quality standards. Whilst we are not aware of any guaranteed funding to assist implementation of such results, we are aware that one regional advice organisation currently is bidding for funding through the modernisation fund to investigate upgrading its case recording system.

Tendering

- Agreeing delivery organisations – the Opening Doors Strategy notes that Treasury guidance requires a procurement process open to competition and leading to a conventional trading relationship under contract. It notes that this will not preclude collaborative bids. BCC will be in a position to develop a SLA on the basis of learning from the pilot phase; and

¹¹ Opening Doors, Page 8

¹² Gap if £2 per head was to be delivered = (£0.23*267,212) = £72,147

- Voluntary and/ or private sector – There has been discussion amongst stakeholders as to whether private sector organisations could bid for advice provision contracts. There has been support for this with regard to the potential of private sector practice to drive up efficiency and value for money. The strategy highlights “a continued key role for the voluntary advice sector¹³” and the “best use of the distinctive approach of the voluntary and community sector¹⁴” whilst Council is committed to contracts that develop community capacity. Therefore our view is that whilst strategic aims may be served by partnership bids from private and voluntary sector organisations, wholly private sector bids would sit uneasily with DSD or Council strategic aims.

Political Will

- Political will – the transition to the hub and satellite model will include some degree of consolidation. Whilst the overall aim of the strategy seeks to improve service delivery to those in need overall, the transition will likely include some pain for organisations within the sector who may not have the capacity to deliver or change sufficiently to deliver within the new arena. There will need to be political will within Council to ensure difficult decisions are taken in line with the overall direction. One option may be to have a panel of councillors (cross-city, cross-party) to oversee implementation.

7.8 BCC Role

It is apparent that BCC need to consider what their role is in the transition, implementation and subsequent delivery of advice services. Currently the role is restricted to process issues including assessing applications, getting monitoring returns and allocating funding. Whilst the role is limited to these process functions, the role is disproportionately time consuming and challenging due to the multiple contractual arrangements and relative incoherence of the delivery organisations (e.g. seven separate returns and funding allocations in West Belfast).

We recognise potential options with regard to BCC’s role to include investing in the relationship in order to realise mutual benefits for BCC and advice delivery organisations, or retaining the status quo. A third potential option could be how DSD can play a greater role in administering and monitoring advice delivery in Belfast (e.g. through protocol arrangements). Thinking around this latter option would have to be developed in liaison with DSD.

Overall we feel BCC’s role should align with the Community Support Plan (2007-2010)¹⁵. The draft Plan states the purpose of the unit is to “*To support and energise communities to become stronger and more confident in order to develop an active, inclusive, safe, and welcoming city now and for future generations.*” The plan highlights sustainable communities, knowing needs, building social capital and objectives including quality of life. All these are connected to the local provision of advice services. The alignment between advice services and overall purpose is reflected in advice services receiving the largest proportion of grant administered through the Community Services Unit. The alignment is not however reflected in the staff structure within BCC. As noted above this role has been restricted to process issues and is currently a small part of one person’s role. We suggest that at this important juncture with advice services looking to make strategic changes this capacity within BCC needs to be enhanced.

There are a range of considerations in the scenario of BCC investing more in the relationship. In the short run (1-2 years) through piloting, implementation of new systems and processes and competitive tendering phases we think there will be need

¹³ Opening Doors, Page 11

¹⁴ Opening Doors, Page 11

¹⁵ At time of writing this is still in draft status.

for a dedicated resource from BCC. In the medium term following transition and assuming the improvements in the sector with regard to standards, convergence of case recording systems and consolidation in the sector with regard to delivery structures, it is anticipated that BCC will have to spend less time on process issues. This will give an opportunity for BCC to invest more in the relationship with regard to reviewing outputs and impact, setting and reviewing targets and ultimately to ensure that quality advice services are being provided and are demonstrating value for money, whilst potentially reducing the resource required to undertake this. Therefore, as noted in transitional funding considerations we estimate a dedicated resource for the period of implementation with 0.5 of a manager level in the longer run, post-implementation.

