



Belfast

Community Support Plan

2025 - 2029



Belfast
City Council

Belfast

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Introduction

The Council's Community Support Plan outlines how we seek to support a better engaged and more resourceful community. We do this through our resources and community facilities and the support we provide to community and voluntary organisations that provide relevant services. It also provides priorities for some Council investment including funding and is used to access funding from the Department for Communities through its Community Support programme which provides central government support to all council areas.

Background

In 2024 Belfast City Council elected members agreed that officers would engage and consult with stakeholders to review existing approaches and to inform the development of a new Community Support Plan (CSP). Through the CSP, Council makes a significant investment to support local communities and it was identified that, given the changes in the external environment since the last Plan, the impacts of Covid 19 and the current pressures that our local communities are facing, this was an opportune time to engage with the sector and local communities to develop a new Community Support Plan.

In addition, a number of other key policies have had reviews completed, or were underway at the time of engagement, which further emphasised the need to develop a new plan. These included;

- Belfast City Council - Belfast Agenda (the community plan for Belfast), Corporate Plan and Peace Plus Local Action Plan.
- Department for Communities – Support for Community Voluntary Sector Infrastructure, People and Place Review (Neighbourhood Renewal) and Review of Advice Provision.

As part of this review, it was also decided Council would review some of the key funding that is included in this plan, namely, the Community Development Large Grants which had an allocation of £3.3 million to over 130 community organisations in 2023.

One of the overarching reasons to develop a new plan was that Council needs to review and articulate its position in terms of its community support priorities and service provision, including funding priorities and approaches and how these will inform resource allocation.

The implementation of the plan will help:

- To improve what we do within our wider Community Services offering
- To better articulate who we are, what we do and how we engage better with our community
- To engage and support those communities most at need
- To outline how funding is allocated

We want to support our community & voluntary sector to be well structured, skilled and have the necessary resources to deliver on priorities for better engaged and more resourceful communities.

It is important to note that the Community Support Plan **does not** include everything we deliver and fund in local communities. This plan outlines how Council will direct the funding, assets, people and programming that we deliver through **our Community Support Teams & Neighbourhood Integration and Assets & Programming Portfolios** within our City & Neighbourhood Services Department.

Proposals are based on the current resources that we have available within these teams, both human and financial. These are subject to change depending on annual budgets being agreed by Council and DfC.

This Community Support Plan will outline:

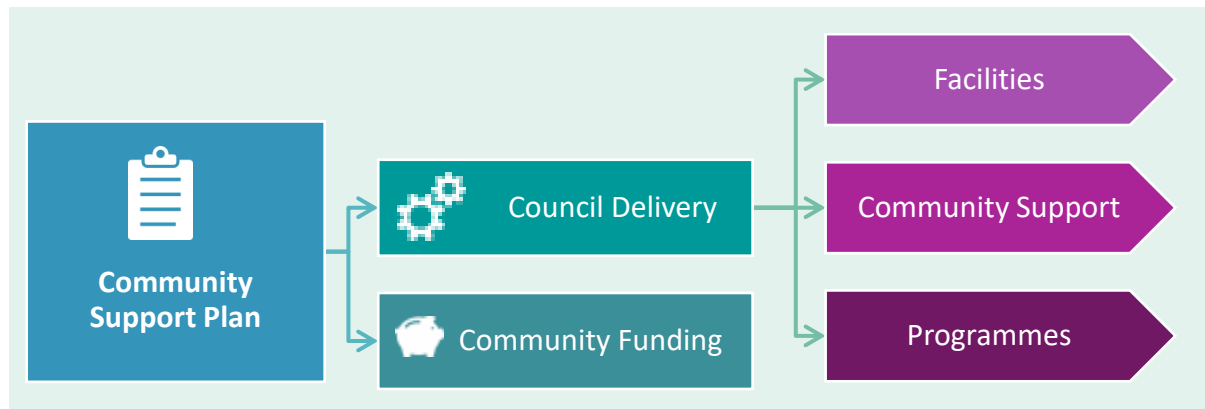
- Outcomes and priorities for Community Support that will drive the delivery of activity from 2025-2029.
- How priorities will be supported through Council delivery and outline the resources required to deliver on these priorities.
- How priorities will be supported through a funding / investment programme 2026-2029.

Using the resources we have available, our focus will be on supporting local communities and we acknowledge that there are structural inequalities such as gender, race, age and disability which we need to address.

What's included in the Community Support Plan

The Community Support Plan (CSP) covers

1. Council community service delivery; and
2. Funding made available by Council to community and voluntary sector organisations across the city.



Our Supports

The community support opportunities included within the Community Support Plan is significant. It is therefore important that our new plan is fit for purpose and meets the expectations of our local community. In general, it includes the current community facilities that we manage and maintain, programmes that we deliver, various grant programmes that we allocate and support that our Community Services staff provide.

Council Community Services activities are delivered in three key areas:

Facilities

- We manage and maintain 27 high quality, multi-purpose, accessible facilities in local neighbourhoods which are used to deliver activities that cater for a range of uses. We also support service delivery via 8 independently managed community centres.

Programming

- We deliver programmes in council community centres and other venues that meet the needs of residents, improve quality of community life and measure their success.

Community Support

- We provide a range of support to enable local communities to identify their needs, plan and take action on local priorities. This includes delivery of relevant grant programmes to fund community activities and services.

The current resources we have to deliver our community support are:

1. Council owned Community Centres

- Provision of 27 Community Centres that are managed by council staff
- Provision of support to 8 independently managed centres

2. Funding – In 2024/25 this included:

 Grant	 Annual Award	 Number of Groups Supported
Capacity Building	£1.85 million	43
Revenue for Community Buildings	£1.43 million	87
Advice Services	£1.46 million	14
Summer Scheme	£0.2 million	98
Social Supermarkets	£0.78 million	21

3. People

We have staff in full and part time roles, supporting the local community, developing programmes and running our facilities. There are 3 teams as listed below:

Area Support Unit – 39 staff which includes 14 Community Development Officers and 23 assistant Community Development Officers who deliver a wide range of programmes and activities to meet the needs of CYP, older people, residents, and local community groups. They also provide support and advice to the VCSE organisations across the city including representation on geographical and thematic partnerships. The CDOs also manage the summer scheme small grants programme.

Community Facilities Unit – 111 staff including 9 Community Development Officers and facilities supervisors who directly manage and maintain 27 community centres across the city as well as providing support to 8 voluntary managed community centres. The community centres provide affordable high-quality facilities to the VCSE organisations. (see Annex 1 for centre locations)

Community Support Unit – 10 staff including 6 Community Development Officers provide developmental support and training for VCSE organisations across the city. They also manage delivery of relevant funding including Advice and Social Supermarket programmes. This team supports the Belfast City Youth Council and Digital Inclusion through access to devices, training and support.



Strategic context

In order to maximise our support to our local community and voluntary sector organisations and the communities they serve, we must align with other key strategies and action plans across the Council and those regional strategies that are of importance. We must also ensure that, as key funders of the Community Support Plan, we align with the outcomes that are agreed by DfC as part of their Community Support Programme and other relevant DfC strategies.

Strategy development is ongoing at the time of this review, however the Belfast Community Support Plan recognises these issues and will seek to address them through Council service delivery and community support funding. This Community Support Plan has been developed to ensure that it aligns to key Belfast and regional strategies including the draft Programme for Government.

The Belfast Agenda

Our Community Support Plan seeks to support the achievement of the Belfast Agenda, our Community Plan for the City.

The Belfast Agenda sets out our vision for Belfast in 2025 as:

Belfast will be a city re-imagined and resurgent.

A great place to live and work for everyone.

