

Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Belfast Community Investment Programme (BCIP) – Update
Date:	23 April 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525 Kim Walsh, BCIP Project co-ordinator, ext 3640 Mark McCann, Business Research & Dev. Officer, ext 3622

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The purpose of this paper is to present to Members an update on the Belfast Community Investment Programme (BCIP). At a special meeting of Development Committee on 25 March, Members approved a draft programme proposal in principle but requested that officers prepare a draft equality impact assessment (EQIA) and consider approaches to budget allocation.
1.2	Members requested that a report on this work be brought back for consideration by Committee in April prior to the planned launch of a full public consultation in May. Similar parallel arrangements were also agreed for DSD political approval.
1.3	There have been a number of developments since the March Committee meeting which will have a critical impact on the progress of the programme.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Pre-consultation engagement From its initiation the Council and DSD made a strong commitment to engaging fully on the design and implementation of BCIP. This was based on the recognition that a new approach to community development in the city can only be successful with the active and positive involvement of the community and voluntary sector and other stakeholders.
2.2	As part of a sustained level of pre-consultation from summer 2012 the project team organised a series of engagement activities that included workshops, briefings and information sessions with Members, officers and representatives from the community and voluntary sectors. This has been a time-consuming process but has ensured that stakeholders have been involved in the development of BCIP from the outset. The most recent engagement event was a large

	workshop at City Hall in early February, attended by over 150 representatives of the community sector, which considered the initial ideas around grant design.
2.3	The pre-consultation engagement proved to be a fruitful process and greatly informed both the outcomes framework and the draft grant design adopted by Committee last month. There is genuine enthusiasm for the concepts behind BCIP and its outcomes. The sector in particular has been encouraged by the long term public sector commitment to community development that BCIP represents. Material for the pre-consultation work contributed to the proposed approach to formal consultation that was presented to members at Development Committee in March.
2.4	Arrangements for public consultation Working back from the planned open call for applications in October 2013, the current project plan calls for a public consultation on the programme proposal and the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) to begin no later than 8 May 2013 following approval by Council and the DSD Minister and submission to the Social Development Committee. If the start of consultation is delayed beyond this date then it is unlikely that the project will make its open call.
2.5	DSD officials considered this timescale for public consultation, and have concluded that they believe the available window of three weeks to analyse the consultation responses and amend the grant stream is too short to be viewed as credible. They therefore believe the project would not be in a position to meet its open call in October and implement the planned pilot funding year. They are preparing to engage the Minister, who will decide if these are unacceptable risks, given this timescale. Given the advice which has been provided to the Minister it is highly unlikely that he will decide to continue with the project within its current timescales.
2.6	That being the case his officials will have to consider alternative options, which will probably include the option of DSD dispersing its Neighbourhood Renewal funding independently of council for the period 2014/15.
2.7	Given this set of circumstances the Council is now itself in a position where a decision cannot be taken before the Council meeting of 2 June which in effect means the project cannot be delivered within the current timescales in any event.
2.8	Members may wish to note that this means that we will no longer be in a position to go to public consultation on the programme in May. Consequently, the BCIP project will not be able to go to open call for funding for 2014/15 under the terms of the current plan.
2.9	Council officers will continue to engage with DSD officials with a view to bringing a paper to the May Development Committee on the options for the future delivery of BCIP and the broader transfer of Neighbourhood Renewal resources under RPA which is due to come into effect in 2015.
2.10	This will include examining the implications for the Council's own grant schemes which are scheduled to end in March 2014 (ie, Advice and Information grant, Revenue grant, Capacity Support grant, Summer Scheme grants and other small grants).

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

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	Equality and good relations implications, in relation to this policy, are still under consideration. Further updates will be sent to the Equality and Diversity Officer in due course.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the contents of the report 2. Agree to the receipt of an update paper at May Development Committee

6	Decision Tracking
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Officer responsible: John McGrillen - May 2013

7	Key to Abbreviations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCIP – Belfast Community Investment Programme - DSD - Department for Social Development - EQIA – Equality Impact Assessment

8	Documents attached