BCC could convene a city-wide advice forum bringing together hub representatives to ensure good practice and strategic issues were addressed at the city-wide level. Additionally as occurred in DCC, BCC could also consider an Advice Service Panel, bringing together Councillors from across the political parties. This could oversee the implementation of the strategy in Belfast. Political will, is likely to be required as the process will probably include some difficult decisions regarding local providers.

There is also an opportunity for BCC to test how providers could gain from using BCC facilities, for example youth centres, community centres and leisure centres for outreach. This could be tested within a pilot and required within contracts.

Within the new strategy and its implementation there are a great many changes going on within the sector regarding convergence of IT systems, training, quality assurance standards. These are regional issues being co-ordinated by ASA and hence whilst there is merit in BCC remaining aware of changes, and participating where appropriate, BCC should seek to realise synergies available from linking into regional efforts and resources. The timeline for convergence has been set in the strategy as 2009.

7.9 Overarching Finding

Whatever model is taken forward it marks a significant opportunity for the sector and for BCC. In particular it must mark a challenging step-up from the current model which is characterised by significant local variation in partnership working and service delivery.

As a minimum the future model of delivery should take on board the characteristics identified as 'essential characteristics':

- Convergence of standards and systems;
- Use of improved management data for target setting and targeting of resources;
- Tailor hub structure to needs of an area – accounting for pros and cons of number of sites and organisations involved;
- There should be an agreed lead organisation;
- Single brand; and
- Representation from each hub on a city-wide advice forum.

With regard to the number of hubs a range of models were put forward. The two given most consideration by delivery agents and stakeholders were a four hub and single hub model.

Taking into account the current delivery structure within Belfast, most importantly the multiple providers and the networks and relationships that they have in place, alongside the consistent view that there should be four hubs rather than one hub and

the transitional issues that need to be managed, we recognise that to step directly to a one hub model from the current position would be a large and difficult step. This is particularly so, in advance of any learning from a pilot phase.

Our view is that whilst moving to one hub, or indeed fewer than four hubs, may be a step too far at this juncture this should be further tested through the consultation phase on proposed hub locations for the regional strategy and considered through lessons learned in the piloting phase.

If a multiple hub option is taken forward the potential for further convergence to Belfast being served by a single hub should continue to be monitored.

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This section includes conclusions and recommendations based on overall analysis of data.

8.2 Review of BCC's Current Advice and Information Grant Service

The Council's current advice and information service was reviewed with regard to its processes, outputs and outcomes in sections 4, 5 and 7. Key conclusions are:

- the Council model of consortium working has helped move a largely organic and un-coordinated delivery of advice services towards a more strategic rationale network of providers. The new strategy however, marks a key opportunity for delivering a further step up in advice services;
- there are over 20 organisations involved in the delivery of advice services in Belfast across the five sectors of Belfast. This includes a Citizens Advice Bureau presence across each of the five areas, North, South, East, West and Central;
- there is a spectrum of partnership working within consortium areas with North and East Belfast having the most developed partnership working arrangements. The partnership in North Belfast before the BCC contract and has benefited from support from the NB Community Action Unit. The Consortium in East Belfast has benefited from good relations between just two providers, which along with Central is the least number of providers across the Consortium areas. West Belfast providers are making concerted efforts to deepen their working relations, including development of a joint constitution. In South a coalition rather than a consortium has remained with a close relationship between independent organisations, but a limited working relationship between this grouping and CAB organisations. The Central area whilst different in nature demonstrates limited evidence of partnership working between CAB and BURC;
- there are substantial difficulties in assessing performance and comparing performance within and across consortia due to number and range of providers involved and subsequent inconsistencies in recording systems and in monitoring and recording practices. The following indicators can be used to assess an overall picture:
 - the benefit claw back compared with amount of grant funding. This has highlighted significant variation between the areas. East Belfast figures suggest significant success in benefit claw back. All sectors report total benefit claw back of more than double the grant funding. This is indicative only as there are issues with consistency of recording systems;
 - the quantity of enquiries dealt with compared to funding allocation. What can already be ascertained is that South and West record a lower number of enquiries relative to funding than North, East and Central; and
 - whilst relatively small in number compared to overall use of the service, the qualitative service recipient interviews we have undertaken have highlighted positive feedback from individuals who have used the services.
- overall therefore we conclude that current delivery of advice services is making a difference to many individuals in need and evidence suggests value for money for

