

APPENDIX



Report to:	Belfast Statutory Transition Committee
Subject:	Community Development Grant Programme – arrangements for 2015-17
Date:	April 2014
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Cate Taggart, Community Development Manager

1.0	Key Issues
	The purpose of this report is to update STC about preparations for the community development grant from 2015-17, and to confirm STC permission to progress to open call. The paper also highlights interdependencies with DSD revenue grants i.e. Neighbourhood Renewal, the Community Support Programme, and the Community Investment Fund (CIF).
2.0	Community Development Grant Programme 2015-17
2.1	A model of Transition (from 1 April 2015) and Transformation (1 April 2017) has been agreed. This model ensures continuity of service; helps manage expectations/risks; and facilitates appropriate lead in time to transform delivery.
2.2	Community Services are currently working with the Central Grants Unit to prepare for a competitive open call across the new council area for the period 2015 to 2017. On the advice of Legal Services, Committee agreed to extend current contracts until March 2015.
2.3	To facilitate a 12 week notice period, applications for transition grants (2015-17) need to be sought, assessed and determined by December 2014. To meet this timetable the grant programme needs to be advertised in early June. However the budget for transferred functions, including funding to support community development, will not be confirmed until Autumn 2014 (see 3.3 below).
2.4	STC will be familiar with Council distributing a number of distinctly different, but complimentary community development grants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice Grants: Currently funded through the 5 advice consortia across Belfast for the provision of generalist advice services. This approach is considered best practice in the DSD Opening Doors Strategy for the provision of generalist advice services. Any future advice grant will need to consider the divergent advice support models currently administered in the Lisburn and Castlereagh council areas. This work is being progressed under our Service Convergence work stream. • Capacity Building Grants: Funds leadership within the community development sector to build the capacity of local groups. This grant is similar in objective to the regional Community Investment Fund. Discussions are ongoing with VCU to consider and propose any revised future arrangements. • Revenue Grants for Community Buildings: Provide running costs for community buildings to enable groups to meet community needs. • Small Grant Programme: This includes Summer Scheme Grants, Community Development Project Grants and one off Community Chest grants. These grants will be administered as part of councils Small Grant Scheme and be open to application twice annually in line with other small grants across council.
2.5	Before opening, each grant will have been updated to ensure they are less bureaucratic, are applicant friendly, transparent, audit compliant and allow Council to appropriately monitor progress and evaluate the impact of the funding. Central Grants Unit will administer the grants so as to allow Community

2.6	<p>Services to advise potential applicants, and other Community Development Officers to score the applications.</p> <p>The service also administers a small number of contracts to independent community organisations who manage council owned community facilities. We are currently reviewing the nature of these contracts and this will inform our future approach. A paper will be presented to committee in due course. The related budget will be annexed from the total CDGP budget available.</p>
3.0	DSD Revenue Grants
3.1	The proposed allocation of resources for the 11 new councils was considered by the STC on 14 January 2014. The proposed allocation includes an element to cover the delivery of a number of functions including Community Development.
3.2	The STC also agreed to extend the current DSD revenue contracts, in line with the transition policy. This includes Neighbourhood Renewal, the VCU's Community Support Programme and the Community Investment Fund. The intention is to put in place new contracts, based on existing arrangements, by December 2014 to enable groups and organisations to plan for the commencement of the transition period on 1st April 2015.
3.3	This will require the review of the existing programmes and action plans; and development of a grant application and appraisal process. However, any subsequent contract is dependent on the available budget and it is unlikely these details will be confirmed until Autumn 2014.
3.4	The current budget for our community development grants is supported by an annual grant income from DSD under the regional Community Support Programme (CSP): currently £1.58m per annum. This allows for a current total annual allocation of £2.6m. BCC officers do not currently administer the CIF grant commitments.
3.5	As with the planned review of NR and CIF contracts, officers suggest that the call for applications is progressed pending notification of any final programme budget available. This information will inform the final recommendations for grant awards which we anticipate presenting to Committee in November / December 2014.
3.6	While the two programmes, that is, our Community Development Grant and the NRP, are currently being administered independently, officers in DSD and BCC are continuing to work together to ensure that the processes are aligned and that assessment information is shared in order to inform all final recommendations to the agreed programme grant budgets available.
4.0	Next steps
4.1	Capacity Support Programme – We are currently managing an extensive capacity programme which is free to community organisations across the city and those in the incoming areas.
4.2	Open Call – A number of information and awareness rising sessions will take place in local venues across the city in May and these sessions will familiarise groups with the updated applications and provide an opportunity for them to ask questions or seek further support. It is intended the first session will take place in City Hall following the formal launch of the programme. All of the community groups on our data bases will be invited to attend; Members will be made aware of the schedule once it is confirmed and are asked to signpost local groups to the correct session. These sessions will be followed by more in-depth advice clinics which will focus on either the capacity building grant or the revenue grant for community buildings. Separate support will be offered to the Advice consortia applicants.
5.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
5.1	There are no equality and good relations implications associated with the report.
6.0	Resource Implications
6.1	There are no Human Resource or financial implications contained within this report.
6.2	Throughout the application process, we will ensure that all stakeholders are aware that the scale and nature of subsequent grant commitments will be fully dependant on the final available budget for the programme which will not be agreed until Autumn 2014.

7.0 Recommendations

Committee are asked to note the contents of the report and

- i. Agree the approach to BCC Community Development Grant Programme 2015-17
- ii. Agree to proceed to open call in June 2014 pending confirmed grant programme budget in advance of grant recommendations.

7.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Members booklet