



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Cross Cutting Issues: A community development model and corporate strategy
Date:	17 June 2011
Reporting officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
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1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The purpose of this report is to present Members with a draft community development model for the city and a council strategy to support it. It also includes proposals for public consultation.
1.2	Our corporate plan places great importance on the relationship between the council and the communities we serve. Community development (CD) activity is one of the core drivers of this work. Where it is successful community development work makes it much easier for the council, and our partners, to engage with communities to determine local priorities; to make better use out of local assets; to deliver our services more effectively; and to measure our impact more easily. It also complements and enhances our wider civic leadership role in contributing to quality of life in the city. It will also be a fundamental element of the Council's emerging community planning role.
1.3	Recognising this underpinning role of community development activity, the Development Committee agreed in May 2010 to design a CD strategy that would help the whole council to contribute more effectively to shared community development goals.
1.4	Work on the strategy to date has been in three stages:
1.5	Stage 1. Drawing together CD best practice; discussions with council officers; preparing a draft CD statement; and designing an approach to engagement with stakeholders.
1.6	Stage 2. Initial engagement with stakeholders (including a series of workshops with council officers and representatives from over 50 external organisations

	including the community, voluntary and statutory sectors). An All-Party workshop in February 2011 considered the results of preparatory work. While attendance at the workshop was low, Members who attended were enthusiastic about the content.
1.7	Stage 3. The formation of a draft community development 'model' to share with our partners; and a community development strategy that would allow the council to contribute to the wider model.

2.0	Key Issues
2.0	The current draft text is attached as Appendix 1 . It does two things:
2.1	1. Establishes a simple model of community development that could be shared both within the council, and with our partners across the city; and
2.2	2. Creates a community development strategy specifically for the council that would allow us, within the context of our corporate objectives, to contribute to the outcomes described in the model.
2.3	The model focuses on a broad definition of community development and the strands of work that contribute to it. It also considers the likely outcomes. Over time we would wish to get support from our external partners for the model and eventually agree on how (either individually or jointly) we could contribute to shared outcomes.
2.4	The second element, the strategy , is for the council and its departments. It considers where the community development model fits with our own corporate objectives, both as a supporting process that enhances the organisation's existing and potential contributions to CD, and as a means for shaping and measuring our impact.
2.5	The model and strategy are the result of many months of discussion and workshops with senior officers; with staff from right across council; with external partners; and with Members at a special all-party workshop.
2.6	It is now proposed that the next stage in the strategy's development is to widen the consultation to encourage communities, the community and voluntary sector; our statutory partners and others to consider the current draft model and strategy in more detail and work with us to refine its contents.
2.7	The role of Members is obviously key to the successful design and delivery of a successful community development strategy. While Members contributed earlier in year to the current draft, an important strand of the final consultation stage will be for officers to work with Members to ensure that the implications of the strategy are more fully explored. The strategy does not sit in isolation but will complement and support many other cross-cutting approaches such as emerging work on Community Planning, the Organisational Development strategy, thematic working and the approach to Neighbourhood working and Neighbourhood Assets which Members may wish to explore.
2.8	An agreed strategy will quickly generate a series of implementation activities. These are likely to not only enhance our existing work on community development (particularly within the Community Services section) but also offer

	ideas for new approaches across the council. For example, closely linked to the development of the strategy has been the development of the council's Community Support Plan 2011 to 2014. The CD strategy has informed the outcomes and focus of the new plan (which will also ready for public consultation in the autumn) and which will clearly demonstrate the positive contribution that the CD strategy can make.
2.9	Given the strategic nature of the emerging strategy, the fact that it will underpin our work with communities and in neighbourhoods, and its likely implications for departments across the council, the draft strategy is now being presented to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for consideration.

3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no additional resource implications. The budget for the public consultation is already contained within Community Services agreed budget for 2011/12.
3.2	The main focus of any emerging actions in the initial years of the strategy are likely to be about enhancing or adapting existing activities.

4.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	As part of the pre-consultation work an equality screening process has been undertaken with the support of the Equality Officer.
4.2	The content of the strategy has already been greatly influenced by substantial pre-consultation work and the proposed public consultation exercise will be designed to explore any additional equality issues.

5.0	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider and endorse the draft community development strategy. 2. Agree to a full twelve week public consultation programme to begin in late summer (in joint consultation with the draft Community Support Plan) to include briefings with each of the Parties.

6.0	Decision Tracking
	Cate Taggart will implement committee decision.

7.0	Key to Abbreviations
	CD – Community development CSP – Community Support Plan DSD – Department for Social Development

8.0	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – The draft community development strategy.