BCC. We also feel, however there are significant opportunities for improvement both within certain areas and across the city as a whole;

- the regional strategy has been using population, deprivation and accessibility as criteria for allocating funding. BCC's grant allocation process has used an analysis of population and deprivation to decide funding allocations across the city. This is reasonable on the assumption that consortia, with local knowledge and networks in place then implement delivery to target need at the local level and ensure they are easily accessed. This has been worked out differently in different areas – for example in East Belfast there are just two providers one in a health and well being centre located on a key arterial route and one in a more inner city location. North Belfast, in contrast, partly due to its complex sectarian geography has a higher number of providers, several of which are aligned to particular communities.
- Therefore criteria for funding sectors of the city should be based on:
 - Proportion of population living in that area of the city;
 - Level of deprivation in that part of the city; and
 - As the central area does not fit with regard to population and deprivation criteria enquiry numbers should be monitored going forward. If there is a substantial difference between proportion of funding (currently 10 per cent) and proportion of enquiries a funding revision for the central service a realignment of funding should be considered.
- The assessment process criteria provided a reasonable cross-section of requirements relating to delivery of advice services. Going forward there is an opportunity to tighten these criteria in order to align with Opening Doors and the future direction of advice services. The timescale for these criteria changes may need to be aligned with regional efforts to converge standards across the sector. The specific criteria that need to be developed are:
 - Evidence of previous experience and performance of delivering advice services, including evidence of delivering value for money and partnership working;
 - detail of proposed hub, satellite and outreach facilities – specifying:
 - how the consortia can deliver the set of skills and expertise to be available in a primary generalist hub as described in Annex 4 of Opening Doors. (Including dedicated money and debt counselling, tribunal and advocacy work);
 - how areas of need within the area will be targeted. This should include specifics on local populations and levels of deprivation and not rely on informal local knowledge or pre-existing infrastructure. It should also detail existing networks and relationships within the area to be served, and how and where outreach will take place;
 - evidence of accessibility:
 - location (e.g. arterial route, on public transport routes);
 - premises (e.g. physical access);
 - opening hours (e.g. weekend, evening); and

- service delivery options (e.g. use of translation services).
- consistency of systems within the area - quality assurance standards, case recording systems, IT systems. What steps need to be taken to move to consistency and how these will be taken and a timeframe for doing so; and
- how BCC funding could leverage in other funding – and how together these contribute to sustainability of core advice services and any supplementary services.

8.3 Recommended Best Practice Changes

The following best practice changes are recommended:

- With regard to targeting beneficiaries:
 - Use consolidation to bring economies of scale to strengthen joint marketing and branding efforts so that potential beneficiaries are more aware of advice provision in an area;
 - Within consortium areas there should be regular liaison between organisations to identify needs / trends and also to plan future partnership working. This should include setting aims and SMART objectives for service delivery in the area;
 - Review of outreach services. This should be done on an ongoing basis and strategically once a year. It should also use data on number of enquiries coming at various outreach locations to best target demand. Reviews should also assess outreach coverage of the overall area;
 - Use of a range of facilities for both main and outreach service provision. The deliberate strategic location of modern advice centres within health and well being centres in South and East Belfast works both as a model that provides synergies in terms of clients using both health and advice services and also through helping develop a modern well designed facility;
 - Development of potential service delivery channels, in particular more focus on telephony including regular review of telephony service provision and usage; and
 - The provision of advice services from a perceived 'neutral' venue in the city centre results in a service accessible to all.
- With regard to improving consortia working:
 - Facilitative processes are needed to develop relationships in south Belfast between independents and CAB activity. West are also seeking help in developing a Constitution for the West Belfast Advice Forum. In general facilitative processes should work towards the essential characteristics identified for hubs, and in particular make clear a single lead organisation for each area;
 - Skills and expertise should be used strategically on an area wide basis. This will require mapping of specialist skills and expertise within structures and working out practices to allow these to be used flexibly within future structures – even if new hub structures include more than one organisation;

