



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Preparation of Community Support Plan 2001 to 2014
Date:	13 April 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Background Through its Community Support programme the Department for Social Development (DSD) part funds the Community Services activity of all of Northern Ireland's local authorities : '...to strengthen local communities, increase community participation and promote social inclusion through the stimulation and support of community groups, community activity and local advice services.'
1.2	To be eligible for funding a local authority must prepare a community support plan (CSP) which details how it will deliver services in support of this aim. The council's previous submissions have included an analysis of local need; an examination of the corporate and departmental context within which the work of Community Services is shaped and prioritised; and detail of the objectives, supporting activity, and performance measures associated with the plan.
1.3	DSD made £3,435,293 available to support Belfast City Council's plan for the period 2008 to 2010 and a further £1,584,286 for the period 2010 to 2011. This represents a contribution of approximately 23% to the Community Services total annual budget.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	The council has been awaiting confirmation from DSD that the Community Support programme would continue post 2011 and the related guidance to inform the nature of the required submission.

<p>2.2</p> <p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p> <p>2.5</p> <p>2.6</p> <p>2.7</p>	<p>DSD have now confirmed they hope to issue contracts to local government for the CSP 2011/12 in advance of April 2011 and that the contracts will outline the level of funding for that annual period and the conditions which will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submission of monitoring returns on the plan for the period 2010 to 2011</li> <li>- An outline action plan for 2011 to 2012</li> <li>- Budget estimates for 2011 to 2012</li> </ul> <p>The service will be in a position to meet these requirements subsequent to formal sign of the departmental business plans.</p> <p>Members will be aware that Community Services are leading on the development of a Community Development strategy for the council which will lead to a shared model of community development in Belfast, a clearer articulation of community development goals for the city and clarity around roles and responsibilities. The vision is that a well designed community development strategy will support council in the achievement of the new corporate plan which places great importance on the relationship between the council, its stakeholders, and the communities it serves in contributing to the quality of life of people in the city.</p> <p>This work is nearing completion and the final draft is scheduled for presentation to the SP&amp;R committee in June in advance of a public consultation exercise. The community development strategy is based on a three year time period 2011 to 2014 in line with the timeframe with the corporate plan.</p> <p>While community development work is delivered by the whole of council, Community Services provides both some of the main functions of community development and they can also support the contributions of other departments. The community development strategy will obviously inform the work of the service and the related Community Support Plan in coming years. It is proposed therefore that the council's CSP submission document should be for the same period.</p> <p>DSD have advised that while their basic submission requirements are for a one year plan, they are also willing to receive a three year CSP. DSD have indicated that it is likely the department will host a critical review of the CSP programme during the coming year with a view to improving practice and impact towards agreed community development outcomes. In doing so they welcome the developing BCC Community Development Strategy and the link to our planned CSP for the 2011-14 period. The initial draft of the Community Support Plan 2011-14 is currently being prepared by Community Services staff on this basis.</p> <p>Given the timeframes and various factors and obligations described above, it is proposed that, in the interest of efficiency savings, the preparation of the final submission to DSD should follow this process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community Services to submit to DSD its annual monitoring returns; an outline action plan for 2011 to 2012; proposals for a public consultation exercise; and budget estimates for 2011/2012</li> <li>2. Community Services to hold Party briefings on the proposed content of the CSP 2011-14 and that this plan is informed by the BCC community</li> </ol>
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2.8	<p>development strategy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Following contributions from Members, officers to table a draft CSP for development committee consideration (August 2011)</li> <li>4. Following council endorsement of the draft plan, officers to arrange a focussed public consultation for the Community Development Strategy and the CSP in late summer 2011.</li> <li>5. A final draft of the CSP for 2011 to 2014 to be presented to Development Committee in November / December and, following council endorsement, submission of final CSP to DSD.</li> </ol> <p>Therefore it is proposed that consultation on the CSP is in tandem to that on the CD strategy. Community Services are in the process of appointing facilitators to assist in this public consultation. As part of the specification the facilitator has been asked to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The consultation will be informed by the results of already completed pre-consultation work on the community development strategy.</li> <li>- That, at the end of the process, the council will have successfully consulted in the first instance with our Members; then with our communities; our internal council stakeholders; external partners including the community sector; and the groups Community Services support through its work.</li> <li>- The consultation will provide opportunities for contributions from the wider community sector in Belfast; statutory sector representatives; service users and residents.</li> <li>- We are particularly keen to use existing small scale community networks across the city for this purpose. This approach to be supplemented by the use of direct mailings, questionnaires, online surveys, phone calls, web, social media, email, etc.</li> <li>- The consultation will be carried out to a standard that ensures fulfilment of our commitments to Section 75 legislation and conforming with Equality Commission guidance and best practice, and the Scottish National Standards for engagement.</li> </ul>
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<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	There are no additional resource implications over that agreed in budget estimates.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	Preparation of the Community Support Plan will be subject to Equality Screening and a full independent Equality Impact Assessment

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the development of the BCC Community Development Strategy and the planned arrangements for formal consultation</li> <li>2. Approve the proposed process for submitting a Community Support Plan for 2011 to 2014 to the Department for Social Development.</li> <li>3. Agree to Party Briefings in advance of presentation of the Draft Community Support Plan to Development committee in August 2011</li> </ol>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
Further to Committees consideration of the report: Time line: December 2011                      Reporting Officer: Catherine Taggart	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
CSP: Community Support Plan DSD: Department for Social Development	