



Belfast City Council

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| Report to: | Development Committee |
| Subject: | Progress report on the 'Building Better Communities' Belfast Community Investment Programme (BCIP) |
| Date: | 18 September 2012 |
| Reporting Officer: | John McGrillen, Director of Development ext 3470 |
| Contact Officer: | Catherine Taggart, Community Services ext 3525 |

| 1 | Relevant Background Information |
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| 1.1 | In June 2012 the Development Committee agreed that the council will work with the Department for Social Development (DSD) to create a new joint programme to support community development activity in the Belfast City Council area. The approach and timetable to developing the programme was subsequently agreed by the Minister for Social Development in July. |
| 1.2 | The new ' <i>Building Better Communities - Belfast Community Investment Programme</i> ' (BCIP) will bring together all of Community Service's existing grant schemes and combine them with Belfast Regeneration Office's Neighbourhood Renewal funding for community development and the Voluntary and Community Unit's Community Investment Fund to create a single fund in excess of £5 million which will be directly managed by the council. |
| 1.3 | <p>The fund, which is expected to run from April 2014, will provide a single approach to public sector support for Belfast's community development infrastructure and ensure that it is capable of having a positive and measurable impact in communities. The programme is likely to have three main strands:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <u>Core community development</u>: Supporting local consortia and organisations to develop an active, influential, informed sustainable and organised community.2. <u>Community buildings</u>: Supporting local organisations and communities by providing venues for them to gather, meet, participate, share information and collaborate.3. <u>Advice and information</u>: Supporting advice consortia in north, south, east, west and central Belfast. |

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| 1.4 | Members had requested regular updates on the progress of the BCIP and this is the first update paper. |
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| 2 | Key Issues |
| 2.1 | <p><u>Project plan</u> The director of Development represents the council on a project steering group which also includes representatives from BRO and VCU and from Community Foundation Northern Ireland (CFNI). This steering group has approved an eighteen month project plan for the development and implementation of the programme.</p> |
| 2.2 | A larger inter-agency delivery group (IADG) is responsible for the successful delivery of this plan. The IADG includes officers from the three organisations and a representation from the community and voluntary sector. |
| 2.3 | The team will be working closely with Members and stakeholders over the autumn period to identify the community development outcomes that the programme needs to achieve and then to build the necessary systems and processes to support it. |
| 2.4 | <p>The main elements of the plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governance & project management – ensuring the delivery of the project, relationship management between the key organisations and political representatives and ensuring links to the wider RPA process. - Communications and Engagement – ensuring communities are actively engaged in the design and implementation of the programme, ensuring our staff and other relevant partner organisations are engaged in the process. - Building Shared Outcomes – determine what impact we want from the programme and how we will measure its performance and engage with the sector on measuring success. - Grant Design – Working from agreed outcomes, determine grant criteria, assessment, baselining, develop application forms and supporting documentation. - Grant Administration- designing the processes and IT systems to manage administration and measurement of the programme. - Transition Year – Develop and implement an “investment readiness” programme for groups to prepare for the new programme including capacity support for staff. - Human Resources – Determining the skills, capacity and structures required to implement and arrange the new programme including transition. |
| 2.5 | <p>The project plan has a number of key dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autumn 2012: Development and engagement on programme content, criteria, supporting management systems. - February 2013-April 2013: Public consultation on the new programme. |

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| 2.5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - April 2013- March 2014: Transition year, including support for the sector in readiness for the programme's new criteria. - October 2013: Open call for the new programme's contracts. - March 2014: New contracts awarded. - April 2014: New one-year contracts go live – with programme of support, monitoring and evaluation by field staff. |
| 2.6 | <p>During the current 2012/2013 period, over 300 community organisations are receiving funding under the existing grant schemes. Assuming they meet existing monitoring requirements, and are willing to participate in the development of the new programme, these same groups will also be offered a further one year of funding for the period 2013/2014. (The exceptions to this are the council's small grants schemes which will be subject to the usual open call process).</p> |
| 2.7 | <p><u>Current status (as of August 2012)</u> As agreed by Members in June, consultants Community Places have been appointed to work with the three organisations to develop a shared outcomes framework for the programme and associated grant design and performance management systems.</p> |
| 2.8 | <p>This work, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2012, will include substantial engagement with key stakeholders including Members and the community and voluntary sector. This will be in addition to a full public consultation in early 2013 as part of the standard Equality screening process.</p> |
| 2.9 | <p>The first stage of the engagement was a workshop for all field staff in the three partner organisations. The workshop examined the challenges for staff in implementing the programme and considered the potential positive impact that it will have in communities.</p> |
| 2.10 | <p>As noted above, 2013/2014 will be a transition year during which we will develop and test the programme while supporting the community and voluntary sector to prepare for it. Groups currently funded under the existing schemes have received initial correspondence about the programme, detailing the broader context of the programme and the change it will have in relation to how groups are currently funded.</p> |
| 2.11 | <p>A dedicated webpage has been set up which provides current information and developments on the programme and includes Frequently Asked Questions for groups and organisations. Members can view it at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bcip</p> |
| 2.12 | <p><u>Next steps</u> Over the next four months the project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyse best practice to inform the framework design and content - Examine the existing funding schemes to identify common outcomes, indicators, etc that may inform the new programme. - Deliver an engagement plan with relevant stakeholders. |

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| 2.12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold an engagement workshop for Members - Prepare a draft outcomes framework |
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| 3 | Resource Implications |
| 3.1 | The project will continue to call upon officer support from across the Council 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. |

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| 4 | Equality and Good Relations Implications |
| 4.1 | The project plan for the BCIP 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. |

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| 5 | Recommendations |
| 5.1 | <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To consider the detail of the project plan and next steps. 2. To agree to a workshop for all Members on the outcomes of the programme. |

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

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| 7 | Key to Abbreviations |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BRO - Belfast Regeneration Office - BCIP – Belfast Community Investment Programme - DSD - Department for Social Development - VCU - Voluntary and Community Unit |

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| 8 | Documents Attached |
| | Appendix 1: Main areas of work in the BCIP project plan |

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