To make this happen we have identified 5 key themes that through the Community Support Plan, we will actively strive to deliver against the 5 themes in the Belfast Agenda

Our Outcomes:
The five things people want by 2035.
Belfast will be a city:

1. Where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
2. That is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
3. That is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
4. Where everyone experiences good health and well being
5. Where everyone fulfils their potential



Theme 1: Our services

Delivering responsive and value for money services.

Theme 2: Our organisation

Ensuring the correct foundations are in place and we continue to be a fit-for-purpose organisation.

Theme 3: Our people and communities

Making life better for all our residents.

Theme 4: Our economy

Creating inclusive, innovative and sustainable growth, learning and opportunity.

Theme 5: Our place

Creating a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city.

Theme 6: Our planet

Creating a sustainable and nature-positive city.

Theme 7: Compassionate city

Making Belfast a welcoming, caring, fair and inclusive city- leaving no one behind.

Department for Communities

Draft Framework for Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support (2023)

This framework was developed following extensive regional consultation and engagement. It identified the need for infrastructure support across four headline areas:

- Leadership and Advocacy
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Capacity building (practical skills and resilience)
- Volunteering

The vision for investment support for the sector is for: *“A confident, independent and collaborative sector which empowers and sustains local action*

and volunteering; a sector that represents the diversity of our communities and supports the delivery of inclusive and accessible services and programme for government outcomes through partnership, innovation and challenge”

The Belfast Community Support Plan will seek to embed these core values and headline priorities for support in local community development activity to assist in the realisation of this vision. It will also incorporate the Fair Funding Principles in future investment/funding approaches.

People and Place review - A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal

This review has been progressed using a co-design approach engaging communities, including representatives from the Belfast City Council area, in identifying key needs and new actions for future programme delivery. A range of issues, challenges and opportunities have been identified. These include:

- A need for simplification of neighbourhood renewal funding and governance arrangements
- Opportunities for increased participation by local communities in needs identification and programme delivery
- An understanding that poverty exists even in perceived affluent areas
- A need to support more running costs, core staff costs and activity costs
- An opportunity exists to be more flexible and adaptive thereby meeting need and encouraging innovation
- Need for increased longevity of funding provision via multi-annual funding
- Need to support capacity development, education and training in the VCS sector and thereby improve its sustainability and resilience
- Opportunities to develop more effective collaboration and partnership delivery including links to community planning at local level
- Need to focus on outcomes when measuring impacts of investments made

The development of the Community Support Plan has also reflected on other funding mechanisms which are available to support community activities. The plan proposed seeks to complement

these other resources and to plug remaining funding gaps for the Community and Voluntary sector. An overview of the funding resources considered is included in Annex 2.

Development of a community support plan

Belfast City Council agreed that, as part of the development of the Community Support Plan, a co-design process should be followed to involve and empower local community groups and residents to self-determine what should be included in the Council's new Community Support Plan. To do this, since June 2024, Council have undertaken to develop a new Community Support Plan (and review of part of the funding that is included in the plan) via a 3-stage process:

- Stage 1 – Understanding and identifying the key issues across the city through local consultation and stakeholder engagement and desktop research.
- Stage 2 – Agree the outcomes and priorities to be included in the new Community Support Plan.
- Stage 3 – Agreement on the new plan and implementation.

Engagement - Methodology

It was agreed the Stage 1 engagement process would comprise of online and public meetings, as well as strategic review, as follows:

- Public meetings across the city
- Meetings with key stakeholders where appropriate
- An online e-survey
- Desktop research

To deliver on this a series of public meetings took place across the city in June 24.

The purpose of these sessions was to:

- advise residents, community partners and wider stakeholders of the opportunities under the development of a new Community Support Plan

- to allow stakeholders to shape the priorities for the plan and
- improve how we allocate funding to our local community partners.

