



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	North Belfast Advice Partnership – proposal for variance in expenditure 2010/11 support programme
Date:	22 February 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Services Manager, ext 3525

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Belfast City Council is a major funder of Advice and Information Services via a consortium model, based on geographical providers North, South, East West and Central. This approach to funding and advice delivery was established in 2005/6 and involves over 20 organisations which include both Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and independent advice providers.
1.2	<p>Advice funding is made up from two sources with The Department for Social Development (DSD) providing £469,902 and Belfast City Council contributing £355,729 giving a total for 2010/11 of £825,631 This is allocated to the consortia on a pro-rata basis based on a deprivation-weighted population and is allocated to the consortiums as follows:</p> <p>North Belfast: 27.33% South Belfast: 13.51% East Belfast: 16.82% West Belfast: 32.34% City Centre: 10.00%</p>
1.3	In the North Belfast Advice Partnership (NBAP) consortium, there are 7 providers. In May of 2010, however, the Lower North Belfast Community Council (LNBCC) withdrew from the consortium. NBAP therefore initiated a process to secure a new partner organisation to deliver advice in the Lower North area. Expressions of interest to provide an advice centre were received from 2 groups, First steps and Loughview Community Action Project (LCAP), however neither organisation were able to demonstrate any previous experience of advice provision.

1.4	Following a lengthy selection process neither organisation was deemed to be in a position to fully meet the requirements of being the advice provider in the area. Further work is being undertaken with both organisations and a further selection process will be undertaken to determine the appropriate vehicle to replace the role previously held by LNBCC in the consortium/NBAP for the 2011/12 programme.
1.5	In line with the NBAP responsibility to provide advice services across North Belfast, the consortium has in the current year been providing services in the York Road / Shore Road area on an outreach basis utilising two Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO) part time staff to provide advice at six different locations within the Lower North area.
1.6	Given the delays experienced in replacing LNBCC with a suitable advice provider in this geographical area, this has been further augmented by outreach provision of the service to the following three new locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grove Wellbeing Centre - Grove Housing Association - North City Training
1.7	In addition, and to further support the work of the NBAP, it is proposed to allocate part of the grant towards supporting the coordination, tribunal representation and administration of work of the partnership until the end of March 2011

2	Key Issues
2.1	NBAP has undertaken to appoint a replacement organisation for LNBCC for 2011/12 in line with best practice and BCC procedural requirements.
2.2	Extra outreach provision is being provided until March 2011 to ensure that Advice Services are available within the Lower North area at a cost of £6,867.14
2.3	NBAP is seeking to utilize some of the LNBCC allocation to secure and enhance its coordination, tribunal representation and administration costs of the NBAP at a cost of £7,669.36

3	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no additional resource implications for Belfast City Council as the associated costs relating to this proposal can be met from the existing NBAP Advice allocation of £14,604.05 and related under spend.
3.2	Any failure to spend the total 2010/11 advice grant funds will negatively impact our ability to draw down the full DSD Advice grant programme subvention.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no equality or good relations implications attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that Council approve the previous allocation be released to the NBAP to deliver a programme of advice service in lower north Belfast.

	Decision Tracking
Further to approval the Committee decision will be implemented	
Time line: March 2011	Reporting Officer: Catherine Taggart

	Key to Abbreviations
<p>The Department for Social Development (DSD) North Belfast Advice Partnership (NBAP) Lower North Belfast Community Council (LNBCC) Loughview Community Action Project (LCAP) Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO)</p>	

	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 NBAP advice proposal.	