- To ensure the client receives a quality of service protocols for referrals within area structures should be developed and implemented. These should activate where there are insufficient resources available for one element of the structure to meet the needs of a client, or if the client could be better served by the practitioner with responsibility for a particular specialism in an area (e.g. housing, disability, lone parents, older people, needs of ethnic minorities); and
- A city-wide forum should help identify and share good practice between consortia and ensure that where necessary and where possible consortia work well together. This forum should include representatives from lead organisations in each hub and BCC.
- With regard to monitoring and evaluation:
 - Convergence with regard to use of the same case recording system, allowing for better consistency of management information;
 - Convergence around training to ensure consistent processes amongst practitioners with regard to use of case recording systems, calculation of claw back etc.
 - Provision of regular quarterly reports in electronic and hard copy format from consortium to BCC. Consortium should analyse data across and within their area¹⁶ to help plan use of their own resources, whilst BCC should analyse data on both a consortium wide area basis and on a city wide basis.
 - Key Performance Indicators should include:
 - Number and type of enquiries;
 - Breakdown of enquiries undertaken face-to-face in the main office, via telephone, outreach and E-Access;
 - Scale of claw back;
 - Service recipient feedback and satisfaction levels;
 - Scale of funding leveraged on the back of the core BCC funding;
 - Staff training undertaken; and
 - Quality standards in place / update on progress to gaining quality standard.
 - The collation and analysis of comparable and consistent data will allow for meaningful target setting with regard to enquiries.

BCC should take the opportunity the regional strategy affords and seek substantial improvements in advice service delivery in Belfast. With this in mind the good practice highlighted should be applied through out the city going forward.

8.4 Recommendations with regard to Role, Regional Strategy and Piloting

BCC Role:

¹⁶ This would require Suffolk and Andersonstown CAB to attribute a certain enquiry level to South and a certain level to West Belfast.

We identified three options – status quo, develop role or investigate DSD undertaking a greater lead in the role.

We suggest that at this important juncture with advice services looking to make strategic changes this capacity within BCC needs to be enhanced.

There are a range of considerations in the scenario of BCC investing more in the relationship. In the short run (1-2 years) through piloting, implementation of new systems and processes and competitive tendering phases we think there will be need for a dedicated resource from BCC. In the medium term following transition and assuming the improvements in the sector with regard to standards, convergence of case recording systems and consolidation in the sector with regard to delivery structures, it is anticipated that BCC will have to spend less time on process issues. This will give an opportunity for BCC to invest more in the relationship with regard to reviewing outputs and impact, setting and reviewing targets and ultimately to ensure that quality advice services are being provided and are demonstrating value for money, whilst potentially reducing the resource required to undertake this. Therefore, as noted in transitional funding considerations we estimate a dedicated resource for the period of implementation with 0.5 of a manager level in the longer run, post-implementation.

BCC could also consider an Advice Service Panel, bringing together Councillors from across the political parties. This could oversee the implementation of the strategy in Belfast, and potentially help to sustain the momentum of the process when difficult decisions are required.

Opening Doors regional strategy:

The Opening Doors regional strategy marks a significant opportunity for the sector and for BCC. It is an opportunity for a challenging step-up from the current model which is characterised by significant local variation in partnership working and service delivery.