A total of 9 public sessions were facilitated as part of this pre-engagement with a total of 122 in attendance

An online e-survey was also agreed and circulated widely by Council across existing networks. In total, 94 people completed the e-survey. See Annex 3 and 4 for further details on Stage 1 engagement.

Need and demand for community support - What you told us:

Through the different consultation and engagement approaches used in the first stage of developing this CSP, we sought the views of participants on the following areas:

1. What the current key priorities are facing communities.
2. What support for communities, Council should provide directly via Council staff and facilities.
3. What type of community support / activities Council should fund so they can be delivered via community / voluntary based organisations.

4. How Council should provide investment to support delivery of Community Support Plan priorities.
5. What outcomes and measures of success should Council apply to ensure funding achieves positive change within and for our communities.
6. What the barriers are to effective community support.

“Development of a community support infrastructure means Council directly supporting the community infrastructure to do it for themselves.”

We consolidated your feedback on the above into the following two key areas:

Supports and services Council should Deliver

In general, throughout the engagement process stakeholders acknowledged they value the support that Council provides and were positive about how Council officers were helpful to residents and local communities. They did outline ways in which Council service delivery and funding, can be improved.

The key issues and areas for improvement that were highlighted, are summarised below:

- Communities welcome the provision of Council owned and operated community centres / community spaces. These offer a low cost, safe and accessible space for community activities and service delivery.
- It was suggested that access to facilities could be enhanced through increased promotion of centre facilities and services / activities; increased consistency of services delivered and ensuring that local facilities deliver activity that meets the needs of user communities.
- There was feedback that provision of facilities is not always consistent across the city and that some facilities need modernisation.
- Council playing a lead role in facilitating / stimulating networking and collaboration between community organisations at local level.
- Proactively encouraging and facilitating collaboration between Council community centres and wider stakeholders to ensure community support and programming is delivered in a co-ordinated way that adds value and reduces duplication.
- Provision of appropriate training / coaching / mentoring for community organisations, ensuring non-duplication with what is already being delivered.
- Supporting volunteer development, including additional volunteer capacity and increased volunteer skills.

“Council should provide assistance to grass roots voluntary, community organisations.”

Supports and services that should be delivered via community / voluntary based organisations through council funding

- Communities need ongoing support from Council to deliver community services and activities. Suggested priorities for Council funding included:
- Providing ongoing and increased funding for core running costs of community operated facilities.
- Funding for core costs of running a community or voluntary organisation not linked to the provision of buildings / community facilities.
- Funding for capacity building activities to addresses identified gaps / deficits
- Grant programmes should offer an opportunity for consortia / collaborative bids for programme / service delivery.
- Grant programmes should offer a variety of funding scales from small short-term grants for community activities to multi-annual grants for programme / service delivery.
- The maximum grant available for community facility revenue costs should be increased recognising increased utilities and running costs experienced by community organisations.

“Core costs and staff costs are an ongoing major concern within the community sector and there are not enough funding pots to ensure ongoing access to programmes that people are now dependent on.”

“More cohesive and cross cutting linkages between directly managed facilities and the voluntary-community delivery partners. Many community organisations have the skills, knowledge and structure to deliver a number of community support themes.”

Our Plan to support you 2025 - 2029

Our Vision

Vibrant, inclusive communities where everyone has opportunities for involvement and development.

Our guiding principles

We will be guided by the following principles when supporting communities through our facilities, our staff activities and the funding we make available:

- We are **accountable** for the services and supports we deliver and will act with integrity and professionalism.
- **Promoting, equity, diversity and inclusion** – we will promote and support equality of access and participation in community services through our support for community and voluntary sector organisations.
- **Outcomes focused** – we will use our facilities, staff and funding opportunities to deliver Community Support outcomes agreed by Council.
- **Involving communities** – we will empower communities to be involved in the design, development and delivery of activities.
- **Needs driven** – we will endeavour to target those most in need and align with our inclusive growth framework.
- **Adding value** – we will add value to what is already in existence and will work with relevant partners to achieve this.
- **Promoting collaboration** – we will promote collaboration and joint working, breaking down barriers between communities.
- **Ensuring flexibility** - We will be flexible and responsive to changing community needs and priorities.

