



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Review of Community Development Services with DSD
Date:	13 April 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Siobhan Watson, SNAP Manager, ext 3579 Cate Taggart, Community Services Manager, ext 3525

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that there are significant levels of Community Development work which takes place within communities in the Belfast area. There are a range of statutory organisations involved in funding this activity including the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Belfast Health & Social Services Trust, PSNI OFMDFM, DSD and Belfast City Council.
1.2	In addition to the work of the statutory agencies there are a large number of community and voluntary organisations who are involved in the delivery of community development activity at a neighbourhood level. This work includes the provision of community based infrastructure in the form of offices, community centres, child care facilities and enterprise units for the use of social enterprises. Along with the provision of physical assets the community and voluntary sector provide a wide range of services to meet the needs of local communities.
1.3	The Department for Social Development has the statutory responsibility for the development of neighbourhoods and their communities. In June 2003, the Department published 'People and Place: A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal' which set out the policy framework for tackling the complex, multi-dimensional challenges facing Northern Ireland's most disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods. In order to progress this strategy DSD established 12 Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships within the BCC area.

1.4	<p>The twelve partnerships are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Andersonstown - Ballysillan/Upper Ardoyne - Crumlin/Ardoyne - Greater Falls - Greater Shankill - Inner East Belfast - Inner North Belfast - Inner South Belfast - Lenadoon - Ligoniel - South West Belfast - Upper Springfield and Whiterock
1.5	<p>A recent review of the Neighbourhood Renewal Project identified that the Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO) fund over 600 projects relating to 37 service areas across the 12 partnerships.</p>
1.6	<p>In addition to Neighbourhood Renewal funding the DSD also support community development across the city through its Voluntary and Community Unit (VCU). This support takes the form of direct funding to community and voluntary groups who deliver services at the local level and through the provision of grants to Belfast City Council for the delivery of the Councils' Community Support Programme.</p>
1.7	<p>Belfast City Council also plays a key role in community development across the city through the activities of various departments. The Community Services Unit within the Development Department does this in a variety of ways, including the direct provision of community centres and other facilities and a wide range of programmes and projects. Community Services also provides indirect support as a core funder of many programmes and community owned facilities across the city.</p>

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>In the current financial climate it is recognised that the pressures which people face, particularly in the city's most disadvantaged areas are greater than ever before. The resources being made available to support these communities are limited and therefore it is important that ways are found to rationalise and consolidate the administration and delivery of community development funding. This will ensure that funds allocated to front line services are maximised.</p>
2.2	<p>Given the pressures on resources, the Department of Social Development are keen to review the way in which Community Development / Infrastructure services are currently supported across Belfast and to recommend how these could be better integrated and improved to ensure that we make the best possible impact with the funds administered in this area.</p>
2.3	<p>Although there are currently a range of bodies responsible for the various activities associated with community development / infrastructure across Belfast, it is proposed that the review will, in the first instance, only consider Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO), DSD Voluntary & Community Unit (VCU) and Belfast City Council (BCC).</p>

2.4	It is proposed that a steering group be established to oversee the review supported by a working group of representatives from BCC, VCU and BRO.
2.5	The working group would undertake the following tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complete an audit of and map all the current [recurring] community development / infrastructure interventions supported by DSD (BRO and VCU) and BCC across Belfast, including funding sources. – Produce an options report setting out potential framework within which DSD and BCC support can operate more efficiently and effectively. – Develop the necessary operational processes to take forward the implementation of the new model(s) and programme(s). This will include a period of community consultation.
2.6	It is proposed that the Director of Development represents the Council in the Steering Group and that the SNAP and Community Services Managers participate in the Working Group.
2.7	The Terms of Reference for the Working Group is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The project will be supported by the Director of Development, Officers from the SNAP Unit and Community Services.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no adverse implications in terms of equality of opportunity and good relations.

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Note the contents of the report. – Endorse the participation of Officers on the Steering and Working Groups for the development of the Service Delivery Model. – Agree to receive on-going reports regarding progress.

6	Decision Tracking
Timeline: Quarterly updates Reporting Officer: Siobhan Watson, Catherine Taggart	

7	Abbreviations
NR – Neighbourhood Renewal BRO – Belfast Regeneration Office DSD – Department for Social Development SNAP – Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme VCU – Voluntary and Community Unit	