



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Progress report on the Community Development Infrastructure Programme project
Date:	22 May 2012
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Services ext 3525

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	At its December 2012 Committee agreed that council officers should continue discussions with the Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO) and the Voluntary and Community Unit (VCU) in DSD towards the establishment of a new strategic programme to support a resilient and effective community development infrastructure across the city (referred to in this paper as the 'Community Development Infrastructure Programme' or CDIP).
1.2	The CDIP is one of the commitments of the council's Investment Programme. It is also one element of a wider agenda relating to the transfer of functions from Government Departments to Belfast City Council under the Review of Public Administration. It will thus be important to ensure that the work undertaken as part of the CDIP is aligned to this broader agenda.
1.3	There are three main drivers for the new programme: (i) <u>Supporting strategic community development activity</u> : Currently public sector grant support for community development is somewhat uncoordinated and lacking in strategic focus. It is diluted by disconnected aims and deliverables and its impact has been extremely difficult to measure. A single shared programme presents an opportunity to support a process whereby statutory partners can work with the community and voluntary sectors to agree on a shared vision, strategic outcomes and the necessary shared infrastructure, programmes and initiatives required to deliver them. (ii) <u>Efficiency savings</u> : In the current financial climate there is an increased emphasis on community development and self-help solutions and a need for a well structured and skilled sector with the necessary resources to tackle social and economic exclusion. The various existing community

	<p>development funding strands have substantial associated administrative overheads both for funders and for grant recipients. There are likely to be inefficiencies in the many parallel application processes and monitoring and evaluation systems. A single programme has the potential to address many of these issues. Such work also addresses one of the priorities of the new Joint Public Sector Forum which, as part of the Government's Concordat with the sector, will be tackling issues of bureaucracy in the relationship between the public and community and voluntary sectors.</p> <p>(iii) <u>Learning for the Review of Public Administration</u>: The transfer of local community development responsibilities is one of the first such functions to be transferred planned under the Review of Public Administration. This is an opportunity for the council and DSD to test many of the practical issues related to such transfers including issues around staffing, audit systems integration, governance arrangements, etc.</p>
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2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>It is proposed that the CDIP will draw together eight existing funding streams including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all of BRO's funding for community development under the <u>Neighbourhood Renewal</u> programme; - the Voluntary and Community Unit's <u>Community Investment Fund</u> to groups in the city; - and Belfast City Council's funding under the <u>Community Support Programme</u> - which includes our Capacity Grant programme, Revenue funding for community facilities, and funding for the city's Advice and Information consortia and our small grant programme; - BRO community development funding for the <u>Belfast Area Partnership Boards</u> to a level of £965,000. <p>Currently the combined annual funding pot of these streams is approximately £6 million distributed to approximately 300 organisations in support of nearly 600 projects. (The main areas of funding are their approximate totals are illustrated in Appendix 1).</p>
2.2	The new programme is likely to have three main strands:
2.3	(i) <u>Core Community Development</u> : Supporting local consortia/ organisations to develop an active, influential, informed sustainable and organised community; working in partnership to identify and address local issues; inform local service provision; promote participation and active citizenship; and build neighbourhood relationships.
2.4	(ii) <u>Community Buildings</u> : Supporting local consortia/organisations to provide venues for people to gather, meet, participate, share information and celebrate, in recognition that community centres promote social inclusion, participation and engagement and as such they are often the first point of contact between the individual and wider community involvement. They provide a focal point for deprived communities and are a base for local service delivery.

