



Belfast City Council

Report to: Development Committee

Subject: Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme

Date: 27 September 2011

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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that at the Development Committee of 14 November 2007, approval was given for Belfast City Council to cluster with Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council for the delivery of Axis 3 of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (NIRDP).
1.2	Axis 3 of the NIRDP contains a funding allocation (£1,240,000) for the delivery of a programme of Village Renewal for rural settlements across the eligible cluster area of Belfast, Castlereagh and Lisburn. The purpose of the measure is to support animation and capacity building within and between villages and their surrounding rural areas.
1.3	A total of 17 eligible villages/rural settlements exist within the three council areas. Within Belfast, the only eligible village/settlement is Hannahstown. The Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) required potential village renewal projects to produce a village development plan, identifying priority projects which can be resourced from the available funds. This is a compulsory step required before any further funds can be drawn down. However, DARD funding for this activity is up to a maximum of 75% of costs incurred.
1.4	At the Development Committee of 9 March 2010, approval was given for Lisburn City Council to lead a funding bid (including Belfast and Castlereagh Councils) to DARD to draw down funding for the development of a discrete number of deliverable Village Renewal Plans.

2	Key issues
2.1	Following a competitive tendering process, The Paul Hogarth Company was appointed to develop a village plan for Hannahstown and the selected villages in Lisburn and Castlereagh council areas.
2.2	The village plan for Hannahstown has identified a number of a priority projects which are eligible and could be resourced from NIRDP funding. An extract from the plan is

	attached as Appendix 1. Through a competitive application process villages can apply for up to £250,000 of grant funding under the Village Renewal measure.
2.3	Match funding of around £80,000 is required to enable the village to draw down the maximum amount of funding from NIRDP. Of this amount, at least £16,000 must be provided as cash while the remainder can be provided through in-kind contributions, if possible. This can include technical design work etc.
2.4	The development of the village plan for Hannahstown has identified that the geographical coverage of the village extends into the Lisburn City Council area. Identified projects within the plan reflect the cross council boundary with projects spanning both council areas, albeit that the footprint of the village lies predominantly within the Belfast boundary and the majority of the occupants of the village also live within the Belfast boundary. In light of this, Lisburn City Council have indicated that they may consider some of the eligible activity that relates to their boundary e.g. pathways/walking trails.
2.5	In order to support the local community in bringing forward the development, it is proposed that Belfast City Council provides up to a maximum of £25,000 plus some officer support time to draw down the maximum level of resources possible.
2.6	It is also proposed that the Council should act in a technical support role to the project with the Community Development Association taking the lead in this application.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u> The maximum budget available to villages under the Village Renewal measure is £250,000. In order to support the community association in drawing down these resources, it is proposed that the Council provides up to £25,000 of in kind support as well as technical support in the form of officer time.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	No specific equality or good relations implications to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the proposed village renewal plan for Hannahstown - Agree to provide up to £25,000 cash support as well as technical officer support to assist the community development association in drawing down the optimum available resources under the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme, up to a total of £250,000.

6	Decision Tracking
	Report back on progress - April 2012.

7	Key to Abbreviations
	DARD – Department for Agriculture and Rural Development NIRDP – Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme