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| Report to: | Development Committee |
| Subject: | DSD Community Support Programme Grant Income: Additional in-year allocation proposal 2013/14 |
| Date: | 22 October 2013 |
| Reporting Officer: | John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470 |
| Contact Officers: | Cate Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525 |

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| 1 | Relevant Background Information |
| 1.1 | BCC have an annual grant contract with DSD for £1.57m under their regional Community Support Programme. The contract is conditional on our making contribution to the CSP overall aim defined as: <i>"To strengthen local communities, increase community participation and promote social inclusion through the stimulation and support of community groups, community activity and local advice services".</i> |
| 1.2 | A series of four outcomes, or impacts have been set for the CSP (Appendix 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. an active and organised community, ii. an influential community, iii. an informed community, iv. a sustainable community, |
| 1.3 | The Voluntary and Community Unit (DSD) has offered Belfast City Council an additional in-year allocation of approximately £467,000 towards general revenue expenditure and subject to the same conditions of grant offer. |
| 1.4 | It should be noted that the additional allocation is conditional on the utilisation of the full fund by 31 March 2014. There is no requirement on BCC to provide match funding. All of the additional grant allocation will be subject to the normal DSD monitoring and compliance requirements. |
| 1.5 | The purpose of this report is to seek committee approval to accept the offer of additional in year CSP grant and to agree expenditure options. |

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| 2 | Key Issues |
| 2.1 | The limited timeframe attached to the additional funding will not allow for monies to be administered competitively so it is crucial to find a prompt but robust way in which to allocate the funds in support of projects and service providers for |

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| | community benefit. |
| 2.2 | <p>Given this requirement (to allocate and fully expend the additional monies within the current financial year), officers have identified a number of potential in-year funding opportunities. In doing so, we have also considered the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSD Community Support Programme funding criteria and target Outcomes • The objectives, supporting actions and logic model presented in the DSD's Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework (July 2013) • The opportunity presented to significantly contribute to the council's Service Convergence and Assets & Liabilities work streams in relation to Urban Regeneration and Community Development. • The opportunity presented to enhance the community impact of corporate initiatives, for example, Super Connected City and Advice Tribunal Service • Priority needs related to current financial climate • Feasibility of proposal to support compliant assessment, committal and expenditure of funds by 31st March 2014 • Efficiency considerations to ensure related officer resources |
| 2.3 | <p>The DSD's Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework (July 2013) sets out the proposed strategic direction for the delivery of urban regeneration and community development policies and programmes in Northern Ireland both before and after the Reform of Local Government. It also contains a set of four supporting actions which will help develop a more conducive policy and financial environment in which the Policy Framework will operate. In addition the Framework contains DSD's commitment to adopt an outcomes-focused approach (<i>'the Logic Model'</i>) to operational activity on urban regeneration and community development. This approach will focus on results ahead of process, using evidence to support action and working in ways that are more responsive to community needs and more collaborative across and within sectors.</p> |
| 2.4 | <p>There are significant inter-dependencies between the various elements of regeneration (economic, social, physical, community) that need to be clearly understood and analysed at a practical level to ensure a viable transition, maintaining service continuity in the short-term, but also setting a firm foundation for the implementation of a transformed service over the longer-term. Given the scale of existing commitments and Council's officers experience to date, particularly the learning from the <i>'Building Better Communities-Belfast Community Investment Programme'</i> (BCIP), a two strand approach has been proposed:</p> |
| 2.5 | <p>Transition – to focus on the practical arrangements/decisions necessary for Council to maintain and deliver agreed transferred services and resources on 1st April 2015. This provides service continuity and helps manage expectations/risks, allowing for a transitional 2015-2017 period.</p> |
| 2.6 | <p>Transformation – to focus on developing the future vision and model for delivery of the transformed regeneration function for the city. This is a longer term process but will operate in parallel to the Transfer strand of work and beyond (2013-2017). This will provide for a composite understanding of the</p> |

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| | scope of regeneration functions to inform decisions around delivery structures, alignment of resources, etc. and maximise the ability to implement the learning from elsewhere to deliver an effective integrated regeneration function for the future |
| 2.7 | To support the priorities outlined above and help align services to meet the proposed urban regeneration and community development objectives post LGR a number of initiatives have been identified for the in-year allocation: Community Sector Support, Large Grant Up-Lift, Corporate Initiatives, Service Convergence to support transferring Assets & Liabilities, and associated officer support. |
| 2.8 | <p>i. <u>Community Sector Support</u></p> <p>With less than 18 months to the transfer of functions and associated support programmes for URCD there is an opportunity for Council to inform, support and engage the community sector in preparation for this change process.</p> |
| 2.9 | Given details of transferring budgets are unlikely to be confirmed until mid 2014, it has been proposed that BCIP should be delayed until 2017 to allow for alignment with the broader regeneration programme and transfer of functions work stream. Without BCIP in place, an interim measure will have to be established to bridge funding for the sector for 2014/15 and beyond. Committee have already agreed in principle to extend our current grant aid programme for this further year. Officers are working to ensure that the Service Grant Programme is subsequently ready for a full competitive open call against current funding streams in 2015. This will involve a limited redesign of the application, assessment and monitoring processes. In addition we must consider applications from groups within the new council boundary. In order to meet the 2015/16 funding cycle, the grant programme must be open in May 2014. |
| 2.10 | To prepare the community sector for the change process, and to assist Council in managing the change, it is proposed that we develop and deliver a capacity building programme which will incorporate elements of best practice and training delivery from the sector. This will have the dual role of skilling the community sector and building stronger relationships between council and our community partners. |
| 2.11 | This programme will be aligned to our current capacity building training support which includes: Community Development Toolkit, Volunteer Development and Child Protection Training. |
| 2.12 | At the end of the programme the council will have a comprehensive set of toolkits and training materials which can be made available for future support activities. This stage of delivery of the capacity building support programme will be time bound to March 2014 |
| 2.13 | <p>It is envisaged that this branded capacity building support programme will consist of workshops, toolkits, and facilitated sessions covering a range of generic skills including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Collaborative working and Service Planning • Financial Management • Area/Neighbourhood Planning • Strategic and Business Planning • Investment Readiness (Contracts and Asset Management) • Developing Outcomes Frameworks and Measuring the Impact of Service |

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| | <p>Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance |
| 2.14 | The programme will be rolled out across the city, delivered locally in our community centres and in a central location. It is envisaged that suitable venues will also be arranged in Castlereagh, North Down and Lisburn to facilitate those groups falling within the extended city boundaries in 2015. The programme will be proactively advertised to maximise awareness and registration. |
| 2.15 | Committee are asked to consider the use of the in-year allocation to design and deliver the capacity building support programme and production of toolkits. If members agree to the above proposal an estimated budget of £65,000 is requested. |
| 2.16 | <p><u>ii Large Grant Up Lift</u></p> <p>Under the Community Support Plan, BCC currently provides revenue grant aid to 80 community organisations across the city and capacity grant to 19 support organisations. The revenue funding is used towards the running costs associated with operating a community building and the capacity grant contributes to the core costs of larger, area based community development support agencies. Officers are aware, via the monitoring process, that funding awards do not currently meet full costs. There is also evidence that, within the current funding environment, a significant number of community organisations are struggling to meet these costs.</p> |
| 2.17 | Committee are asked to consider an in-year limited offer of additional funds to support programmes in community buildings or those of community development support organisations. The fund could be used to support any verified increase in core costs, for small scale building repairs and maintenance or for programme equipment. If we are to meet the requirement to allocate and fully expend the additional monies within the current financial year, it is suggested that any agreed uptake of these funds be administered to those organisations currently in receipt of a revenue or capacity grant from BCC in 2013/14. |
| 2.18 | A small number of organisations have not yet completed the monitoring requirements in regard to this grant. Eligibility for an uplift award would be dependent upon compliant submission. |
| 2.19 | If agreeable, officers will invite organisations to submit proposals on how they propose to utilise the potential funding and to indicate a budget: bands of £1000, £1500 and £2000. After assessment and confirmation of available budget, recommendations for grant uplift would be presented for the Director's approval via delegated authority. Subject to approval, a letter of variation on existing contracts will be issued and, as per current arrangements, all successful groups will submit monitoring returns to report progress against targets. |
| 2.20 | If members agree to the proposal as outlined above, the allocation would be approximately £160,000 |
| 2.21 | <u>iii Corporate Initiatives</u> |
| 2.22 | <p>Super Connected Belfast: Community Centre Public Access</p> <p>Members will be aware that Belfast City Council, with the support of a number of organisations, has successfully bid for funding to become a Super-connected</p> |