2.5	(iii) <u>Advice and Information:</u> Contribution to advice consortia in N,S,E,W and central Belfast which will allow them to provide generalist advice, enabling ease of access, especially for those who are most disadvantaged, to information, advice and advocacy services which ensures that local people are aware of their rights and entitlements and are able to maximise their opportunities and quality of life
2.6	It is intended that the defined outcomes for the new programme would be shaped by the council's new Community Development strategy (which is currently in draft form but expected to be adopted by council shortly) and emerging neighbourhood assets planning. There has already been a commitment by DSD to also adopt the council's strategy for this purpose. Depending on the size and nature of any contracts awarded, consortia or groups would be expected to demonstrate how their programme of work is contributing to these pre-defined outcomes within the geographical area to which the contract applies.
2.7	<u>Governance arrangements:</u> A steering group has been established to lead the project plan for the design and implementation of the CDIP. Members of the group include the director of Development, and senior representatives from BRO, VCU and a voluntary sector representative from Community Foundation Northern Ireland (CFNI).
2.8	At the December 2011 Development Committee meeting Members raised concerns about political representation and agreed that the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, or their nominees, be nominated to serve as the Council's representatives on the steering group.
2.9	DSD, following discussions with the Minister have proposed that alternative arrangements might include ensuring regular update reports on the project to the Development Committee and the DSD Minister and that arrangements be made for the Minister to meet with the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, or their nominees, during the project life. This item has been added to the agenda for a forthcoming meeting with the Minister at the Committee's request.
2.10	An Inter-agency Delivery Group (IADG) has also been set up with officers from Development, BRO, VCU and CFNI. The IADG will be responsible for the delivery of the project plan. A number of smaller Task and Finish Groups will also be established to deliver individual pieces of work associated with the project. These groups will draw on officers from across the organisations.
2.11	<u>Project plan:</u> At its meeting on the 30 April the steering group agreed a draft project plan for the development of the new programme. (The main areas of work of this plan are illustrated in Appendix 2). Under these draft proposals the steering recommend that all currently-funded groups would have one-year extensions to their contracts (ie, covering the period 2013 to 2014). However, during this year groups would be expected to work with the council and DSD on the development of the new CDIP. The programme would go to open call in Autumn 2013 with new contracts in place for April 2014. This recommended time-line is subject to BCC and DSD ministerial approval.
2.12	During the proposed 'transition' year (April 2013 to March 2014) field staff will work to put in place the programme systems. There is strong emphasis on working with groups to ensure their capacity to bid for contracts.

2.13	It will be important to engage as soon as possible with the funded groups on the broad direction of the programme, its purpose and its implications for funding and contracts. If we want to promote a community development approach to the programme we need to work with these groups on the design and implementation. This is included in the project plan design.
2.14	<p>Critical milestones under the project plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Summer 2012</u>: Engagement on the development of an agreed outcomes framework - <u>Autumn 2012</u>: Development of programme content, criteria, supporting management systems - <u>February 2013 to April 2013</u>: Public consultation on the new programme - <u>October 2013</u>: Open call for the new programme's contracts - <u>March 2014</u>: New contracts awarded - <u>April 2014</u>: New contracts go live – with programme of support, monitoring and evaluation by field staff <p>This is a significant change management project with a challenging timescale and milestones that offer very little flexibility in terms of delays. All key decisions will be presented to Development Committee for consideration and agreement,</p>
2.15	Building a common outcomes framework is the keystone to the entire project and will require immediate attention. Most of the other activities associated with the project will be based on the results of this piece of work. As noted above the council's draft Community Development strategy provides the theoretical underpinning for the outcomes framework. It is proposed that work is commissioned in June 2012 to allow a framework to be in place for the Autumn of 2012. This is likely to be a substantial piece of work requiring detailed examination of existing CD funding programmes and engagement with officers and the sector on future project outcomes and likely associated measures and indicators.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The project is likely to call upon officer support from across the Council but with a particular emphasis on support from Development Department and its Community Services section. It should be noted that both BRO and VCU are committing substantial staff resources to the delivery of the project.
3.2	A budget of £30,000 will be required to commission the development of the programme outcomes framework. BRO have agreed to contribute 50% of this figure subject to Ministerial approval.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	The project plan for the CDIP includes a commitment to EIAQ screening and the completion of a public consultation on the proposals. Following this work the Equality and Good Relations implications are expected to be identified.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To agree to the proposed rationale for the new programme 2. To confirm the governance arrangements as outlined above 3. To confirm the project timeline and the related project plan approach as outlined 4. To agree in principle to extending current Council grant contracts for Advice and Information, Capacity and Revenue funded groups into 2013/2014 pending compliant monitoring and appropriate submissions and assessment of work programmes including any transitional arrangements. 5. To agree to the commissioning of an outcomes framework for the programme

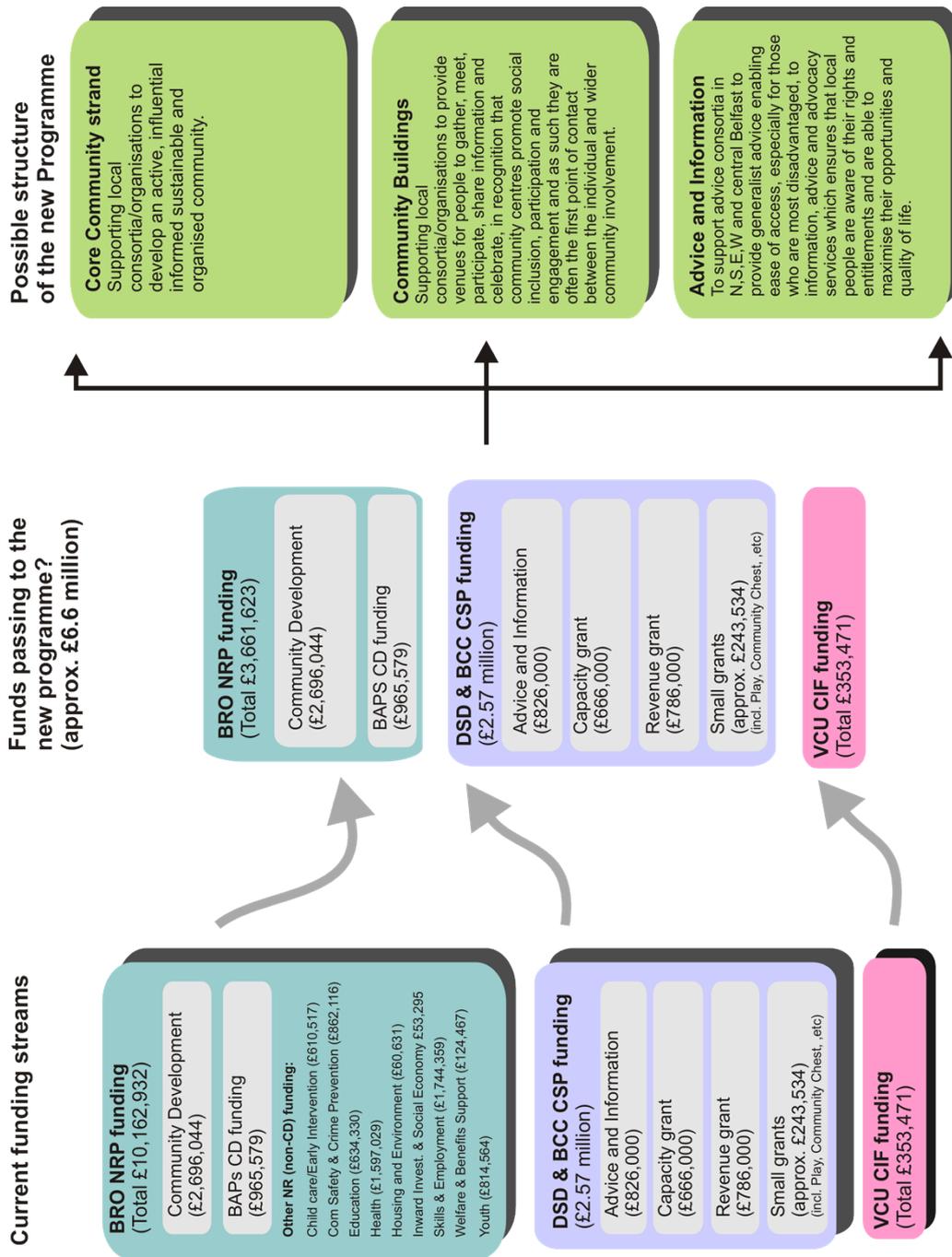
6	Decision Tracking
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Officer Responsible: John McGrillen - Catherine Taggart to implement actions in line with the CDIP project plan

7	Key to Abbreviations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BRO – Belfast Regeneration Office - CDIP - Community Development Infrastructure Programme - CFNI – Community Foundation Northern Ireland - IADG - Inter-agency Delivery Group - DSD - Department for Social Development - VCU – Voluntary and Community Unit

8	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1: Current funding programmes contributing to the new CDIP Appendix 2: Main areas of work in the CDIP project plan</p>

Appendix 1: Current funding programmes contributing to the new CDIP

(Note: Totals are approximates based on 2010/11 figures)



Appendix 2: Main areas of work in the CDIP project plan

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