Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Centres for Computer Suites
Date:	19 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525

1	**Relevant Background Information**
1.1	Development Committee agreed a programme of expenditure in November against the offer of additional in-year Community Support Programme funds secured from DSD. The offer is conditional on full expenditure before 31 March 2013.
1.2	One element of the agreed programme was to invest in a network of public access computer suites across the city in support of the community outreach and capability strand of the Super Connected Belfast programme.
1.3	Working with ISB, officers anticipated that the allocation of £162,780 would resource the hardware, software and networking set-up costs of twelve quality ICT suites across our BCC community centres, that is, the upgrade of the current out of date suites and the identification of further locations to ensure equity of access across the centre network. An outline of the resource investment is attached at Appendix 1.
1.4	These quality ICT suites would then facilitate a community focused capacity programme, designed to promote and enable social inclusion amongst our citizens by enhancing access to broadband services and providing a platform for training for individuals who lack digital literacy. Working with the community sector and other training providers, these suites could facilitate the development and delivery of knowledge-based skills to help people get online; carry out more transactions online; use the internet to find employment and develop basic skills required for the current market place.
1.5	The purpose of this report is to suggest the location of the suites across the city.

2	Key Issues
2.1	In establishing the list of recommended community centres, officers have considered the following: − Current established infrastructure: both BCC and community sector provision − Geographical coverage − Available centre space to accommodate the installation − Internet Survey with community centres
2.2	At present there are 5 established computer suites within our BCC community centres. We recommend these are included in the project and a further 7 new suites identified.
2.3	The 12 recommended sites are spread across BCC centres, and community owned and/or managed facilities: 8 of the suites would be in directly managed community centres, 2 in independently managed BCC centres and 2 in voluntary community centres. (see Appendix 2)
2.4	The 2 voluntary community centres, the Frank Gillan Centre and Short Strand Community Forum, were selected because of their substantial expertise in computer training and a lack of suitable space in our Divis CC and in the Short Strand area.
2.5	In order to further maximise access, 12 Laptops have been included to provide a mobile training resource for use within areas not close to an IT suite.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The set up costs of £162,780 will be resourced via the additional in year DSD grant (See Appendix 1).
3.2	Officers will need to quantify and identify a related budget to cover programme costs, IT service support costs, insurance costs and replacement liabilities for the 2013/14 financial period, from within the current revenue budget.
3.3	The training and support programmes will be accessed through the super connected Belfast project.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	The sites identified for the computer suites offer a spread across the city in line with Equality and Good Relations requirements.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Committee are asked to consider and agree the proposed community centre locations for the computer suites in support of the Super Connected Belfast programme.

6	Decision Tracking

Cate Taggart to implement decision to utilise funds in advance of year end.

7	Key to Abbreviations

CSP – Community Support Programme
DSD – Department Social Development
IT – Information Technology
BCC – Belfast City Council
CC – Community Centre

8	Documents Attached

Appendix 1: - Super-connected Belfast: Community Centre Public Access
Appendix 2: - Centre IT Suites
Appendix 3: - Map of proposed locations.

Appendix 2: Location of IT suites in Community Centres

Centre	Area	Computers	
Woodvale CC	North	8	BCC
Duncairn CC	North	4	BCC
Carrickhill CC	North	12	BCC - Independently managed
Markets CC	South	8	BCC
Morton CC	South	8	BCC
Shaftsbury Recreation Centre	South	10	BCC - Independently managed
Dee St CC	East	12	BCC
Short Strand CC	East	12	Independent Community group
Hammer CC	West /Shankill	10	BCC
Highfield CC	West	9	BCC
Horn Drive CC	West	8	BCC
Frank Gillan Centre	West	12	Independent Community Group
Mobile training		12 Laptops	BCC
Totals		**125**	