Our proposed priorities

One of the key messages from engagement and consultation was that the Belfast City Council Community Support Plan should move to an Outcomes Approach. This means that all of our support, either through funding or direct service delivery, should focus on contributing to overarching strategic outcomes.

For the purposes of this plan, we are using the outcomes that have been agreed as part of the Belfast Agenda and included in its refreshed action plan which is outlined in Table 1. We believe that the Belfast Agenda outcomes align with other relevant strategies such as the DFC Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Framework. The Priorities that we have identified for the Community Support Plan will enable delivery that supports the achievement of the overall outcomes.

Priorities

Based on your feedback and our knowledge of wider issues which are impacting community services and activities, we have identified the following priorities for the new Community Support Plan:

1. **Creating active, engaged and resilient communities**
2. **Ensuring access to quality community facilities**
3. **Joining up community support through partnership development and collaboration**



Cross cutting themes

Improving health and wellbeing and reducing the negative impacts of poverty in Belfast are considered fundamental to our work and as such, will represent cross cutting themes for the Community Support Plan.

We will seek to ensure that through the delivery of Council services and allocation of our external funding, we make a positive contribution to tackling both of these issues.

We will seek to:

- Contribute to an increase in the wellbeing experienced by local residents and community members. By wellbeing we mean: both the physical and mental health experienced by individuals, their families and the wider community.
- Contribute to tackling poverty through community support services through proactive measures / activity which seek to positively change the life experiences of local communities and their residents.

How we will measure success

Our aspiration is that all activity contained in the Community Support Plan, both direct council delivery and activity delivered through Council funding will contribute to the outcomes in the Belfast Agenda and priority areas highlighted above.

In order to ensure achievement of these ambitions, we will focus on our priorities which are explained in more detail below. Council programmes and funding programmes will use relevant measures of success from the framework included in the tables below.

1. Evidence of more active, engaged and resilient communities

- By active we mean: residents are active and participate in community activities, community organisations and wider community relationships in positive ways.
- By engaged we mean: residents are active and involved in their community in the delivery of services, designing the type of services on offer and benefiting from the supports provided.
- By resilient we mean: local communities and the community organisations that serve them will have the skills and access to sustainable human and financial resources that support delivery of effective community support.

2. Ensuring access to quality community facilities

- By access we mean: communities will have access to community buildings and spaces which enable delivery of community based services and activities.
- By quality we mean: facilities will be available which are fit for purpose, and which make provision for the range of service needs presented by the community.

3. Joining up community support through partnership development and collaboration

- By joined up we mean: statutory and community and voluntary sector organisations collaborate and work together to deliver services, raise awareness, or sign-post to other service providers.
- By partnership we mean: creation and implementation of formal joint working relationships for service development, service delivery, or advocacy.

Table 1 Outcomes and Success Measures

The table below outlines how we will define and measure delivery against these outcomes.

