

**Proposal for Development Partnership
between Belfast City Council and
East Belfast Community Development Agency**

**To develop work
within the Lower Castlereagh community
in East Belfast**



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Introduction

In 2006 key stakeholders, facilitated by EBCDA, working in the community within the Sydenham area (which has been recognised by the Department of Social Development as an Area at Risk) began the process of developing a partnership to formally identify and address the needs of the area. This resulted in the formation of the Sydenham Working Group, an active amalgam of statutory, community and church organisations from the locality.

The Group sourced funding and commissioned 2 audits – one to look at the needs of the community as a whole and one to look at the needs of young people in the area. In collaboration with an independent facilitator and supported by EBCDA, the group devised and collectively agreed upon an Action Plan as the way forward for the immediate future in the Sydenham area. The Area Action Plan was then supported by DSD Areas at Risk (AAR) Scheme and resulted in, over a 2 year period, major development work being undertaken by the Working Group (and an AAR funded Support Worker managed by EBCDA) to improve the area, develop services and work towards sustainability.

As a pilot for improvement within an area with weak community infrastructure the work carried out in Sydenham was an excellent model of good practice which could be rolled out in other areas. The process has led to a structured partnership approach to addressing community needs and has opened communication channels between Churches, the Community Group and Statutory Agencies that were previously active in the area, but working independently. There is now a co-ordinated approach to the development of the Sydenham community and an agreed action plan to work within.

As a result of the work in Sydenham, in 2009/2010, Belfast City Council funded East Belfast Community Development Agency, to carry out a similar process within the communities of Clarawood, Ardcarne, Bloomfield and Knocknagoney, using a facilitator and EBCDA staff to manage the process as opposed to employing a specific worker. The results of these pieces of research were the production of documents which present an analytical picture of the area. From this, an overall action plan is developed and then a yearly action plan is developed from this.

In developing the research in the areas we are attempting to bring together a number of community, voluntary, statutory and church organisations to work together and share resources and ideas for the benefit of local people in the defined area on a long term basis.

Organisation Background

EBCDA is a support and networking organisation whose mission is to provide resources, support and capacity building programmes for community groups that are based on partnership, equal opportunities and sustainable outcomes. To fulfil these objectives the organisation has four strategic aims:

- Community Support/Capacity Building – To assess the needs of the community sector and work with other key organisations to draw up programmes, projects, plans and strategies that build capacity.
- Community Resource and Finance Services - To promote good financial management practice in the community sector by offering financial management advice, training services and a community accountancy service. To provide accessible meeting rooms and assistance with photocopying, production of newsheets, leaflets and other administrative support.
- Community Development Education and Training - To encourage, support and facilitate the provision of quality community development education and training opportunities.
- Advocacy - To seek to influence the policies of community, voluntary, government and public agencies so that they recognise the value of adopting a community development approach and that the community sector in East Belfast might benefit from this.

Proposal Detail

The Lower Castlereagh area sits on the Interface between Protestant and Catholic East Belfast. It is an area which has been deeply affected by interface violence and is dissected by Castlereagh Street/Castlereagh Road and Albertbridge Road and Woodstock Road. A community association does exist in the area and has attempted to undertake fragmented community development work, but they have no existing structures within which needs can be collectively identified, neither do they have a current action plan with which to address them. EBCDA would facilitate and manage the process in this area. The work would include:-

- Identifying and bringing together key stakeholders for initial meeting (e.g. active community groups, active statutory agencies, Church leaders, etc in the area)
- Formation of an area Working Group
- One to one interviews with Working Group members
- Completion of an area community needs audit
- Planning sessions, using an independent facilitator, which will enable the Working Group to identify and prioritise needs from the audit findings and draft an area action plan
- Support for the Working Group to investigate possibilities to implement the action plan and ensure sustainability of work undertaken.

EBCDA proposes to undertake this work, funded by BCC, and will manage this process in each of the area, commission an independent facilitator to complete the audit and planning aspects and support the Working Group throughout the process. We highly recommend using the facilitator with whom we worked during the similar work in Clarawood, Ardcar, Bloomfield and Knocknagoney

Timescales

We anticipate that the work in each area will take 6 months to complete, starting in January 2011 and concluding by June 2011.

Budget

The costs outlined below are based on the actual costs incurred to implement the pilot process in Sydenham and are therefore exact.

Facilitation Costs	£3,250.00
Community Needs Audit	£1,450.00
Working Group meetings and planning sessions	£1,000.00
Printing of area report and action plan	£1,000.00
Admin Support/Postage/Photocopying	£ 750.00
TOTAL	£7,450.00

EBCDA will provide management support for the development of the process within the 4 areas as part of their core work in East Belfast.