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**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

6 October 2025

MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following item will also be considered at the meeting to be held at 5.15 pm on Tuesday, 7th October, 2025.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

- (e) Neighbourhood Renewal Advice Services Funding (Pages 1 - 4)

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Subject:	Proposal re: Neighbourhood Renewal Advice Services Funding
Date:	7 th October 2025
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan – Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer, Community Provision

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐
☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues																																		
1.1	The main purpose of this report is to advise members that the Department of Communities has contacted Council to seek their views on the potential to administer existing Neighbourhood Renewal Funding for Advice Services through the Community Support Plan (CSP) LoO in 25/26 and 26/27																																		
2.0	Recommendation																																		
2.1	Members are asked to consider the contents of the report and advise whether they wish to accept the DfC proposal to administer existing Neighbourhood Renewal Funding for Advice Services through the Community Support Plan (CSP) LoO in 25/26 and 26/27.																																		
3.0	Main Report																																		
3.1	Background information																																		
	Members will be aware that Council receives funding from the Department for Communities Voluntary and Community Division (VCD) through the Community Support Plan (CSP). This funding is used to fund community support activity and also to fund a range of advice services.																																		
	DfC has contacted council officials to advise that DfC also funds some community-based advice projects through DfC Community Empowerment Division (CED) / Neighbourhood Renewal (NR). The projects were initially identified through Neighbourhood Renewal action plans and have received core funding from Neighbourhood Renewal for more than ten years.																																		
	The Department is keen to establish if there is potential to transition the NR funded projects to within the existing council-delivered programmes. This would mean that funding for these projects would be administered by Council through an allocation from the CSP.																																		
	DfC has indicated there will not be significant changes to the NR funding in 2025/26 with 2026/27 likely to be a transitional period within the programme. DfC propose that projects transitioned into the CSP programme would continue to be funded in line with NR funding until 2026/27.																																		
	DfC would engage with the impacted organisations during this period to ensure each is aware of the impact on it in respect of funding, how the council-delivered programme operates, and how to engage with the funding mechanisms in place through the existing programme.																																		
3.5	Neighbourhood Renewal funding in 2024/25 for projects delivering advice services totalled £286k. DfC would provide this additional amount to be allocated to the affected organisations. Funding is provided to the following organisations through the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme.																																		
3.6	<table><tr><th>Organisation</th><th>Project Title</th><th>Constituency</th><th>23/24 Award Amount</th><th>24/25 Award Amount</th></tr><tr><td>North Belfast Advice Partnership Vine Centre, BCF, Ligoniel.</td><td>Welfare & Benefit Support</td><td>North Belfast</td><td>£116,846.88</td><td>£124,335.82</td></tr><tr><td>Upper Springfield Development Company Limited</td><td>Advice Services</td><td>West Belfast</td><td>£107,907.20</td><td>£113,302.56</td></tr><tr><td>CCRF - North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum</td><td>Advice Services</td><td>North Belfast</td><td>£11,077.04</td><td>£11,077.04</td></tr><tr><td>Springfield Charitable Association</td><td>Social Environment</td><td>West Belfast</td><td>£35,301.90</td><td>£37,732.14</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td></td><td></td><td>£271,133.02</td><td>£286,477.56</td></tr></table>					Organisation	Project Title	Constituency	23/24 Award Amount	24/25 Award Amount	North Belfast Advice Partnership Vine Centre, BCF, Ligoniel.	Welfare & Benefit Support	North Belfast	£116,846.88	£124,335.82	Upper Springfield Development Company Limited	Advice Services	West Belfast	£107,907.20	£113,302.56	CCRF - North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum	Advice Services	North Belfast	£11,077.04	£11,077.04	Springfield Charitable Association	Social Environment	West Belfast	£35,301.90	£37,732.14	Total			£271,133.02	£286,477.56
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3.7	Members should note that DfC have advised that they will only provide the additional allocation through the CSP Letter of Offer until 26/27 to the organisations listed above. After that time, there will be no allocation from the DfC NR Team as it is expected that new arrangements for Neighbourhood Renewal will be in place by that time.
3.8	<p>Members should consider that the provision of funding for these organisations may create an expectation that this support will be provided by Council after 26/27, however, since this funding is 100% funded by the DfC NR team there would be no budget to do this. Officers would highlight the risk associated to council of this increased expectation and also the value of implementing a new funding arrangement for such a short period of time.</p> <p>Members are asked to consider this request and advise of their decision.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The administration of this fund would have to be carried out by existing staff, there is no immediate financial impact for council as 100% funding is being provided by DfC. However, there is a risk that an expectation to maintain this funding would be created.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Belfast City Council will have to undertake a screening exercise and rural needs risk assessment on any council decision.</p>
4.0	Appendices
4.1	N/A

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