As a minimum the future model of delivery should take on board the characteristics identified as ‘essential characteristics’:

- Convergence of standards and systems;
- Use of improved management data for target setting and targeting of resources;
- Tailor hub structure to needs of an area – accounting for pros and cons of number of sites and organisations involved;
- There should be an agreed lead organisation;
- Single brand; and
- Representation from each hub on a city-wide advice forum.

With regard to the number of hubs a range of models were put forward. The two given most consideration by delivery agents and stakeholders were a four hub and single hub model.

Taking into account the current delivery structure within Belfast, most importantly the multiple providers and the networks and relationships that they have in place, alongside the consistent view that there should be four hubs rather than one hub and the transitional issues that need to be managed, we recognise that to step directly to a one hub model from the current position would be a large and difficult step. This is particularly so, in advance of any learning from a pilot phase.

Our view is that whilst moving to one hub, or indeed fewer than four hubs, may be a step too far at this juncture this should be further tested through the consultation

phase on proposed hub locations for the regional strategy and considered through lessons learned in the piloting phase.

If a multiple hub option is taken forward the potential for further convergence should continue to be monitored.

With regard to piloting:

All areas of Belfast should participate in a pilot phase. We recognise that different areas in Belfast are at different stages within their consortium development and face different challenges for example scale of need, sectarian geography and accessibility issues. Therefore if all proposed hubs were piloted, this would allow learning across all variables, whilst also ensuring all areas created forward momentum; and

An evaluation should take place alongside the piloting phase ensuring that lessons from across the pilots are identified, collated and analysed. At the end of the pilot phase, following completion of the review, a service level agreement (SLA) framework should be developed for the preferred hub approach.

8.5 Overview of Recommendations

The table below summarises the recommendations highlighting who has lead responsibility and what the indicative timescale for the recommendation is. The indicative timescale is based upon the time line put forward in Opening Doors (Annex 7). This may be subject to change depending on progress with certain work streams.

**Table 8.1
Overview of Recommendations**

Recommendation		Responsibility	Indicative Timescale			
Best practice changes	Targeting beneficiaries	Joint marketing / branding	Consortia	Within 1 year		
		Local monitoring / planning /targeting				
		Review of outreach				
		Strategic premises			DSD / BCC / Consortia	Within 2-3 years
		Development of service delivery channels			DSD / Consortia	Within 2 years
	Improving consortia working	Facilitative work to develop consortia	Consortia	Within 1 year		
		Co-ordinating skills				
		Referral protocols				
		Implement city-wide forum	BCC / Consortia	Within 1 year		
	Monitoring and evaluation	System Convergence	DSD / regional working groups BCC / Consortia	Within 2 years		
Training convergence						
	Quarterly electronic reporting to BCC	Consortia	Within 1 year			
BCC Role	Implement dedicated staff member for implementation / transitional period and 0.5 of a Manager role for longer term		BCC	Within 1 year		
	Develop an Advice Service Panel of Councillors to oversee implementation of strategy in Belfast		BCC	Within 1 year		
Regional Strategy & Piloting	Adopt essential characteristics for future model		BCC, Consortia, DSD	Within 2 years		
	Move to a four hub model in Belfast		BCC	Within 1-2 years		
	Pilot across all four hubs		BCC, Consortia			
	Undertake an evaluation of pilot phase		BCC			
	Develop and implement a service level agreement for preferred hub approach		BCC	Within 2 years		

Source: Deloitte

Appendix I

Stakeholder Consultations

Project Steering Group

- Ms. Ann-Marie Campbell, Belfast City Council
- Ms. Karen Anderson-Gillespie, Belfast City Council
- Ms. Catherine Taggart, Belfast City Council
- Mr John Nelson, Belfast City Council
- Ms. Nichola Kennedy, Project Director, Deloitte
- Mr Colin Mounstephen, Project Manager, Deloitte

Stakeholder consultations

- Mr Derek Alcorn, Citizens Advice Bureaux
- Mr Bob Stronge, Advice Northern Ireland
- Ms. Janine Fullerton, Department of Social Development