Belfast Agenda Theme 1.Our people and communities, making life better for our people and communities		
Desired Outcome	CSP Strategic priority	Success Measures
Where everyone fulfils their potential. Where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing. That is welcoming, safe, fair, and inclusive for all.	Active Communities - residents are active and participate in community activities, community organisations and wider community relationships in positive ways.	% people within the community who feel that they have access to participation in a wide range of Voluntary Community Social Enterprise activities. % people within the community who feel that they have access to participation in a wide range of Council delivered activities Number of individuals participating in community activities. % who have been involved in previous 12 months
	Engaged communities - residents are active and involved in their community in the delivery of services, designing the type of services on offer and benefiting from the supports provided.	Number of active volunteers within projects Number of individuals accessing community support services Participant satisfaction levels by service
	Resilient communities – local communities and the community organisations that serve them will have the skills and access to sustainable human and financial resources that support delivery of effective community support.	% of VCSE organisations that feel that they have sufficient skills within their staff and volunteer to operate effectively for the next 12 months % of VCSE organisations that feel that they have sufficient resources to operate effectively for the next 12 months Number of VCSE staff/ volunteers achieving accredited qualifications Number of VCSE organisations receiving support from BCC Community Services staff to develop leadership / community development and governance skills Amount of income that is drawn from other sources
Belfast Agenda Theme 2.Our Place, creating a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city.		
Desired Outcome	CSP Strategic priority	Success Measures
That is a welcoming, safe, fair, and inclusive for all.	Access: communities will have access to community buildings and spaces which enable delivery of community based services and activities.	Number of community, voluntary and social enterprise facilities used for the delivery of community services Participant numbers using community facilities % reporting awareness of community facilities and services on offer
	Quality: facilities will be available which are fit for purpose, and which make provision for the range of service needs presented by the community.	% reporting that community facilities are welcoming, accessible, high quality and safe. % of people reporting that they are satisfied with facilities’ provision
Belfast Agenda Theme 3.Our Place, creating a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city.		
Desired Outcome	CSP Strategic priority	Success Measures
Where everyone fulfils their potential. Where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing. That is a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all.	Joined up: statutory and community and voluntary sector organisations collaborate and work together to deliver services, raise awareness, or sign-post to other service providers.	Number of joint services and activity programmes delivered via partnership arrangements.
	Partnership: creation and implementation of formal joint working relationships for service development, service delivery, or advocacy.	Number of formal partnerships established Number of joint services and activity programmes delivered via formal partnership arrangements.

Our implementation plan

How we will implement our community support

To achieve our Vision, we will:

- Develop operational action plans under key priorities, ensuring Council community facilities and staff resources are targeted towards realising our identified priorities.
- We will refresh and update our funding programmes to reflect current and projected future community support needs.
- We will seek to actively develop enhanced connections and collaboration between communities, Council supports and wider agencies, thereby maximising the impacts of our work. We will prioritise our work to meet community needs and add value to other programmes and support services, rather than duplicating existing provision.
- We will retain flexibility in our approach so that emerging community needs and priorities can be addressed through the delivery of Council services and our funding programmes.

Our Council service delivery priorities

Council recognises that public services are under increasing pressure from increasing community need, changing demographics and social patterns and increased pressure on budgets available. The Council will therefore undertake to work more effectively in partnership with the local community and the community and voluntary sector in meeting these challenges. In the delivery of community development activity, the Council will strive to better meet the community needs captured during this review to focus its priorities on:

- Leading networking / co-ordination & partnership development in local communities
- to create active, engaged and resilient communities.
- Supporting volunteering by creating new and better opportunities for people to give their time and make a difference to their communities and the issues they care about.
- Providing access to mentoring / training for community organisations
- Reviewing the current provision of council facilities across the city to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet identified need.
- Delivery and co-ordination of activity programmes.

Our funding plan

Our funding programmes will change to ensure they are better able to meet current and future community needs. From 2026 we will offer funding through the following approach.

	Funding Scale	Key Features
1	Large Grants	• Value (tbc by members) per annum. • Multi-annual funding – up to a 3 year programme. • Eligible costs will include core running /staffing and programming costs for activity that meets agreed outcomes.
2	Small Grants	• Value up to (tbc by members) per annum • Delivered within 1 year period. • Annual application.
3	Social Supermarkets	• Value up to £50k • Delivered within 1 year period. • Annual open call application • Subject to Department for Communities annual funding
4	Advice	Services which provide free, independent, accessible advice. • This funding supports 5 area based advice consortia to deliver advice services across the city.
5	Summer Schemes	• Value up to £2,500 • Delivered during school summer holiday period • Annual application