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| | <p>City by March 2015. £13.7 million will come from the Urban Broadband Fund to provide a major boost to the city's infrastructure. In addition to this, the Council also intends to contribute an additional £3 million, as part of its Investment Programme, and the private sector will contribute £8 million towards the project.</p> |
| 2.23 | <p>To increase levels of community engagement, access and knowledge, Development Committee agreed in February 2013 to invest in a network of public access computer suites in 8 BCC community centres, 2 Council owned/ community managed centres and 2 independent centres.</p> |
| 2.24 | <p>These quality ICT suites will facilitate a community focused capacity programme, designed to promote and enable social inclusion amongst our citizens by enhancing access to broadband services and providing 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 the basic skills required for the current market place. Because not all community centres could facilitate the IT suites, it was suggested that laptops could be used to provide services on an outreach basis and therefore extend the reach of any associated digital community programme.</p> |
| 2.25 | <p>The hardware and associated software has been purchased to fit-out the 12 suites. Working with colleagues from ISB and Legal Services, staff have been progressing the project however, as each centre was being assessed for networking, it became apparent that where dedicated furniture existed, it was of a low quality and did not match the Council's guidelines.</p> |
| 2.26 | <p>Members are asked to consider a further £20,000 in-year allocation to provide chairs and desks as required to support set-up costs at each site. (Approximately £1,660 per site)</p> |
| 2.27 | <p>As noted, this network of community based IT suites are designed to support a community facing demand stimulation programme however we have not yet identified additional resources in order to deliver and sustain a proactive community education programme to animate the suites and to work collaboratively with other community based provision.</p> |
| 2.28 | <p>Officers therefore propose that we utilise £80,000 of the in-year CSP income to support a pilot programme which would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launch this BCC investment - Raise awareness of the programme in local neighbourhoods and key target audiences (eg children, young people, older people, LTE, etc) - Offer animation programmes to support use of these community IT hubs and stimulate interest and digital confidence - Deliver a series of Taster training programmes which would engage threshold interest and act as a pathway to the established Essential Skills Programmes. |
| 2.29 | <p>This investment would include identification and purchase of any supporting software and materials, the design and delivery of the community animation and education pilot programme and an evaluation report to inform and support any resource application for future programme delivery.</p> |
| 2.30 | <p>If members are supportive of this pilot proposal, officers will work with ISB and</p> |

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| | current delivery partners to further develop and cost the programme. |
| 2.31 | <p>City Wide Advice Tribunal Service</p> <p>In August 2013, Council announced two-year funding totalling £430,000 for a Citywide Tribunal Representation Service to help claimants who wish to appeal SSA decisions on benefits including Employment Support Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independent Payment, Universal Credit and any other SSA benefit. This service enables clients to challenge decisions, assisting them through the process and representing them at hearings.</p> |
| 2.32 | <p>The opportunity exists via the in-year allocation to provide up to 3 months additional funding for the service, which could be spent by March 2014. Members are asked to consider a budget allocation of £54,000 to support this project and result in an extended time-line for the service.</p> |
| 2.33 | <p><u>iv Service Convergence and Service Planning</u></p> <p>With the transfer of functions for urban regeneration and community development to the Council and the change in the city boundary to take in substantial areas of Lisburn, Castlereagh and North Down, there is a need to assess the likely impact on our services and to plan for effective service delivery.</p> |
| 2.34 | <p>Our Community Services grants programme will be expanded to include new areas in 2015 with a proposed open call in May 2014. As already outlined, community organisations will require support to prepare for this open call particularly those which have not applied for Council funding in the past or are currently outside the city boundary. This will be supported via the proposed sector support programme outlined above.</p> |
| 2.35 | <p>The service will also acquire responsibility for a number of community centre assets and will need to design and deliver our community area support programme, play development and youth engagement support activities for the new areas which will include a significantly increased Traveller population.</p> |
| 2.36 | <p>To deliver our new service business plans we will need to understand the neighbourhoods, the community infrastructure and the level of support required by organisations. Officers suggest a project which will help to underpin service convergence and service planning in relation to the transfer of <u>Assets & Liabilities</u> associated with the new council boundary and linked to the current council work streams relating to LGR. This project will support the service to consider and quantify service implications associated with those transferring Assets. These include eight community centre assets transferring from Lisburn and Castlereagh council areas. In order to support service business plans (drafts by June 2014) we need to scope the condition and current service delivery model for each of the transferring assets.</p> |
| 2.37 | <p>Through the CSP, we also provide revenue funding to support the cost of community sector facilities. This is allocated to support groups and organisations which provide community space and a varied programme of activities/services. It is vital for us to have an understanding of the physical infrastructure used to support community development and services in the new boundary areas before we go to open grant call (estimated May 2014).</p> |
| 2.38 | <p>We are therefore requesting a total of £25,000 to develop a Service Convergence Plan for community facilities in the new boundary areas. The plan will include a formal condition survey for each asset, a review of the current</p> |

