



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Belfast Bursary Scheme update
Date:	20 August 2013
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that the Council made £300,000 available through the Investment Programme for 2012-2015 to support Belfast Bursary Fund. The Fund is administered through Belfast Metropolitan College (Belfast Met) and The Prince's Trust. Hundreds of young people are supported in the city to take part in further education, training and improve their employment prospects.
1.2	At Belfast Met, full-time students who are beginning their first year of study, living in the Belfast City Council area, aged between 16-24 years and whose annual household income is £23,820 or less can apply for grants of up to £500. Students must have secured a place on one of the 10 recognised Achieve: Belfast Bursary Fund training courses at Levels 2-5, including IT, multimedia, renewable energies, science, tourism and hospitality to qualify for the award.
1.3	The Prince's Trust bursary (with funding allocated through the charity's Development Awards programme) is open to young people aged 16-25 residing in the city who are not in education, training or employment. The scheme aims to help recipients overcome barriers which may prevent them from undertaking training and education or moving into employment.
1.4	At the 7 May 2013 Development Committee meeting, Members were asked to consider a request by the Prince's Trust to use £9,484 of their £50,000 allocation to cover programme management and administration costs associated with delivery of the Bursary Fund during 2013-14. Members asked that the Trust review administrative costs. However, in order to ensure that the scheme would still progress, members authorised the allocation of up to £30,000 and asked that £20,000 be withheld subject to engagement with the Trust on this issue.
1.5	To this end, officers met with the Prince's Trust to get an update on the outcomes of the bursary fund for 2012-13, an update on progress in the first quarter of 2013-14 and to understand fully their operational procedures to justify administrative costs.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The Prince's Trust supported 135 young people using the Council's Bursary Fund during 2012-13. On average, bursary fund recipients were aged 21. 73% of young people supported were from the top 10% most deprived areas in the city and 83% of recipients resided in the top 25% areas of highest deprivation.
2.2	90% of young people receiving a Bursary achieve a positive outcome, exceeding the original target by 10%. Two-thirds of bursary fund recipients were helped into education or training and 40% were helped into employment (some went into both education and employment). This means that 54 people who received the bursary are now in employment – a very positive outcome considering the council investment.
2.3	The highest percentage of bursary fund recipients (51%) used the fund to pay for equipment for work placements and courses in plumbing, joinery, cookery, hairdressing and mechanics, followed by 28% who used the fund to pay for course fees.
2.4	The Prince's Trust have a number of systems in place which are necessary to promote, process and vouch bursary spend to ensure that the Council's audit requirements are met. This work is led by a Development Executive who spends 100% of her time in managing this scheme and the Trust's wider Development Awards fund (valued at around £20,000).
2.5	<p>The Development Awards Executive's role includes the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managing enquiries received for Development Awards: advising on eligibility, helping applicants complete the application forms, ensuring all supporting information is provided - Liaison and engagement with external assessors: recruitment of volunteer assessors to be involved in the award assessment process, training of volunteers, processing of Access NI checks for assessors, provision of administrative support around the assessment process. Organisations currently involved in assessment work include GEMS Belfast, Workforce Training, Springvale Learning and NIACRO - Convening the independent panel with responsibility for approving development awards - Organising payment to one of the Trust's approved suppliers via procurement card or cheque payment and overseeing delivery of equipment or training programme, in line with original award - Undertaking follow-up reviews with young people to confirm outcome of award and to issue certificates for successful engagement.
2.6	The Prince's Trust purchases equipment or services on recipients' behalf directly from approved suppliers to achieve the best value for money. The Development Awards Executive delivers equipment directly to recipients demonstrating that considerable time is spent to ensure the fund is used for the purposes intended and that bursary recipients receive the highest standards of service to ensure their needs are fully met.
2.7	The Prince's Trust is confident of meeting the 2013-14 target to support 200 young people and they confirmed that a minimum of 150 awards will be processed by October 2013. However the Trust has once again confirmed that,

	given that all of its income is project-related, it has limited space capacity to allocate to projects and, by default, needs to include an operational overhead to ensure the proper functioning of its programme activity.
2.8	To this end, they have confirmed that they will not be able to meet their targets without some funding towards organisational support and project delivery. They have already committed to finding £3,962 of funding from their own resources to contribute towards the project support costs but have identified that a shortfall of £9,484 remains. This represents an overhead of around 19% of expenditure - well in line with government guidelines.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	An overall budget of £300,000 was allocated to Achieve: Belfast Bursary Fund over a 3 year period 2012-2015. The Development Committee agreed that the Prince's Trust be given an allocation of £50,000 for financial year 13/14 to be used towards bursaries for young people from disadvantaged areas. The financial allocation requested by the Prince's Trust to administer the scheme in this financial year is £9,484.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	No specific equality and good relations considerations at this stage.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the outcomes of Year 1 of the Prince's Trust's work on the Council Bursary and progress on Year 2 work - Note the scope of the work to be delivered by the Development Awards Executive - Note and approve the commitment of £9,484 towards project delivery support to ensure efficient management of the scheme, to be matched by a financial commitment of £3,962 from the Prince's Trust.

6	Decision Tracking
	An update on numbers, outcomes, progress and budget spent during year 2 of the programme will be brought back to Committee at a later date.

7	Key to Abbreviations
	Belfast Met – Belfast Metropolitan College NIACRO – Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Re-settlement of Offenders