



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources committee
Subject:	Consultation response: DSD - Draft Concordat for Relationships between Government and the voluntary and community sector
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development manager, ext 3525

Relevant Background Information	
1.1	<p>The Department for Social Development held a public consultation from 13 January 2011 to 23 February 2011 on proposals for a new 'Concordat' between the voluntary and community sectors (VCS) and the NI government.</p> <p>The Concordat replaces a 'Compact' between government and the sector endorsed by the Executive in 2000. In 2008 the Minister for Social Development acknowledged that a policy gap existed in the Executive, and in the Assembly, in respect of the relationship with the sector and the need to fill it appropriately.</p> <p>It was agreed that the best approach would be to develop a new Concordat between Government and the voluntary and community sector supported by a programme of agreed actions and commitments.</p> <p>The draft Concordat describes the 'shared vision of Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector is to work together as social partners to build a participative, peaceful, equitable and inclusive community in Northern Ireland.'</p> <p>It outlines a series of shared values and principles between the CVS and Government. And It defines a set of specific commitments identifying key activities is the most appropriate implementation and control mechanism. The commitments are there to ensure the effective delivery of significant elements of the concordat.</p> <p>A copy of the draft is available at: www.dsdni.gov.uk/consultation-concordat.htm</p> <p>Belfast City Council did not receive a direct invitation from DSD to contribute to the</p>

	consultation and officers only became aware of it informally on 10 February. Officers have since approached DSD who extended their deadline for submissions to 3 March 2011.
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Key Issues	
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the Concordat focuses specifically on the relationship between the VCS and central government, officers are concerned that there is no direct reference to the role of local government in the draft. • Local government's current relationship with the sector is considerable. We not only offer advice, support and funding to the sector through the work of the Community Services section, but we also have a large number of linkages to the sector through the work of many of our other council services and units. And, under forthcoming local government reforms, it is apparent that these relationships are only likely to grow over the next few years. • In particular, our work on a future model for Community Development; our emerging approaches to Community Planning and community engagement, our support for Neighbourhood Renewal, will have a significant impact on the relationship between the statutory sector and the CVS. • It is important and constructive that these relationships between central government, the CVS and local government is recognised within the Concordat and that local government is formally involved in the implementation arrangements.

Resource Implications	
3.1	There are no resource costs associated with this consultation response.

Equality and Good Relations Considerations	
4.1	None for Belfast City Council.

Recommendations	
5.1	The Committee is asked to :
5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the contents of the draft response • Agree to its submission to DSD with the proviso that it will be subject to full council endorsement in April.

Decision Tracking		
Timeframe:	Reporting Officer:	Barbary Cook

	Key to Abbreviations
DSD – Department for Social Development VCS – Voluntary and community sector	

	Documents Attached
Appendix 1: Belfast City Council draft response to the consultation on the Concordat between Government and Voluntary and Community Sector	