



Belfast City Council

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| Report to: | Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee |
| Subject: | Leisure Transformation Programme: Belfast Stadia Community Benefits Initiative |
| Date: | 20 March 2015 |
| Reporting Officers: | Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources/Deputy Chief Executive |
| Contact Officers: | Caroline Wilson, Neighbourhood and Development Manager |

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| 1.0 | Relevant background information |
| 1.1 | <p>At its meeting in August, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee considered a report outlining a community benefits partnership approach for the stadia programme in Belfast, as required by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). The SP&R Committee agreed the objectives for the 'Enhanced Sports Development Programme' and agreed a financial contribution of £100,000 per annum over 10 years for the purposes of the programme.</p> <p>They noted that discussions were ongoing with the three sports governing bodies (Irish Football Association, Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Rugby Football Union) to determine their match funding contribution, but that all had expressed a commitment to this effect.</p> |
| 1.2 | <p>All stakeholders to the 'Belfast Community Benefits Initiative' – DCAL, Council and the three sports governing bodies – recognise the once-in-a-generation opportunity of the investments and are committed to maximising the potential catalyst for wider social, economic and environmental regeneration.</p> <p>The overarching purpose of the initiative is to: <i>Ensure that the public investment in the stadia and surrounding areas improves the quality of life now and for future generations, especially those who are socially marginalised and excluded across the city.</i></p> |

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| 2.0 | Key issues |
| 2.1 | DCAL expects the Belfast Community Benefits Initiative to produce a well developed working draft of a Memorandum of Understanding by 31 March 2015, including: |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the minimum financial contributions, each will make to the Belfast Community Benefits Initiative each year (and the minimum period of time); - the proposed benefits; - specific, measurable targets; and - details of the governance structure, including roles and responsibilities. <p>The Memorandum of Understanding must be signed in sufficient time ahead of 30 April 2015 to allow Belfast City Council to draw down the first project payment from DCAL.</p> <p>Over the past number of months, discussions have taken place to develop the Memorandum of Understanding. In line with Committee agreements to date, work on the proposed benefits, specific, measurable targets and the governance is well underway.</p> |
| 2.2 | <p>It was anticipated that the partners would co-fund a joint team of sports development / community engagement officers and associated work programmes.</p> <p>In seeking to determine the financial contribution from the partners for this purpose, both the Irish Football Association and Irish Rugby Football Union have stated that their contribution to the Belfast Community Benefits Initiative, will be through core-funded staff already in post.</p> <p>The Gaelic Athletic Association has indicated that it remains their intention to provide finance for a central resource, although will not be in a position to confirm the final amount until the new financial year.</p> |
| 2.3 | <p>In the DCAL letter of offer to the Council in respect of the Olympia development, it states:</p> <p><i>“With effect from the Completion Date, the Grantee shall make a minimum contribution of £100,000 each year for a minimum period of 10 years (so that a minimum of £1,000,000 is contributed in total) to the Belfast Community Benefits Initiative.”</i></p> <p>In discussions with DCAL, they note that there is no obligation on the part of the Council to provide finance for a central resource, and are content that this approach fulfils the Council’s letter of offer obligations.</p> |
| 2.4 | <p>It is now proposed that Committee re-states its preference for a co-funded team of sports development/community engagement officers and joint work programmes.</p> <p>However, in light of the approach adopted by IFA and IRFU, and the timeframe to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, and in the event that co-funding a joint team is not possible, Committee authorises the allocated financial contribution can be used for an in-house resource to support the delivery of the Belfast Community Benefits Initiative objectives.</p> |
| 2.5 | <p>Committee is also considering a report on planning for Phases II and III of the Leisure Transformation Programme. This community benefits approach will enable the Council to meet DCAL obligations arising from any future co-funding opportunities.</p> |

3.0 Resource Implications

Financial: Committee has already approved up to £100,000 per annum of revenue funding, over 10 years, financed as part of the voluntary redundancy cost reduction exercise undertaken in Leisure Services.

Staff: The potential appointment of up to 3 sports development / community engagement officers to work on the delivery of the Belfast Community Benefits Initiative, in collaboration with the stadia partners. This will be within the affordability limits already set by Committee.

Assets: Fulfils the Council's obligations in respect of the Letter of Offer for the development of the Olympia leisure facility in the Windsor stadium.

4.0 Equality Implications

The final action plan will be screened for equality and good relations implications. It will include specific actions in relation to under-represented groups in sports (e.g. girls, women, disabled people) as well as good relations programmes.

5.0 Committee decisions required

Committee is asked to:

1. Affirm its preference for a joint team of sports development/community engagement officers for the delivery of the agreed objectives of the Belfast Community Benefits Initiative;
2. Authorise officers to put in place the required resources and Memorandum of Understanding to ensure delivery of those objectives, in accordance with the letter of offer from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure by 30 April 2015, and subject to advice from the Town Solicitor.

6.0 Abbreviations

DCAL – Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

GAA – Gaelic Athletic Association

IFA – Irish Football Association

IRFU – Irish Rugby Football Union