



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Consultation: £15M Big Lottery Supporting Families
Date	17 April 2012
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen Director of Development ext 3470
Contact Officer:	David Purchase, Policy Officer, ext 3792

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Council has been asked to respond to this online consultation which is a follow up to the Big Thinking consultation in 2008/09. The Big Lottery now want to develop a programme of support to address the needs of families. Their proposals involve a £15M open programme from 2012 - 2015. It will provide funding for up to 5 years to support activities that develop the skills of families with children under the age of 12 to provide supportive and nurturing relationships to improve children's lives. Grants will be between £100k-£500k to fund mainly revenue activity.
1.2	The aim of the programme is that 'families will be enabled to provide supportive and nurturing relationships to improve their children's lives.'
1.3	It will deliver the following outcomes:
1.4	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Families will have improved resilience to overcome adversity2. Families will have increased opportunities to learn together3. Families will be enabled to participate in all aspects of community life.
1.5	It will help to address challenges families may face including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- physical and/or emotional abuse- poverty- substance/alcohol abuse- disability- homelessness

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - separation - social isolation - caring.
1.6	The Full proposal is attached as appendix 1.
1.7	Comments are required to be submitted using an online form by the 4th May 2012.
1.8	The consultations document was distributed to officers across Council and their responses have been included in the provisional draft response attached as appendix 2.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The document is an overview paper rather than a detailed programme. Responses to the document will inform the design of future programmes and ensure funding makes a difference to the communities and people most in need.
2.2	As an online survey has been used, we have to limit the size of our responses. The specific questions are:
2.3	<p>Q.1 Do you think the programme aim best reflects the needs of families in Northern Ireland?</p> <p>Q.1b If no, what do you think the most important aim is to support the needs of families in Northern Ireland?</p> <p>Q.2 Do you think the programme outcomes best reflect the needs of families in Northern Ireland?</p> <p>Q.2b If no, what do you think the most important outcomes are for families in Northern Ireland?</p> <p>Q.3 We are proposing that this programme should support families facing challenges such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - physical and/or emotional abuse - poverty - substance/alcohol abuse - disability - homelessness - separation - social isolation - caring <p>Do you agree with our definition of the challenges that a family may face?</p> <p>Q.3b If no, what other factors should be included?</p> <p>Q.4 Do you agree that this programme should support families with a child/children younger than 12 years of age?</p> <p>Q.4b If no, what age range would you suggest?</p> <p>Q.5 Should we encourage and support partnership working and collaboration across sectors?</p> <p>Q.6 Do you think the proposed grant sizes of £100,000 - £500,000 are appropriate?</p> <p>Q.6b If no, what is the appropriate grant size?</p> <p>Q.7 Do you think the proposed grant length of three to five years is appropriate?</p> <p>Q.7b If no, what is the appropriate grant length?</p> <p>Q.8 How can we ensure the projects we fund involve families in project design, development and delivery?</p>

2.4	<p>Q.9 Are there any further comments you wish to make about our proposed programme to support families?</p> <p>In general the proposals seem sensible and supportive of many of the Council's existing priorities. The proposals may benefit from specific reference to the difficulties faced by families in interface areas and to stress the importance of longer term programmes.</p>
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3	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no resource implications.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no negative equality or good relations implications.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to approve the draft BCC response to the consultation and raise any additional issues, relating to the consultation document, that they would like to be included.

	Decision Tracking
Timeline:	4th May 2012 Reporting Officer: David Purchase

	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 "Consultation Draft Response £15M Big Lottery Supporting Families"</p> <p>Appendix 2 "Supporting Families" Big Lottery Fund 2012.</p>

Appendix 1

Consultation Draft Response £15M Big Lottery Supporting Families

Q1. Do you think the programme aim best reflects the needs of families in Northern Ireland?

Yes.

Q.1b If no, what do you think the most important aim is to support the needs of families in Northern Ireland?

Q.2 Do you think the programme outcomes best reflect the needs of families in Northern Ireland?

No

Q.2b If no, what do you think the most important outcomes are for families in Northern Ireland?

Outcome 2 should be widened to read “opportunities to learn and develop together”. The use of the word “learn” on its own may lead people to think of formal educational issues and attainment only whereas the focus should be on the wider development of the family and young person. There may also be scope for including reference to the opportunities to engage with and better understand different communities (see our reference to interface areas for questions 3b).

Q.3 We are proposing that this programme should support families facing challenges such as:

- physical and/or emotional abuse
- poverty
- substance/alcohol abuse
- disability
- homelessness
- separation
- social isolation
- caring

Do you agree with our definition of the challenges that a family may face?

No

Q.3b If no, what other factors should be included?

The legacy of the Troubles and those living in or near interface areas should be highlighted as a particular challenge. There is much evidence to show that those living in interface areas are more likely to be in poverty, with lower levels of educational attainment etc. Social isolation is mentioned as a factor, and whilst this could perhaps fall under this heading, given the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland, it is important to recognise the importance and impact of good relations on our society. Although there are many programmes designed to help in the transition from conflict, the impact on families particularly those at interface areas should still be acknowledged. BIG may want to give some thought as to how a family centred approach, such as that being proposed under this scheme, could work hand in hand with other funding streams and

initiatives (for example, that are targeted at interface communities) to provide a more joined up and intensive level of support.

Q.4 Do you agree that this programme should support families with a child/children younger than 12 years of age?

Yes.

Q.4b If no, what age range would you suggest?

Q.5 Should we encourage and support partnership working and collaboration across sectors?

Leading on from our comment about interface areas, yes it is important that this funding promotes collaboration and partnership working. There are many initiatives that would benefit from intensive work with families – but often this level of intensive support is too expensive and time-consuming, therefore efforts instead focus on wider programmes or universal type activities. It would be helpful if this funding could promote partnership working and actually encourage the joining-up of funding, resources and initiatives so that macro and micro level activity can take place collaboratively.

Q.6 Do you think the proposed grant sizes of £100,000 - £500,000 are appropriate?

Yes.

Q.6b If no, what is the appropriate grant size?

Q.7 Do you think the proposed grant length of three to five years is appropriate?

No

Q.7b If no, what is the appropriate grant length?

Belfast communities we have engaged with on Lottery and other grant schemes have raised concerns about the short term approach to some funding and the number of pilot initiatives. The opportunity for 5 year funding streams would be welcome, but steps should also be taken well before the funding comes to an end to look at transitioning or mainstreaming successful projects. The Greater Shankill and West Belfast Integrated Services for Children and Young People would be a prime example. Given the nature of this support / funding it will take time to build up the relationships and rapport with families in order to make a real difference; funding should therefore be for a minimum of 3 years.

Q.8 How can we ensure the projects we fund involve families in project design, development and delivery?

It could be a requirement of funding that projects include representatives from families (ideally those in the programme). It should also be a requirement that participating families are able to comment on the programme during its life and at its end. This could be through a standard and not overly complicated survey form. This could form part of any annual monitoring and would ensure lessons are learnt and projects amended as necessary. A permanent 'families forum' could be funded and established to comment on future projects during the life of the overall programme.

Q.9 Are there any further comments you wish to make about our proposed programme to support families?

Generally we would be supportive of this scheme as it fits with the Council's ethos of improving quality of life and many of our supporting corporate objectives and activities. The focus on family should provide a much needed "people-centred" approach and, as it is built around the core societal concept of family, it should provide a much more targeted and holistic approach to helping address need. The focus on early years (support and intervention), particularly within the context of a family setting, is a theme which emerges regularly in our engagement processes. We would therefore welcome any funding that helps provide that holistic and micro level support.