



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Update report on the Belfast Community Investment Programme (BCIP) including the draft outcomes framework
Date:	29 January 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Services, ext 3525

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The 'Belfast Community Investment Programme' (BCIP) is a new joint programme being established by Belfast City Council and the Department for Social Development (DSD) that will go to open call in October 2013. Initially it will offer one year contracts beginning April 2014 (with the expectation that this would move towards multi-annual funding arrangements from April 2015).
1.2	BCIP will bring together all of Community Service's existing grant schemes (Advice and Information, Capacity Support, Revenue and other small community grants) and combine them with the Belfast Regeneration Office's Neighbourhood Renewal funding for community development and the Voluntary and Community Unit's Community Investment Fund. This will create a single fund for the city in excess of £5million annually which will be managed directly by the council.
1.3	<u>Purpose of BCIP</u> BCIP's aims to offer strategic support for Belfast's community development infrastructure and ensure that such infrastructure is capable of having a positive impact in communities. It aims to do this in a way that reduces bureaucracy for groups seeking funding; and provides all partners with an agreed approach to determining community development outcomes and measuring the impact of the work that is being supported.
1.4	This is based on the understanding that community development activity creates more resilient and adaptive communities. Evidence from Belfast and elsewhere shows that such communities can respond much more effectively to economic, social and environmental changes. It can help them address and respond to the worst effects of these changes and it sustains an environment that fosters initiatives and opportunities.
1.5	The programme is an investment (both through grant aid and developmental support) to ensure that Belfast has an effective city-wide community development infrastructure (ie, the workers and volunteers, organisations, networks and buildings needed to sustain community development activity).

1.6	<p>For public service deliverers, such as Belfast City Council and Government Departments, the existence of such an infrastructure is an important component is making sure that our services are designed and delivered effectively and efficiently. For example, it would be much more difficult for the council to deliver services such as our Renewing the Routes programmes or individual Employability, Community Safety or Health initiatives without the existence of strong community sector partners.</p>
1.7	<p>This infrastructure will become more critical as we begin to incorporate Community Planning or area-based planning approaches to our work. Evidence from cities which have adopted successful approaches to Community Planning (such as Dundee) has shown that the existence of a strong community development infrastructure is a pre-requisite for the establishment and delivery of Community Planning.</p>
1.8	<p>DSD's draft Urban Regeneration and Community Development Framework (which will form the basis of the transfer of urban regeneration and community development responsibilities to councils) echoes the strategic case for more cohesive and engaged communities. It highlights the importance of community development in the pursuit of Government policy aims and recognises the importance of strong community infrastructure to enable social and economic objectives to be achieved in more sustainable and efficient ways.</p>

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Delivering the project BCIP is operating under a challenging time framework with the open call scheduled for October 2013. Since July 2012, when the Council and the DSD Minister agreed to move forward with BCIP, officers from both organisations have developed and instigated a substantial 15 month project plan. There are a number of major elements to the plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Autumn 2012) Development of a shared outcomes framework to determine what BCIP should focus on and how we should measure our impact; - (Winter 2012/13) The development of new grant strands that reflect the agreed outcomes; - (Spring 2013) Development of grant administration, monitoring, and performance management systems; - (Spring 2013 onwards) Transition support for the community sector to prepare them for the new programme and its delivery - (Summer/Autumn 2013) Preparation for open call, assessment and grant recommendations
2.2	<p>There was a commitment by partners from the outset to engage with the sector during the entire development phases of the programme in addition to a formal public consultation programme in the spring of 2013 and an Equality Impact Assessment.</p>
2.3	<p>Given the substantial workload and compressed time scales for the programme, DSD and the council have agreed to establish a project office (located in the Cecil Ward building from February 2013) which will bring together seven officers from both agencies to ensure delivery of the project.</p>

