



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Community Planning and BIG Lottery Project</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Director of Health & Environmental Services
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### Relevant Background Information

On 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2010, the SP&R Committee was advised that the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) had begun a tendering process for the delivery of up to three community planning pilot projects in Northern Ireland. The primary purpose of the projects was to build the capacity of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) so it could participate equally in the community planning process. The Committee subsequently agreed that the Council should submit a bid in collaboration with the five Area Partnership Boards and Community Places. For the purposes of the funding application, this partnership was named the 'Belfast Community Planning Consortium' (Belfast Consortium) with Belfast City Council assigned as the lead partner.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> March the Committee agreed the scope and outline project plan for the bid, agreeing to a community planning project that would focus on the single theme of health. On the 21<sup>st</sup> May, Committee was informed that the bid had been successful and agreed to enter into a contract with the BIG Lottery to deliver the pilot. The contract is to the value of £139,000 plus VAT and must be completed by February 2012. The remaining two contracts were awarded to partnerships from the Derry City and Strabane district council areas and the Fermanagh and Omagh district council areas.

The BIG Lottery pilot offers an opportunity to develop and test the Council's emerging community planning processes in advance of any future statutory model for community planning. However, the project represents just one aspect of our approach to community planning. Other thematic and citywide structures currently exist or will need to be developed outside of this project. For this reason, the Committee also agreed at its meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> March to establish a Cross Party Reference Group on Community Planning to guide the project and to inform the development of the Council's wider community planning framework.

This report provides an update on progress to date and sets out the proposed next stages in the BIG Lottery project and community planning process in general.

### Key Issues

#### The Pilot Project

As agreed by Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> March, the pilot project focuses 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 builds on the Council's commitment to creating a healthier Belfast and will augment ongoing work within Council and with our partners to improve health and wellbeing, including working closely with the new Belfast Health Development Unit (set up jointly between the Council, the Public

Health Agency and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust) and the new Strategic Health Partnership for the city, which will be responsible for developing a health and wellbeing plan for the City. The pilot will inform the development of this plan, whilst at the same time provide an opportunity to test in practical ways how the VCS can participate most effectively in community planning.

The emphasis on the VCS will help inform how we engage, support and involve these important sectors in planning and delivery. Following the pilot, BIG aims to provide a model and a toolkit of good practice that will help ensure the genuine engagement of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the new / emerging community planning processes.

The pilot project is managed through a Project Steering Group, chaired by Suzanne Wylie, Director of Health and Environmental Services, with membership from the following organisations:

- Belfast City Council
- Belfast Area Partnerships (one from each of the five partnerships)
- Community Places
- Belfast Health & Social Care Trust:
  - Belfast Health Development Unit
  - Public Health Agency

The Belfast pilot is contracted to deliver the following key elements:

- Engagement and participation of Voluntary & Community Sector
- Capacity building programme
- Integrating emerging priorities into planning (and in collaboration with other partners informing the development of a health and wellbeing plan for the city)
- Creating realistic plans and ensuring they are resourced
- Informing the longer-term model of community planning
- Conference and Final Evaluation Report (Dec 2011 and Jan 2012)

Work to date has focused on understanding the health and voluntary and community sectors and making sense of the various health needs across the city. A review of expressed health needs and priorities has been completed and is being checked against people's understanding of the health issues in their local area. Feedback to date suggests that the range of existing priorities and issues do reflect local concerns and form an acceptable basis for developing a health & wellbeing plan for the city but we also want community and voluntary sector input to action planning and delivery.

In line with the approach agreed by the Committee previously, a number of engagement sessions are planned for the coming months including a "mini conference" in June to which a wider range of participants from the community will be invited to hear about the project and give their views on how community planning should develop..

Work is also progressing on the development of the capacity building programme and a number of information sessions have been held with various stakeholders.. This includes plans to develop a formalised and ideally accredited short programme , with a specific Belfast focus, which will bring together participants from across all sectors to understand the potential benefits of community planning to Belfast and explore what has worked well both in other areas and in the city to date.

