



Subject:	Department for Communities Letter of Variance for Council Community Support Programme 2016/17
Date:	11 October 2016
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department
Contact Officer:	Cate Taggart, Community Development Manager

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of the report is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To note correspondence received from the Department for Communities (DfC) 7th September, regarding the Welfare Reform Readiness Programme (See Appendix 1)• To invite Members to agree to accept the subsequent offer of additional in-year funding under the Community Support Programme (CSP) from the DfC. The detailed Letter of Variance is attached as Appendix 2.• In line with contract conditions, consider and agree a mechanism to distribute this additional grant across the five advice consortia.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accept the additional in year grant as outlined in the DfC Letter of Variance.• Consider and agree the proposed model for the distribution of funds across the 5 area based advice consortia.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The purpose of this Letter of Variance is to amend the Council's CSP Letter of Offer (dated 31st March 2016) following the Department's decision to revise the financial offer by allocating further funding from the Welfare Reform Advice monies for Welfare Reform</p>

	Readiness and Welfare Reform Training.
3.2	The additional allocation to BCC is as follows:
3.3	Welfare Reform Readiness Programme. To provide support to front line advice organisations currently funded through the council's Community Support Advice grant. The programme will ensure that advice organisations are prepared to assist customers through the implementation of Welfare Reform. The individual allocation to each Council area will be for the delivery of specific objectives in relation to Welfare Reform through Council's existing contractual arrangements with advice providers via the CSP.
3.4	Additional funding of £203,677.26 has been offered to the Belfast area. This must be allocated on the same basis as the original 2016/17 awards.
3.5	Welfare Reform Training Programme. Additional funding of £65,400.00 which has been allocated based on the number of current front line advisers per council area. The Training Programme will consist of six Welfare Reform courses required by all front line generalist advisers and volunteers. The programme will enable front line advice organisations to complete immediate training requirements related to Welfare Reform. (Details at Annex 2 of Letter of Variance).
3.6	It is anticipated that there will be a regional allocation of £500,000 per year towards front line training. There is also provision for training to be targeted at a number of other groupings including elected Members.
3.7	The funding is in year and must be spent by 31 March 2017. Councils are not required to match this additional funding which must be used to meet the specific objectives referred to above. Additional funding will not be extended into the next financial year.
3.8	Belfast Generalist Advice Consortia Council currently administer an annual grant programme of £931,765 to five consortia covering north, south, east, west and central Belfast under its Advice & Information Services grant programme. This programme supports the consortia to deal with an average of 127,400 enquiries per year across the city.
3.9	The purpose of the Generalist Advice Funding is to support core costs and associated

programme costs, offering longer term sustainability for Belfast based Generalist Advice organisations that have full time staff and ongoing annual costs, and that produce work which substantially benefits the city

3.10 The programme includes a formula for determining the percentage allocation of funding to the four quadrants and to central Belfast. This formula, which takes account of need (via the proxy of population and deprivation), was previously reviewed in 2015 to ensure it is up to date and based on available and credible data sets.

3.11 The DfC Letter of Variance stipulates the additional in-year funds should be distributed via our current generalist advice infrastructure (the five advice consortia). Officers therefore suggest that this is based on Council's existing allocation model. The table below details the current 2016/17 grant award for each consortium and the proposed grant uplift based on the area percentage allocation. The marginal percentage anomaly has been equally spread across neighbourhood consortia to maximise the available budget.

Area	Area Allocation Based on new boundary 2015	Recommended awards based on agreed model to reflect 2015/16 available budget	Letter of Variance
			Additional allocation for Welfare Reform Readiness and Welfare Reform Training
Central	10.00%	£ 82,588.50	£26,983.07
East Belfast	14.41%	£134,593.53	£38,849.37
North Belfast	24.71%	£241,153.43	£66,564.33
South Belfast	15.37%	£143,538.48	£41,432.51
West Belfast	35.37%	£329,891.59	£95,247.97
Total	99.86%	£931,765.53	£269,077.26

3.12 If this approach is agreeable, each consortium will be required to submit proposals outlining how they intend to meet the programme objectives.

3.13 Following Committee decision, officers will initiate pre-contract discussions with organisations to discuss the proposed 2016/17 grant revision and to outline any specific

	<p>conditions attached to the funding offer. Officers will assess and approve individual submissions. Further conditions may be attached to letters of offer as deemed necessary. Members should note that all funding agreements will continue to be subject to receipt of satisfactory monitoring reports.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p><u>Financial:</u></p> <p>3.14 Any additional funding contracts issued will be wholly dependent upon additional income from the Department for Community. There is no requirement for BCC match funds.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>3.15 Within current officer team.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>3.16 The programme is citywide and open and accessible to all sections of the community.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	<p>Appendix 1: Correspondence from Department for Communities in relation to Welfare Reform Support Programme.</p> <p>Appendix 2: Letter of Variance from Department for Communities to amend the Belfast City Council's Community Support Programme (CSP) Letter of Offer dated 31st March 2016.</p>