2.4	<p>The draft outcomes framework</p> <p>There is a commitment by both the council and DSD to take an ‘outcomes planning’ approach to the development of BCIP. In other words we committed to first building agreement between partners and with the sector on the outcomes we wished to achieve and then working backwards to determine the likely activity and outputs that BCIP could support in order to contribute to these outcomes. For each outcome we also determine a basket of measures required to measure success.</p>
2.5	<p>The council’s Community Development strategy provides the underpinning policy for the framework and is the basis for a common working definition of ‘community development’. Following best practice research and substantial engagement with Members, staff and the community sector, we have prepared a draft framework for Members to consider (see Appendix 1).</p>
2.6	<p>The framework defines the impact that community development is expected to have in the city and identifies a basket of potential proxy indicators with which to measure this impact. These outcomes and their associated indicators will then form the basis of the design of the grant programme and its criteria. It will also be the basis for grant and programme monitoring and evaluation.</p>
2.7	<p>The framework proposes two ‘strategic’ outcomes for community development work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Residents are active and involved 2. Communities are engaged and influential <p>(These outcomes have the potential to be adopted not only for BCIP but for any programme which seeks to define its contribution to community development.)</p>
2.8	<p>Supporting these are three BCIP programme outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Community groups are more resilient and thriving 4. People have access to welcoming and inclusive community space 5. People have access to services and support <p>Any new grant streams being designed under the BCIP programme will have to align to one or more of these outcomes.</p>
2.9	<p>A series of potential qualitative and quantitative indicators are identified in the attached report for each of the five outcomes (pages 18 to 22). These offer a way of measuring the impact of BCIP over time. Most of the indicator information would be collected through standard grant monitoring processes. However, a number would have to be gathered through additional evaluation processes or via survey techniques. Not all funded activities will need to report on all indicators.</p>
2.10	<p>At this stage the indicator set is ‘best case’ option for measuring BCIP. However, in practice it may prove impractical or too expensive to use the suggested set. Over the next period officers, will be working to establish an optimal set of indicators for the programme.</p>

2.11	<p>Once Members have considered the Outcomes framework and agreed on a final draft, the project team will begin work on the design of supporting grant stream that align with the agreed outcomes. It is likely that the strands will reflect three main areas of activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for core community capacity; - Support for community buildings; and - Support for Generalist Advice and Information.
2.12	<p>On the 6th February (at City Hall) the team are planning a public workshop for the community sector on the final agreed outcomes framework and a discussion on the nature of the final grant streams.</p>
2.13	<p><u>Member engagement</u> Following a second round of community engagement, officers will prepare a draft BCIP programme document which will describe proposals for new grant streams; indicative criteria and supported activity for each. This will be presented to Development Committee in March for approval along with plans for a twelve week public consultation and Equality Impact Assessment beginning April 2013. Following this consultation a final Equality-proofed programme document will be presented to Development Committee in June 2013.</p>
2.14	<p>During the summer of 2013 officers will be working to finalise the technical and administration processes required prior to the open call for applications in October. Community Development Officers from both the council and DSD will also be working with the sector to prepare them for the open call.</p>
2.15	<p>It is expected that the grant application and assessment process will be complete by February 2014 at which time recommendations for award of grants to groups will then be made to Development Committee.</p>
2.16	<p>Members of Development Committee had requested that in addition to this ongoing reporting that a new Member Officer Working Group be established to enhance Member engagement on BCIP. Given the demand on Members' diaries it has proven difficult to secure Party nominations for this new group and an initial meeting scheduled for December 2012 was postponed.</p>
2.17	<p>An alternative proposal is that the existing Community Planning Reference Group act at the reference group for BCIP. There is a strong strategic fit in this proposal as the Group already has a remit that includes the corporate Community Development strategy. This paper has also described the supporting role that community development is likely to play in any future Community Planning model and the Reference Group may help ensure that the final design of BCIP aligns with current thinking in Community Planning.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p>Project costs for the development of BCIP are being jointly supported by Development Department and the Department for Social Development.</p>

3.2	As part of the project plan officers will seek to establish the costs associated with the ongoing delivery of BCIP.
-----	---

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	The final form of the programme will have to be screened for its equality impact. This screening will be carried out as part of the project design. However, the project involves significant pre-consultation and engagement with the sector during the design stage.
4.2	The programme will be subject to a twelve week public consultation and a full Equality Impact Assessment in spring 2013.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note the progress on the project to date and the milestones towards the public consultation in April 2013. ii. Consider and agree the draft outcomes framework and note the further work required on the associated indicator set. iii. Note the plans for continued Member engagement on BCIP and consider the proposal that the Community Planning Reference Group act as the reference group for BCIP during its development stages.

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

7	Key to Abbreviations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCIP – Belfast Community Investment Programme - DSD - Department for Social Development - RPA – Review of Public Administration

8	Documents Attached
	Appendix One: Draft outcomes framework for BCIP