

Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section
Chief Executive's Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

18th January, 2018

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

As previously notified to you, I enclose a copy/copies of the report for the following item(s) to be considered at the meeting to be held at 9.00 am on Friday, 19th January, 2018.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

7. Finance, Procurement and Performance

- (b) Welfare Reform Support Project Funding DfC (Pages 1 - 6)

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Subject:	Welfare Reform Support Project Funding - Department for Communities
Date:	19 January 2018
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Cate Taggart, Community Development Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
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	The purpose of this report is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Note correspondence received from the Department for Communities (DfC) 12th January 2018 seeking Council’s support to facilitate funding of Citizen Advice for the provision of frontline advice services in relation to Welfare Reform; ▪ Seek Member agreement for Council to facilitate the payment of £64,589.43 to Citizen Advice for frontline welfare reform services to be delivered by 31st March 2018; ▪ Note that the funding will be administered through the Community Support Programme, the Council’s current funding contract with the DfC. A letter of variance will be issued.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree the request from DfC to administer funding for the Welfare Reform Support Project to Citizen Advice through the current Community Support Programme arrangement pending receipt of the formal Letter of Variance.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>In preparation for the introduction and roll-out of Welfare Reform, DfC has supported front-line advice organisations via grant-aid and capacity development. The Council currently administers an annual grant programme of £931,765 for generalist advice, with levered income via the DfC’s Community Support Programme, to five Advice Consortia covering east, north, south, west and central Belfast for generalist advice services.</p>
3.2	<p>At December’s People and Communities Committee meeting, Members agreed to accept an additional in-year allocation of £61,103 from DfC through the Community Support Programme towards the provision of the City-Wide Tribunal Service.</p>
3.3	<p>DfC is now seeking support from Council to facilitate payment of £64,589.43 to Citizen Advice for the provision of frontline services relating to welfare reform. The total funding allocation covers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Belfast Citizens Advice Adviser Salaries (6 Advisers): Total £44,234.94 for period 1 October 2017 – 31 March 2018 ▪ Hosting Costs: Total £11,349.74 for 2017/2018 year ▪ Additional Welfare Reform Support: Total £5,404.75 for 2017/2018 year ▪ Training Package for 6 Welfare Reform Advisers @ £600 each, total £3,600.00 for year 2017/2018
3.4	<p>This additional allocation of £64,589.43 will be administered via the current Community Support Programme arrangements with DfC and a letter of variance will be issued.</p>

3.5	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The funding does not require BCC to match funds. All expenditure relating to the project must be incurred before the end of the 2017/18 financial period.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.6	<p>The programme is Citywide and open and accessible to all sections of the community.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Letter from DfC

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Appendix 1



**Ms Suzanne Wylie
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Donegall Place
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

Voluntary and Community Division
Level 3, The Lighthouse Building
Gasworks Business Park
Ormeau Road
Belfast BT7 2JB
Telephone: (028) 9082 9441
Facsimile: (028) 9082 9422
Email: Elaine.downey@communities-ni.gov.uk

Date: 12 January 2018

Dear Ms Wylie

Re: Welfare Reform Support Project

Thank you for agreeing to issue funding for the Welfare Reform Support Project through the Community Support Programme in respect of Citizens Advice Frontline Advice services. I am pleased to advise you that the Voluntary and Community Division (VCD) can now provide funding of **£64,589.43** for Welfare Reform frontline adviser salaries for the period 1 October 2017 – 31 March 2018, associated hosting costs, an additional allocation for the 2017/2018 year and training package for Welfare Reform Advisers.

Details and breakdown of funding for Welfare Reform Support Project for Belfast Citizens Advice are demonstrated at Annex A.

The funding is in year and must be spent by 31 March 2018.

A Letter of Variance to include this additional funding will follow.

If you have any queries regarding these additional funds please contact either: Elaine Downey Elaine.downey@communities-ni.gov.uk or Nuala McCrudden, Nuala.McCrudden@communities-ni.gov.uk or telephone 90829441/90376342

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elaine Downey".

**Elaine Downey
Head of Advice Services
Voluntary and Community Division**

Annex A

Welfare Reform Support Project Funding – Belfast Citizens Advice

1. **Belfast Citizens Advice Adviser salaries (6 Advisers) total £44,234.94 for period 1 October 2017 – 31 March 2018**
2. **Hosting Costs total £11,349.74 for 2017/2018 year**
3. **Additional Welfare Reform support total £5404.75 for 2017/2018 year**
4. **Training Package for 6 Welfare Reform Advisers @ £600 each, total £3600.00 for year 2017/2018**