| | <p>service delivery model, associated resourcing, systems, centre programme, user groups and local infrastructure. This will provide base-line information to allow us to plot a transition programme for the incoming assets while ensuring high quality, citizen centred and integrated community facilities.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 2.39 | The surveys will be completed by February 2014 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.40 | <p>Staff Resources In order to maximise the impact of the service in relation to the menu of proposed initiatives above while continuing to maintain the current service operational level, we are requesting a total of £63,000 from the in-year allocation for staff resources and development.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.41 | <p>The allocation will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional hours to key staff (currently part-time or time-bound agency) who will co-ordinate and administer the five initiatives (estimated budget £30,000). • Train staff in Grant-Funding/Assessment, Facilitation, Action Planning and Building Collaborative Practice (estimated budget for 36 Staff £33,000). This will increase the capacity of staff to assess grant applications and support groups through the application process, and to help support community organisations to develop strategic and business plans and contribute to the formation of neighbourhood plans. As trained facilitators, officers will also be available to other services within council to help them develop effective collaboration with our sectoral partners. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.42 | <p>Officers believe the proposals outlined above present a balanced opportunity to allocate the additional in-year CSP funds.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Allocation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Community Sector Support</td> <td>£65,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Large Grant Up-Lift</td> <td>£160,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Super Connected Belfast- Community Centre Public Access</td> <td>£100,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Extend the City Wide Advice Tribunal Service</td> <td>£54,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Assets Condition Surveys & Service Convergence Plan</td> <td>£25,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staff allocation to programme co-ordination</td> <td>£30,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staff development (36 staff)</td> <td>£33,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Allocation</td> <td>£467,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Category | Allocation | Community Sector Support | £65,000 | Large Grant Up-Lift | £160,000 | Super Connected Belfast- Community Centre Public Access | £100,000 | Extend the City Wide Advice Tribunal Service | £54,000 | Assets Condition Surveys & Service Convergence Plan | £25,000 | Staff allocation to programme co-ordination | £30,000 | Staff development (36 staff) | £33,000 | Total Allocation | £467,000 |
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| Total Allocation | £467,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| 3 | Resource Implications |
| 3.1 | Pending confirmation of offer, the additional DSD allocation of £467,000 will cover all grant or associated project costs, and associated staff costs. |
| 3.2 | Related assessment and administration resource requirements will be subsumed into current staff work programmes. |

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| 4 | Equality and Good Relations Considerations |
| | There are no equality or good relations implications attached to this report. |

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| 5 | Recommendations |
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| | <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Agree to accept the additional DSD offer of £467,000 as a variation to the Community Support Programme grant contract for 2013/14; ii. Consider the proposals to utilise the potential additional allocation of CSP funds and prioritise these dependant on the total funds available; iii. Agree that, where uptake within any of the proposed elements is under-utilised, officers can reallocate funding based on the committee agreed priorities in order to maximise the uptake of the additional CSP funding allocation. |
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| 6 | Decision Tracking |
| Reporting Officer: Cate Taggart ext 3525 | |

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| 7 | Key to Abbreviations |
| DSD- Department for Social Development CSP- Community Support Programme BCIP- Building Better Communities- Belfast Community Investment Programme LGR- Local Government Reform | |

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| 8 | Documents Attached |
| Appendix 1 Community Support Programme Aim and Outputs | |

Appendix 1

Community Support Programme Aim and Outputs

The aim of the Programme is:-

"To strengthen local communities, increase community participation and promote social inclusion through the stimulation and support of community groups, community activity and local advice services".

A series of four outcomes, or impacts would capture the Programme's contribution to community life in Northern Ireland. The Programme contributes to the following:

an active and organised community, through

- the increase of public participation in civic life;
- the promotion of self help and sustainability;
- the strengthening of community organisations, particularly those in Disadvantaged areas;

an influential community, through

- the increased ability of disadvantaged communities to articulate their interests, their concerns and their suggestions for improvement;
- improved partnership working between district councils, other agencies and local communities and
- more effective interagency work at local level;
- positive change for individuals and groups within the community particularly those who are excluded or marginalised;

an informed community, through

- community access to effective, appropriate, approachable, timely and accurate advice and information services; and

a sustainable community, through

- the creation of the conditions for social and economic development and promotion (within district councils and outside) of a long term, integrated systems approach to developing and achieving vibrant communities by jointly addressing social, health, environmental, economic and community relations issues.

http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/community_support_prog