### **Role of Elected Members, SP&R Committee and Cross Party Reference Group**

Elected Members, as civic leaders and local advocates, will be pivotal to community planning at both local and strategic city-wide levels. Whilst the SP&R Committee has specific responsibility for the development and implementation of the community planning process; all Elected Members will have a role. Therefore the Committee was keen to ensure that this role was properly reflected within the pilot and any emerging model. As a result it established a cross Party Reference Group with the dual role of overseeing the BIG Lottery project but also leading the development of a community planning framework for the Council.

At the first meeting of the Reference Group on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2010, the Group agreed an outline programme of work and terms of reference (attached as appendix 1). The Reference Group has met four times to date, including a joint workshop with the BIG Project Steering Group. The Reference Group has received a number of briefings relating to community planning, the pilot project and related health theme. The primary focus to date has been on the BIG Lottery Project, but the Reference Group is keen to consider and align other relevant work, such as the development of the Council's Community Development Strategy, and to explore and develop models of good practice.

Through the BIG Lottery pilot and other good practice learning, the Reference Group aims to develop and test:

- A route map / model for community planning
- Structures and processes for engagement

In doing so, the Reference Group also hopes to learn and address the following key issues:

- Representation
- Resources
- Empowering the community and voluntary sector so it can influence and participate in how we plan and deliver services
- Joining up council responses /services
- Joint planning among agencies
- Working at both city level and local neighbourhood level

The Cross Party Reference Group will need to be re-constituted following the establishment of the new Council in June. It is also intended that Party Briefings and/or workshops with the new SP&R Committee be organised after June to update new and existing Members on community planning and to begin the process of Member engagement on community planning. This may be done as part of a wider induction programme.

### **Legislative Developments**

The DoE recently issued the Local Government Reform / Policy Proposals for consultation, which included only high level references to community planning and the power of wellbeing. The Council will continue to seek to influence the development of formal community planning guidance. The pilot project will assist with this process.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

None at present. Support costs for managing and coordinating the project will be met from within the BIG funding. This includes the appointment of the Project Co-ordinator, Kim Walsh.

#### Human Resources

None at present.

**Decisions required**

The Committee is asked to note the above report and progress to date.

**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 – Cross Party Reference Group - Terms of Reference and Programme of Work

**Cross Party Reference Group - Terms of Reference and Programme of Work**

**Purpose of Group**

The main purpose of the group, which had been established by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 19th March, is to provide a political forum to discuss and test emerging ideas/concepts as required for developing a Council approach to community planning with an early focus on the delivery of the Big Lottery Fund Pilot Project on Community Planning.

**Terms of Reference**

- Provide strategic direction to the Belfast Community Planning Consortium (BCPC) - which is responsible for overseeing the BIG Lottery funded community planning pilot project.
- Ensure the BCPC and BIG Lottery Project is connected to the political process.
- Monitor the progress of the BIG Lottery Project and contribute to the evaluation of the project.
- Provide strategic / political direction and input to the development of the health planning process within Belfast.
- Assess the learning for Belfast City Council and its implications for the ongoing development of community planning within Belfast.
- Act as a reference panel in the wider development of the Council's community planning framework.
- To make recommendations to SP&R regarding the developing community planning framework for Belfast. This may include recommendations on timelines, resources and structures.
- Champion a cohesive approach within the Council to Community Planning.
- To develop and maintain expertise in the field of community planning.

**Programme of Work**

<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Set a community planning framework which can be used by Govt and statutory agencies	Dec 2010 – Feb 2012
Proposals from Steering Group - Influence and re-shape: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Health Prioritisation</li> <li>• Draft proposals on engaging with the VCS</li> <li>• Decide our participation in the engagement programme</li> <li>• Draft proposals on building capacity of the VCS</li> </ul>	Mid Jan 2011 Mid Jan 2011 Mid Jan 2011 (then as agreed) March 2011
Consider Councillor and staff training needs for community planning and make recommendations to SP&R	March 2011
Develop knowledge and consider good practice on community planning including research and study visits	Feb 2011 – Feb 2012
Develop communication and relationships with other sectors (as required)	Apr 2011 – Mar 2012
Inform and influence 2012 / 13 corporate planning and budget process	Jun 2011 – Oct 2011
Interim review of process to date and implications for Council	Sept 2011
Develop a community planning framework for Council – report to SP&R	Mar 2012