Aligning Council and funded services

Throughout the consultation process and development of the Community Support Plan it has been clear Council service delivery and funded community service delivery should align and strive to meet the same overall priorities and objectives. The table below illustrates how this will be achieved:

Priority	Council Delivery (Programming / Support / Facilities)	Funding Support
Active, engaged and resilient communities		
Active Communities: residents are active and involved in community activities, community organisations and wider community relationships in positive ways.	BCC will develop and deliver a broad programme of activities in our facilities that meets local needs and caters to a diverse range of people. BCC will work with VCSE and statutory partners to co-ordinate programmes/activities in communities and foster collaboration. BCC will ensure that resources are used effectively to deliver complementary programmes and avoid duplication. BCC will manage relevant grant programmes and report on outcomes achieved on an annual basis. BCC will support organisations to make applications to deliver projects for local communities both to council and other funders.	Small grant programme will support activities that will contribute to Active Communities priority. Funded activity could include: ■ Programme of activities ■ Community events ■ Costs for recruiting, involving, managing and supporting volunteers for related activity
Engaged communities: residents are active and involved in their community in the delivery of services, designing the type of services on offer and benefiting from the supports provided	BCC will provide a range of support and advice to current and new community organisations and will take a needs based approach to working in communities. BCC will work with VCSE and statutory partners to foster collaboration to ensure that resources are used effectively to meets local needs and priorities. BCC will ensure that work delivered through the Community Support Plan aligns with other programmes delivered by council including Good Relations, Community Safety, Leisure Development, Health Development and other relevant services.	Grant programme to support VCSE organisations to deliver projects that meet local needs within neighbourhood facilities. Funded activity could include: ■ Staff costs for development/project worker ■ Costs to facilitate community involvement such as core running costs, venue hire, facilitation, volunteer expenses.
Resilient communities: local communities and the community organisations that serve them will have access to resources that support delivery of effective community support.	BCC will provide a range of support and advice to current and new community organisations to develop their skills and support sustainability. Council will support organisations that receive financial support from council funding programmes through individual and networking meetings to address issues and identify areas for collaboration. This will include: ■ Advice ■ Social Supermarkets ■ Community Support Grants ■ Independently Managed Community Centres	Council will provide funding for projects/services that directly meet identified community need. These will include: ■ Advice Services – community based services across the city that can provide free, independent advice on a range of issues. ■ Social Supermarkets – projects that provide food support to the most vulnerable alongside other wraparound services. ■ Community Support Grants - support VCSE organisations to meet local need, develop their skills and support sustainability.

Priority	Council Delivery (Programming / Support / Facilities)	Funding Support
Access to quality community facilities		
Access: communities will have access to community buildings and spaces which enable delivery of community based services and activities.	BCC will work with VCSE and statutory partners to co-ordinate programmes/activities in communities and foster collaboration. BCC will ensure that resources are used effectively to deliver complementary programmes and avoid duplication. Develop a programme of work to increase the number of programmes and activities that are delivered in BCC facilities through direct service provision and by local organisations. Increase the number of Council programmes across wider council teams that are delivered in our facilities. Implement a new electronic booking system for council owned community centres. Council will provide training and ongoing support to VCSE organisations funded through Community Support to ensure that they are aware of good practice in terms of facility management and application of appropriate policies/requirements.	Support community managed facilities through grant aid (Community Support) and service agreements.
Quality: facilities will be available which are fit for purpose, and which make provision for the range of service needs presented by the community. their respective geographical / sectoral communities.	Council will ensure that all BCC community centres meet agreed quality standards. Council will provide training and ongoing support to VCSE organisations funded through Community Support to ensure that they are aware of good practice in terms of facility management and application of appropriate policies/requirements and will provide training where appropriate.	Support community managed facilities through grant aid (Community Support) and service agreements.
3. Joining up community support through partnership development and collaboration		
Joined up: community and voluntary sector organisations collaborating and working together to deliver services, raise awareness, or sign-post to other service providers.	BCC will lead on collaboration in local areas, working with the community to coordinate voluntary groups and networks that provide support to the community.	Council will provide funding for projects/services that take a collaborative approach to directly meeting identified community need.
Partnership: creation and implementation of formal joint working relationships for service development, service delivery, or advocacy.	Develop a plan for the creation and development of formal working relationships in local communities to improve delivery of services. Council will support organisations that receive financial support from council funding programmes through quarterly individual and networking meetings to address issues and identify areas for collaboration. This will include, advice, social supermarkets, community Support and independently managed community centres.	Council will provide funding for projects/services that directly meet identified community need. This can include costs for partnership development and delivery.

