STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

| Subject: | DSD Community Support Programme Grant Income: Additional in-year allocation proposal 2015/16 |
| Date: | 18th December 2015 |
| Reporting Officer: | Cate Taggart, Community Development Manager |
| Contact Officer: | Clare Mullen, Community Services Unit Manager |

| Is this report restricted? | Yes | No | X |
| Is the decision eligible for Call-in? | Yes | No | X |

1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members on the proposed expenditure options in relation to the offer of additional income of £275,280 against our DSD administered Community Support Programme grant.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

i. Agree to accept the offer of additional DSD income of £275,280 as a variation to the existing Community Support Programme grant contract for 2015/16;

ii. Consider the proposals to utilise the potential additional allocation of CSP funds and prioritise these dependant on the total funds available;

iii. Agree that, where uptake within any of the proposed elements is under-utilised, officers can reallocate funding based on the committee agreed priorities in order to maximise the uptake of the additional CSP funding allocation.
<table>
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<th>3.0</th>
<th><strong>Main report</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Council has an annual grant contract with DSD under its regional Community Support Programme: the total value of the 2015/16 contract is £1.404 million.</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
<td>The contract is conditional on our making a contribution to the CSP overall aim defined as: <strong>“To strengthen local communities, increase community participation and promote social inclusion through the stimulation and support of community groups, community activity and local advice services”</strong>.</td>
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| 3.3 | A series of four outcomes, or impacts have been set for the CSP:  
  i. an active and organised community,  
  ii. an influential community,  
  iii. an informed community,  
  iv. a sustainable community, |
| 3.4 | On 4 December we were informed that the Voluntary and Community Unit (DSD) has offered Belfast City Council an additional **in-year allocation of £275,280** towards general revenue expenditure and subject to the same conditions of grant offer. It should be noted that this allocation is conditional on the additionality of any supported activity and full utilisation by 31 March 2016. There is no requirement on BCC to provide match funding. All of the additional grant allocation will be subject to the normal DSD monitoring and compliance requirements. |
| 3.5 | **The limited timeframe attached to the additional funding will not allow for monies to be administered competitively so it is crucial to find a prompt but robust way in which to allocate the funds in support of projects and service providers for community benefit.** |
| 3.6 | Given this requirement (to allocate and fully expend the additional monies within the current financial year), officers have identified a number of potential in-year funding opportunities. In doing so, we have considered the following:  
  • DSD Community Support Programme funding criteria and target outcomes  
  • The opportunity presented to significantly contribute to the Council’s and Service Priorities. |
3.7

- Priority needs related to current financial climate
- Feasibility of proposals to support compliant assessment, committal and expenditure of funds by 31st March 2016
- Efficiency considerations

The proposed options for expenditure of the in-year allocation are:

i. **Community Sector Support - Large Grant Uplift**

Under the Community Support Plan, BCC currently provides 82 Revenue grants for Community Buildings and 29 Capacity Building grants to organisations across the city. The Revenue funding is used towards the running costs associated with operating a community building and the Capacity Building grant contributes to the core costs of larger, area based community development support agencies. Officers are aware, via the monitoring process, that funding awards do not currently meet full costs. There is also evidence that, within the current funding environment, a significant number of community organisations are struggling to meet these costs.

Committee is asked to consider an in-year limited offer of additional funds to support programmes in community buildings or those of community development support organisations. The fund could be used to support any verified increase in core costs, for small scale building repairs and maintenance or for programme equipment.

If we are to meet the requirement to allocate and fully expend the additional monies within the current financial year, it is suggested that any agreed uptake of these funds be administered to those organisations currently in receipt of a revenue or capacity grant from BCC in 2015/16.

If agreeable, officers will invite organisations to submit proposals on how they propose to utilise the potential funding of up to £1,500 per organisation. After assessment and confirmation of available budget, recommendations for grant uplift would be presented for the Director's approval via delegated authority. Subject to approval, a letter of variation on existing contracts will be issued and, as per current arrangements, all successful groups will submit monitoring returns to report progress against targets.

If Members agree to the proposal as outlined above, the allocation would be approximately £166,500.
ii. **Resourcing Girdwood Community Engagement Programme**

Committee will be aware that the Girdwood Community Hub Shared Space project will be launched in January 2016. The development is the first step in the wider regeneration of Girdwood Park, a 14 acre site located between Crumlin Road and Cliftonpark Avenue. The Hub will include a gym and wellbeing area, youth space, multi-purpose rooms and an outdoor piazza with seating, as well as a range of other facilities.

The shared space programme has been developed in partnership with the Girdwood Hub Forum which is made up of over 20 groups from the surrounding area and other key stakeholders. Officers have worked with the Forum to develop plans for the Hub and other regeneration proposals for the wider site and this stakeholder involvement will support the vision of the hub as a safe and welcoming place for everyone.

