



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Big Lottery – Outcome of application for funding to deliver Community Planning projects in Northern Ireland</b>
<b>Date:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
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### Relevant Background Information

On 22<sup>nd</sup> January, the Committee was advised that the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) had begun a tendering process for the delivery of three pilot projects on community planning in Northern Ireland, commencing with a pre-qualification stage to determine who should be invited to tender for the contract. The Committee agreed that the Council should submit an expression of interest and complete the pre-qualification application. As BIG's preferred method of delivery appeared to be a partnership approach with the voluntary and community sector (VCS), the Committee also agreed that this should be done in collaboration with the five Area Partnership Boards (APBs) and the not for profit organisation, Community Places. For the purposes of the funding application, this partnership was named the 'Belfast Community Planning Consortium' with Belfast City Council assigned as the lead partner.

On 19<sup>th</sup> March the Committee was informed that the Council's consortium application had been short-listed and that we had been invited to submit a tender for the pilot community planning project. At that meeting, an outline project proposal that would form the basis of the submission was approved by the Committee. Officers from the Council, in collaboration with our consortium partners, subsequently developed the funding application and also attended an interview with BIG as part of the evaluation process.

We have now received notification from BIG that the bid has been successful and that they intend to award one of the three pilots to Belfast.

### Key Issues

#### The Pilot Project

As agreed by Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> March, the pilot project will focus on the single theme of "health" as this provides a manageable way to test processes and relationships whilst also securing deliverables for partners and ultimately the local community. The pilot project will build upon the Council's commitment to creating a healthier Belfast and will augment the work done to date within Council and with our partners to improve health and wellbeing. It will work closely with the new Belfast Health Development Unit (set up jointly between the Council, the Public Health Agency and the Health Trust) and comes at an opportune time to influence the further development of the new Unit's business plan and the development of a health and wellbeing plan for the City. At the same time it provides an opportunity to test in

practical ways the capacity and ability of the VCS to participate most effectively in community planning.

Key elements of the project plan include:

- An engagement programme
- A capacity building programme
- A planning integration exercise (and in collaboration with our health partners lead to the creation of a health and wellbeing plan for the city)
- Development of a model of community planning for replication.

The intended outcomes of the pilot are to:

- Develop a shared understanding of community planning, through testing and modelling community planning processes around the theme of health;
- Build capacity in local communities and among citizens to influence decision-making on service provision in the Council and other statutory agencies;
- Build upon and improve networks and strategic alliances;
- Deliver tangible results in the form of a plan to address health inequalities and specific changes to the service plans of key statutory agencies to improve delivery of services on the ground;
- Ensure learning is transferred to the wider development of a community planning framework for the city and regionally.

The pilot therefore offers an opportunity to test our emerging community planning processes. Building on existing and planned work in terms of community engagement and integrated planning, the pilot will provide a specific focus at a time of uncertainty regarding the future statutory model for community planning. The emphasis on the VCS will provide a valuable learning tool in terms of how we engage, support and involve these important sectors. Whilst the pilot will be working in collaboration with the Belfast Area Partnerships, the Council is mindful of the need to engage fully with the VCS and communities themselves. It is therefore intended that the pilot or other linked Council processes will provide opportunities for the VCS to be fully engaged. As mentioned above, ongoing evaluation and learning forms an integral element of the project with BIG also providing a separate support contract to capture learning and good practice.

### **Contract**

BIG had indicated that the total contract value for all three community planning projects was £380,000 to £420,000. This equates to approximately £127,000 - £140,000 per area, with the final breakdown open to negotiation. At the time of writing, BIG has not yet confirmed the final contract value awarded to Belfast. However, the schedule of costs as outlined in our application was to the value of £139,000 plus VAT.

The contract will be for a maximum of 18 months, commencing ideally in May 2010 and ending in November 2011. A high level project plan is attached at appendix 1. Work has commenced in collaboration with our consortium partners to develop a detailed action plan to ensure delivery against the project.

