



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	BCSDN VFM report
Date:	10 October 2013
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officers:	Jacqui Wilson, Business Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	At its meeting on 12 February 2009 the Committee supported an application for funding to Sport NI to participate in the Active Communities Programme. This was successful and the programme has been running since 2011.
1.2	Active Communities is an investment programme delivered by Sport NI that seeks to employ, deploy and train a network of full time and part time sports coaches and leaders to deliver activities in community and club settings across Northern Ireland, with a view to increasing participation in sport and physical recreation, especially among underrepresented groups.
1.3	A package of funding and business a plan was put together to support BCSDN (Belfast Community Sports Development Network) as the lead delivery partner for Sport NI's Active Communities programme under the auspices of the Active Belfast Consortium (ABC).
1.4	The Committee gave approval for the Director of Parks and Leisure, in consultation with the Chair of Parks and Leisure, to agree the Council's contribution to the overall package of funding up to a maximum of £50,000 per annum.

2	Key Issues
2.1	As lead partner Belfast City Council is responsible for the management of the project including monitoring and evaluation and managing the overall investment in the project by all consortium members.

	<p>In keeping with this effective governance of the project a Value for Money Audit was commissioned in May 2013 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review the extent to which BCSDN is complying with the terms of the contract • review the value for money provided by the contracted service. <p>2.2 Significant levels of inconsistencies and areas of non-compliance, which could lead to the potential for irregularities, were identified through the review. In particular there were issues with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35% of targets per the ABC Action Plan Report 2012/13 were not achieved • Delivery of the programme has become less cost effective in 2012/13 compared to 2011/12 as the cost per <u>new</u> participant has increased from £20 to £22 • BCSDN is not compliant with BCC requirements to deliver the Active Communities Programme consistently across Belfast • Active Communities Programme does not appear to be contributing more than the minimum requirements of the school curriculum. This is not compliant with the strategic aims of the Active Communities programme to contribute added value to schools. • Only 52% of coaches achieved the target of 14.5 coaching hours per week. In our opinion this is an unsatisfactory level of performance • 54% of the data contained errors; this is an unsatisfactory level of compliance and calls into question the reliability of the AC Database for performance monitoring. • When the cost per participant is adjusted for the 54% error rate, cost per new participant increases to £47, which is above the benchmark figure of £30, thereby indicating that BCSDN does not provide value for money. <p>2.3 The report has been shared with the Board of BCSDN and officers will engage with BCSDN on the findings of the VFM Audit recommendations and to consider any proposals that they have regarding the issues raised. BCSDN have now provided an initial view of the findings of the audit.</p> <p>In addition the audit indicates that this is an appropriate time to review the options for future delivery and have recommended that an options report be prepared, considering the cost, benefits and risks associated with the options currently available to the Council. They suggest that this should include consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The status quo • Bring in-house maintaining the delivery partner structure • Bring in-house • Alternative provider
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3	Resource Implications
	<p>An annual contribution of £50k has been provided for in 2013/14 and a decision will be required on the commitment to the project going forward.</p> <p>Currently the Director chairs the consortium and the Leisure Development Manager and his team manage the contract with BCSDN.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	There are no equality or good relations issues associated with this programme as is City wide and for all ages and communities.

5	Recommendations
	Members are asked to note the contents of this report and agree that officers engage with BCSDN on the development of an improvement plan and that a review of the options for the future delivery be undertaken with a report being prepared for a future meeting of the Committee.

6	Decision Tracking
	Report to be brought back to Committee on the option of bringing the programme back in house.

7	Abbreviations
	<p>BCSDN Belfast Community Sports Development Network</p> <p>ABC Active Belfast Consortium</p>

8	Attachments
	None