- The Forum has identified a range of additional equipment which would support the targeted usage of the facility by nearby community groups, as well as other organisations in north Belfast, including statutory bodies and charities. The equipment requested will specifically support the outline programme for the Youth Space and other Community Programming across the building. It is anticipated the total cost will be in the region of **£44,780**

- A range of activities to support community awareness has been ongoing including a community fun day and tea dances in the autumn and a soft launch programme in the building during December 2015. A week long programme of events, including a Good Relations conference, is planned for January 2016 with the official opening on the 15th. While officers are utilising all our current internal and external communication platforms to publicise the facility, the message could be further extended via a targeted publicity campaign, for example, using adshells, bannering on adjacent arterial routes, social media and Flicker. It is anticipated the likely cost would be up to **£10,000**

- Given the end spend date, the ability to utilise additional funds to support programming is limited however there is an opportunity to host a mini St Patrick’s Day event which would be planned & delivered on a community engagement basis ensuring participation of all local communities: **£5,000**

iii. **Super Connected Cities- Digital Hubs Programme**

The Superconnected Communities pilot project set out to animate twelve IT hubs in
community centres across the city agreed by the former Development Committee. An outreach (mobile) hub was also set up. The project outcomes are digital inclusion, literacy and skills development - generally engaging people in the community online and teaching them how to surf, email and also learn skills to support their work ambitions. There has been significant progress with all 12 hubs up and running along with 2 further hubs in the new council areas: Sally Gardens and Tullycarnett. We have also expanded the outreach service to meet the needs of all 31 centres and the wider community such as Folds and other community buildings with the delivery of Belfast WIFI. The co-ordination of the project is key and has brought in a vast array of new partners to offer free training or avail of our contacts in the community. This has resulted in 426 new onliners engaged since November 2014 (9 months) in a significantly short period.

Community Services officers support the project through a working group made up of community development staff who promote the programmes in and around their centres and support delivery and secure small levels of programme investment both internally (eg Age Friendly Belfast) and externally (eg DFP through Go Online; DEL; NI Screen and the US Consulate).

In order to extend the programme offer in support of our core outcomes, we recommend utilisation of £12,000 to support a Digi Programme consisting of courses and classes for new onliners, mature onliners and progression classes for those that want to know more. This allocation will also support a train the trainer programme for volunteer champions in order to extend and sustain current programming.

iv. Youth Forum

As one of their current programme priorities, the Belfast Youth Forum is committed to a Shared Space campaign. Youth Forum members have already completed initial research via a survey of young people attending our summer events and interviewing young city centre users during Autumn of this year. The next phase would include a POP UP Youth space which is the mobile youth space / bus owned by T13. This would be operated over 6 weekends during February and March 2016 to engage young people on what any future permanent 'youth shared space' should offer. The total cost of this engagement programme is anticipated as £11,000 including bus hire and development session support and related promotional activity.

v. Play Development Programming
In line with the recently agreed Children and Young People outcomes framework, our Play Development team will work with at least 12 children to design and deliver a competition. The project will build skills through the use of animation techniques in order to translate our new CYP character images into an engagement programme. The programme will be ready for launch on 1 April and will encourage all children over the summer to create a new character. The total cost is anticipated as £10,000 including skills development training, software, junk art materials and promotion.

vi. Advice Tribunal Service

In August 2013, Council announced two-year funding totalling £430,000 for a Citywide Tribunal Representation Service to help claimants who wish to appeal SSA decisions on benefits including Employment Support Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independent Payment, Universal Credit and any other SSA benefit. This service enables clients to challenge decisions, assisting them through the process and representing them at hearings.

DSD income of £54,000 allowed for a further extension of 3 months and Council has since agreed additional investment of £175,000. The programme is now due to end in June 2016. In order to capture the impact of the programme to date and to make recommendations to inform any future support, committee is asked to agree that officers commission external expertise to complete an independent evaluation (£10,000). The recommendation from the report will be tabled with committee.

vii. Equipment to support incoming Community Centres

Under service convergence, Council now supports a number of additional community centres either via direct or independent management. Officers have identified a need for a small level of additional service equipment to ensure compliant management. The total budget required will be £6,000.

Officers believe the proposals outlined above represent a balanced opportunity to allocate the additional CSP funds given the associated conditions.

<table>
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<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Large Grant Uplift</td>
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<td>Resourcing Girdwood Community Engagement Programme</td>
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<td>Super Connected Belfast: Digital Hubs Programme</td>
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<td>Youth Forum</td>
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<td>Play Development Programme</td>
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Given the conditions of offer and the challenge to ensure full spend before 31st March 2016, it is recommended that where uptake within any of the proposed elements is under-utilised, officers are given delegated authority to reallocate funding based on the committee agreed priorities. This will allow BCC to maximise the uptake of the additional offer of in-year income.

**Financial & Resource Implications**

The additional DSD allocation will cover all grant or associated project costs. Related assessment and administration resource requirements will be subsumed into current staff work programmes. There is no requirement for match funding from BCC.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications**

There are no equality or Good Relations implications

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### Equipment to support new CC compliant management

| Equipment to support new CC compliant management | £6,000 |
| Total | £275,280 |

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### Appendices – Documents Attached

None