### **Additional BIG contract information**

The lead partners and council areas which were awarded the contracts for the two other community planning pilots are as follows:

- Derry City Council – Derry and Strabane District
- Rural Development Council – Fermanagh and Omagh District

At its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, the Committee was also informed that a separate but linked support contract to capture the learning and good practice from the pilots was also being

commissioned by BIG. Through these linked contracts, BIG aim to provide a model and a toolkit of good practice in community planning that will help ensure the genuine engagement of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the new / emerging formal processes.

### **Central role of Elected Members**

Members will play a central role in the success of any community planning pilot, with the SP&R Committee in particular having a pivotal role to play in the development of the community planning process. It is intended that engagement with Members will be a key part of the community planning pilot and the wider development of a community planning framework for the city. Key ways that this will be taken forward include:

#### *Cross-Party Community Planning Reference Group*

At its meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> March, the SP&R Committee agreed to establish a cross-party 'Community Planning Reference Group' comprising of up to two elected Members from each Party. Whilst Committee agreed that the group should be established for the purposes of taking forward the pilot project, it also agreed that this group should act as a reference panel in the wider development of the Council's community planning framework and the associated work streams which need to be undertaken. At the first meeting of the group, an outline programme of work and terms of reference will be presented for consideration.

#### *Transition Committee ( Strategic Policy and Resources)*

The BIG Lottery was keen for the pilot projects to enable meaningful collaboration between the proposed Statutory Transition Committees and various partners in the community, particularly the VCS. Our project proposal therefore included specific engagement with the Council's Transition Committee (i.e. Strategic Policy and Resources) in the form of at least two seminars over the period of the contract. The exact outworkings of these seminars will be developed over the course of the project and in addition, regular update reports on the BIG community planning pilot will also be brought to the Committee for information. At this stage the Committee is asked to agree to its involvement in a minimum of two seminars.

#### *Elected Members and Party Briefings*

Recognising the leading role of Elected Members, both as civic leaders and as local advocates, in our submission to BIG we recommended that Party briefings be organised to support the engagement, capacity building and collaborative working objectives of the pilot project. This builds on previous recommendations to Committee where it was agreed that Member workshops and /or party briefings be developed to support Members and the development of the community planning process. Within the pilot project it is proposed that the Party Briefings be held early in the project timetable, with perhaps review briefings held at appropriate intervals.

### **Regional Developments**

The legislation which will underpin community planning is the Local Government Reorganisation Bill, which has yet to be released for consultation and no further official guidance has been received from the DoE since November on the issue of community planning. Nevertheless, the Council has made a commitment through the corporate plan to the creation of an effective community planning framework for Belfast in light of the benefits this is likely to bring in terms of more effective community engagement, more integrated planning and service delivery and improved collaboration between agencies to find the most effective and efficient solutions to issues across the city.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

None at present. The Council has already committed resources to the development of the Joint Belfast Health Development Unit. This Unit, together with other existing officers

responsible for supporting community planning within Council, and a cross-departmental officer working group which was already established to support the development of community planning, will contribute to the pilot project.. Given the uncertainties surrounding RPA and community planning, the BIG pilot will provide a fresh impetus and focus for community planning activity. Additional support costs for managing and coordinating the project will be met from within the BIG funding.

#### Human Resources

As previously agreed with Committee, the bid included the salary cost for a project co-ordinator. This fully funded post with no additional cost to the Council will be recruited on a fixed-term basis for the duration of the contract only.

#### **Decisions required**

The Committee is asked to:

- i. Note the above report and the project plan and proposal summary attached at appendix 1;
- ii. Agree to the Council entering into a contract with the BIG Lottery to deliver this pilot in conjunction with the consortium partners;
- iii. Approve the proposed Committee and Elected Member involvement as set out above and in particular to agree to engagement with the Committee and Party Groups as part of the pilot and development of the wider community planning framework;
- iv. Endorse the Council's continued commitment to the development of a community planning framework for the city.

#### **Decision Tracking**

The Director of Health and Environmental Services will bring progress reports back to the Committee as the project progresses.

#### **Key to Abbreviations**

APBs – Area Partnership Boards  
BIG – Big Lottery Fund  
VCS - Voluntary and Community Sector

#### **Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 – BIG project proposal and project outline  
Appendix 2 - **Background Information –Belfast Health Development Unit (BH DU)**