



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Routine Correspondence - Volunteer Now
Date:	17 September 2013
Reporting Officer:	Mr. John McGrillen, Director of Development, Ext. 3470.
Contact Officer:	Barry Flynn, Democratic Services Officer, Ext 6312

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	On 9th May, 2013, the Minister for the Department for Social Development, Mr. Nelson McCausland M.L.A., announced the introduction of new budgetary arrangements to oversee the implementation of the Assembly's Volunteering Strategy.
1.2	In essence, the level of financial support for small grants would increase to £600,000 from £300,000; funding for the volunteering innovation programme would increase to £500,000 from £300,000; whilst the level of support for volunteering infrastructure would decrease from just over £1 million to £600,000. The Minister's decision to enhance the amount available for small grants and the volunteering innovation programmes was taken to promote the delivery of 'front line services' within the overall Volunteering Strategy.
1.3	Correspondence (copy herewith) has been received from Ms. Wendy Osborne, Chief Executive Officer of Volunteer Now, suggesting that a letter be forwarded to the Minister outlining the support which that organisation has provided to the Council and requesting that he reassess the decision to decrease the level of funding towards volunteering infrastructure.
2.0	Key Issues
2.1	Whilst there has been a reduction in the funding allocated towards volunteering infrastructure, the Minister has merely streamlined the level of funding within the Volunteering Strategy. The majority of this increase will be allocated towards enhancing the amount available for small grants and volunteering innovation programmes.
2.2	The Committee should be mindful that the Assembly has endorsed this realignment and there is limited scope for the Council to lobby the Minister. In addition, should the Committee accede to the request, it could create a precedent which would encourage other groups to request Council support.

3.0	Recommendations
3.1	It is recommended that the Committee notes the receipt of the correspondence and takes such action thereon as deemed appropriate.

	Decision Tracking
The Democratic Services Officer will implement the Committee's decision.	

	Documents Attached
Letter requesting support.	