



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Public consultation results on the Community Support Plan 2011 to 2014
Date:	6 th March 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Through its Community Support programme the Department for Social Development (DSD) offers support to all of Northern Ireland's local authorities to deliver Community Services that ' <i>... strengthen local communities, increase community participation and promote social inclusion through the stimulation and support of community groups, community activity and local advice services.</i> '
1.2	Under the programme DSD made £3,435,293 available to Belfast City Council 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.
1.3	To be eligible for funding each council must prepare a Community Support Plan (CSP) that describes how it will deliver community services in support of the programme. A Belfast City Council draft Community Support Plan for 2011 to 2014 was approved by Development Committee in April 2011. (This followed delays on the part of DSD in confirming its submission requirements and procedures).
1.4	Members should note that DSD have already issued a contract to the council for our 2011/12 CSP prior to its submission to them. The contract was subject to the submission of monitoring returns, budgets estimates, the draft plan, and a commitment to complete the twelve week public consultation.
1.5	Members agreed to a twelve week public consultation on the plan to run in parallel with the consultation on the council's draft Community Development Strategy. (A re-drafted Community Development strategy and equality screening are currently being prepared and will be presented to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March 2012).

1.6	The structure and content of the draft CSP was greatly informed by work and evidence emerging from the council's draft Community Development strategy. In the development of both documents officers held pre-consultation workshops for Members, community development staff in the council; with thematic co-ordinators (including those with responsibility for Equality, Older People, Children and Young People, Good Relations); and with Policy Officers.
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2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>The twelve week public consultation on the draft document included the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All party briefings for Members - Workshops with officers from across the council including the thematic co-ordinators and the policy officers group; - Substantial analysis of the wider socio-economic and policy context; - Direct mailing to over 300 organisations from the community and voluntary sectors including all community grant recipients; - Mailing copies of the document and a questionnaire to all organisations on the Section 75 list and two briefings to the council's Equality Consultative Forum; - Presentations to the Belfast Area Partnership Boards; the twelve Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships; and Youth Forum; - We held five public workshops in north, south, east and west Belfast, which were advertised in the media, and an additional workshop for representatives of the statutory sector. - The document and questionnaire were also available for download from the council's website.
2.3	<p>There was broad support for the CSP and its contents and a number of organisations identified opportunities for joint working with the council on a number of areas. There were no equality issues raised during the consultation. Officers worked with the council's Equality Officer to finalise an equality screening on the planned CSP. The recommendation, based on the results of the consultation, is that the CSP be screened out and not subjected to a full equality impact assessment.</p>
2.4	<p>Following approval by Members the results of the consultation, together with the screening decision and the final draft of the CSP will be submitted to DSD as part of the requirements of their contract.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no additional resource implications over that agreed in budget estimates.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	<p>Following the twelve week public consultation and discussions with the Council's Equality Officer, the evidence suggests that the plan has no substantial equality impact and has been screened out. It will not require a full Equality Impact Assessment.</p>

5	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agree to the decision to screen out the CSP and not carry out a full Equality Impact Assessment, and;2. Agree to the submission of the CSP to DSD to finalise the contractual requirements under their Community Support programme.

6	Decision Tracking
Further to Committees consideration of the report: Time line: March 2012 Reporting Officer: Catherine Taggart	

7	Key to Abbreviations
CSP: Community Support Plan DSD: Department for Social Development	

8	Miscellaneous
The draft CSP is available for download at: http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/communitysupportplan or from Democratic Services on request.	