



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Active Communities – Correspondence from Sport NI
Date:	16 October 2014
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Caroline Wilson, Neighbourhood and Development Manager

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Active Communities (AC) is a Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) programme, delivered from April 2010 to March 2015, through 11 council groups/ consortia including BCC.
1.2	In July 2014, SNI wrote to the Chief Executive asking BCC to make a formal response by the end of August, regarding our position on their proposal to seek a 30% financial contribution from Councils to AC programme costs from April 2015.
1.3	Parks and Leisure Committee in August 2014 agreed the response to Sport NI's consultation and for officers to develop an affordable and value for money delivery model.
1.4	Subsequently, Sport NI has written to the Chief Executive (attached) on 6 October 2014 advising that they were prepared to continue with an Active Communities investment from April 2015 for 12months. Their contribution will no longer provide support for management costs, which have been 10% of overall costs. They have asked that Council signals its intention to proceed on this basis no later than 07 November.

2.	Key Issues
2.1	The AC programme has proved to be a valuable coaching and community resource, which has led to high levels of participation in the city including under-represented groups, whilst providing opportunities for partnership working. From the period April 2010-March 2014, Sport NI has invested over £1.6m in the AC programme for Belfast. The Council annually contributes up to a maximum of £50,000. This is currently managed in one of 3 ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Sub-contract to Belfast Community Sports Development Network;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sub-contract to Disability Sport NI; and – Directly employing coaches through Leisure Services (participation). <p>Quantifiable benefits include the delivery of 40,419 sessions, 44,500 coaching hours, involving 67,286 participants with 587,148 participations realised.</p>
2.2	<p>There are a number of options to be considered when reviewing the delivery of the AC programme going forward in the context of the Sport NI request including:</p> <p>Option 1: Do nothing and close the AC programme without 100% SNI funding;</p> <p>Option 2: Continue ‘as is’ with Council providing 10% management costs to current delivery partners - £75,104 based on current Sport NI allowance;</p> <p>Option 3: Continue ‘as is’ with no or reduced contribution for management costs to delivery partners, based on affordability within existing revenue budgets;</p> <p>Option 4: BCC to co-ordinate in-house the management of the AC programme in partnership with sports governing bodies and community sports organisations which wish to directly employ the coaches, with no contribution to management costs.</p> <p>As Sport NI have now agreed their position and clarified their offer of support, a full analysis of the risks and benefits of each option will now be undertaken and brought to Committee for its future consideration.</p>
2.3	<p>Issues to note in response to SNI offer of support</p> <p>Sport NI is seeking the Council’s commitment to deliver the programme with funding for salaries, travel, training and equipment, as they consider options for the refresh of the programme. In a proposed response to SNI, there are a number of key issues to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The programme is very positive and the Council supports its continuation; – This is a timely opportunity to integrate and align the positive outputs and outcomes of the AC programme into the emerging community plan; – Any contribution will be a growth area for the P&L budget and it is difficult to determine affordability at this stage in the estimates process. Currently, no allowance has been made for such a contribution.
2.5	<p>It is proposed that the Council responds to Sports NI positively i.e. discounting option 1, indicating its intention to continue the programme in 2015-16.</p> <p>However, further work is required to examine budgets with partners to determine which of options 2-4 the Council will be able to implement.</p>
2.6	<p>Officers will continue to work with Sports NI and determine a value for money option for consideration by Committee in due course. This will draw on the conclusions of the value for money and compliance report completed by Cavanagh/Kelly Chartered Accountants in July 2013, considered by the Parks and Leisure Committee in October 2013.</p>

2.7	An affordable and value for money delivery model in light of the SNI offer of funding will be presented to Committee for its consideration in December.
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3.	Resource Implications
	<p>Financial: Option 2 has additional costs of £75,104 for management of the programme which is not allowed for in existing estimates.</p> <p>Human Resources: Option 4 will involve the direct recruitment of up to 26 coaching staff on fixed term contracts</p> <p>Asset and Other Implications: None</p>

4.	Equality Implications
	There are no equality and good relations implications at this stage. Screening of any emerging proposal will be undertaken in the future.

5.	Recommendations
	<p>Committee is asked to agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – That council advises Sport NI of its intention to continue the Active Communities programme on the terms of their offer – That officers undertake work to determine an affordable and value for money delivery model in light of the SNI offer of funding

6.	Decision Tracking
	<p>Responsible Officer: Neighbourhood and Development Manager.</p> <p>Actions to be completed by December 2014</p>

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>AC – Active Communities</p> <p>SNI – Sport Northern Ireland</p> <p>BCSDN – Belfast Community Sports Development Network</p>

8.	Documents attached
	Appendix 1 - Correspondence from Sport NI