How we will continue to include you

Our Community Support Plan has been developed based on feedback from communities for communities. Your involvement is important to us and as we move forwards through Plan implementation we will:

- Continue to engage with community representatives gaining regular updates on key issues and needs impacting local community services.
- Seek your feedback on the effectiveness of Council community service delivery, including community facilities and targeting of wider community support resources.
- Engage with grant recipients to gain an understanding of how funded projects are delivering against their proposed impacts and outcomes.
- Seek your feedback on how funding programmes are enabling and effecting desired community change.
- Where and when we decide there is a need and / or benefit in making further changes to our grant programmes and service delivery we will communicate these proposals to communities that may be affected.

Belfast Community Support Plan | 2025 - 2029



Annex 2: Research - Funding Sources Considered

Funding Source	Fund	Value
National Lottery Community Fund	Awards for All	£300 to £20,000
National Lottery Community Fund	Sustainable Community Buildings	Up to £50,000
National Lottery Community Fund	The UK Fund (including Empowering Young People)	£500,000 - £5 million
National Lottery Community Fund	Dormant Accounts Fund NI	Variable
PEACEPLUS Programme	Empowering Communities Cross Community Change Maker Fund	Up to €100,000
Community Relations Council	Cultural Diversity Grant Scheme	Up to £10,000
Community Foundation for NI	Variable – currently small grants linked to renewable energy providers.	Variable
Belfast City Council	Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund	Variable
Belfast City Council	Multi-annual Cultural Grants	Variable
Department for Communities	Community Cohesion Fund Small Pockets Deprivation Fund NIHE Enterprise Plus	Variable

Annex 3: Community Support Plan – Overview of Engagement sessions and Public Survey

Date	Time	Venue	Attendance
Wednesday 5 June	2.00 – 4.00	City Hall	18
Tuesday 11 June	10.00 – 12.00	Girdwood	20
Tuesday 11 June	2.00 – 4.00	Cregagh CC	12
Wednesday 12 June	10.00 – 12.00	Olympia	6
Friday 14 June	10.00 – 12.00	Horn Drive CC	19
Friday 14 June	2.00 – 4.00	Hammer CC	6
Tuesday 18 June (Sec 75)	2.00 – 4.00	City Hall	24
Wednesday 19 June	7.00 – 9.00	Olympia	3
Wednesday 26 th June	6.30 – 8.00	On-line / virtual	14
Survey			94
Total Participants			216

Annex 4: Community Support Plan – Public Survey Questions

94 responses were received to the following questions:

1. Which of the following community support priorities do you think are the most important?
2. Which of the following community support services do you believe council should provide directly?
3. Looking at the list of community support activities, please indicate which activities, if any, that you think council should provide funding for i.e. so that community and voluntary organisations can deliver support?
4. Do you have any other comments about community support priorities in your area?
5. What time frame should funding be offered over?
6. What type of outcomes or measures of success should council consider to ensure funding achieves positive change within and for our communities?
7. If there are other types of funding opportunities not listed, that you think should be available via our Community Support Plan, please tell us.
8. Have you any other comments you would like to make about the priorities for supporting or funding community services in Belfast?

Contact us:

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Belfast
City Council