Focus Groups

- North Belfast Advice Partnership
- West Belfast Advice Partnership
- South Belfast Independent Advice Working Group
- Citizens Advice Belfast
- East Belfast Advice Partnership

Comparative Research

- Derry City Council
- Glasgow City Council

Appendix II
Grant Assessment Information

	Element	Essential	Maximum Score	Threshold Score	Score Awarded	Comments
1.0	Organisation					
1.1	Does the Consortium include all advice providers seeking Council funding	No	5			Points to be awarded according to the extent to which the consortium is representative of the sector in the area in question
1.2	Does the Consortium include independent providers and CABx	No	5			Consortia are preferred but not essential
1.3	Evidence of a 'Well Run Community Organisation as defined by BCC.'	Yes	Yes	Yes		
1.4	Coverage / Geography	Yes	Yes	Yes		Need boundaries of the area to be served
2.0	Submission. This is the actual document submitted in support of any bid for Advice funding and must include the following:					
2.1	Defining the need for advice services in the area served	Yes				This may include statistical information
2.2	Track record of the applicant in advice services provision including current level of services offered	Yes				Evidence of the history of the organisation in respect of generalist advice services provision
2.3	Is there evidence of sufficient resources to deliver the level of services proposed	Yes				Does the application demonstrate that advice need in the area of operation can be met?
2.4	Is there a suitable information recording system	Yes				An indication of compliance from the appropriate regional organisation will be required
2.5	Does the level of provision meet	Yes				Evidence required

	ASA standards					
2.6	Staff / volunteer training	Yes				Have all advice giving staff / volunteers received at least recognised basic training
2.7	Is there a means of obtaining customer feedback	No				Desirable but not essential
2.8	Robustness of submission (aims / objectives / delivery / timescales)	Yes				Clear, realistic and achievable proposals
2.9	Clearly defined outputs / outcome and impact measures	Yes				As above
2.10	Sustainability of the proposal	No				How reliant is the proposal on BCC funding
3.0	Other Criteria					
3.1	Contribution to BCC objectives	Yes	15	9		State relevance to specific objectives / KPIs
3.2	Appropriateness of the community support grant	Yes	10	6		Why BCC is the appropriate funder. What other efforts have been made to attract funding
3.3	Value added and Additionality	Yes	15	9		This should either build on existing work or demonstrate additional benefit to the community
3.4	Leverage	Yes	10	6		Show how council funding has attracted or is expected to attract additional financial support from other sources
	Total. Applicants must achieve an overall minimum score of 60% which is equivalent to 120		200	120		It is not enough to achieve threshold scores in every category. Applicants must also achieve a total score of 120.

Appendix III
Glossary of Abbreviations

DRAFT

Glossary of Abbreviations	
AIG	Area Implementation Group
ASA	Advice Services Alliance
BCC	Belfast City Council
BCF	Ballysillan Community Forum
BLF	Big Lottery Fund
BRO	Belfast Regeneration Office
BURC	Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureaux
CEP	Community Empowerment Partnerships
CRC	Community Relations Council
DCC	Derry City Council
DETI	Department of Enterprise Trade and Industry
DSD	Department of Social Development
EBIAC	East Belfast Independent Advice Centre
EFQM	European Foundation Quality Model
GAIN	Glasgow Advice and Information Network
GCC	Glasgow City Council
GTLRA	Greater Turf Lodge Residents Association
IIP	Investors in People
IT	Information Technology
LCF	Local Community Fund
LGD	Local Government District
LIA	Ligoniel Improvement Association
LNBBCC	Lower North Belfast Community Council
MDM	Multiple Deprivation Measures
NBAP	North Belfast Advice Partnership
NDA	Neighbourhood Development Association
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
PQASSA	Practical Quality Assurance Systems for Small Organisations
RPA	Review of Public Administration
SBIAWG	South Belfast Independent Advice Working Group
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SOA	Super Output Area
SPG	Strategic Planning Group
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector