



## Belfast City Council

**Report to:** Development Committee

**Subject:** Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme

**Date:** 26 June 2012

**Reporting Officer:** John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

**Contact Officer:** Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

1	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
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 identified future activity is up to a maximum of 75% of costs incurred.
1.4	The village plan for Hannahstown has identified a number of a priority projects which are eligible and could be resourced from NIRDP funding. Through a competitive application process eligible villages can apply for up to £250,000 of grant funding under the Village Renewal measure.
1.5	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. Subsequently, 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2011, the Development Committee agreed to provide up to £25,000 along with some officer support to draw down the maximum level of resources possible under the DARD programme. Lisburn City Council has agreed in principle to provide up to 50% of the required match funding to support the bid through DARD.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
2.1	Phase 1 of the application was recently taken through the economic appraisal process. Following approval by the Lagan Rural Partnership £139,632, based on 75% of a total cost of £186,176 ( <b>Appendix 1</b> ), has been awarded with the match funding (already secured) to be provided by both Belfast and Lisburn City Councils.
2.2	As part of this Phase a number of enhancements have been planned for the area including the creation of a distinct village identity through physical improvements to improve the sense of arrival and initial Impressions of Hannahstown that will establish unique and attractive gateway signage. Furthermore, proposals seek to increase use and enhance the natural setting through the upgrading of Glenside Community Woodland entrance and improvements to underpin the role of church and community centre as a key village assets. The environmental quality of the Village will be enhanced through upgraded fencing and boundary treatment; a Highway to Health Initiative at Lámh Dhearg CLG and improved approach routes into Hannahstown through environmental improvements.
2.3	<u>Delegated Authority: Procurement of proposed works.</u>
2.4	The Renewing the Routes team will work in liaison with the Project Management Unit of the Property and Projects Department who will manage the procurement of necessary construction related design services and construction contracts for the carrying out of the works across all the areas and the subsequent administration of the contracts.
2.5	To support the ongoing activity and successful implementation of the project committee is requested to approve the invitation of tenders for construction related design services and construction contracts. These are required for the carrying out of the works across all the areas identified and the award of contracts to those firms submitting the tenders which are evaluated as being the most economically advantageous in terms of quality and cost criteria, in accordance with Council procurement guidelines.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<u>Financial</u>  Match funding already approved for this Phase of the application.

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

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	Note the updates on the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme; and
5.2	Approve the invitation of tenders for construction related design services and measured term contracts for the carrying out of the works across all the areas identified and the award of contracts to those firms submitting the tenders which are evaluated as being the most economically advantageous in terms of quality and cost criteria, in accordance with Council procurement guidelines

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	Report back on progress – September 2012.

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