



Subject:	Generalist Advice Funding 26/27
Date:	4 th March 2026
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 <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. 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 matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. 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	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime 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/Summary of Main Issues								
1.1	<p>The main purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise members that the Community Support Programme (CSP) Letter of Offer for 2026/27 has not yet been received by Council from DfC. • Seek members approval to issue Letters of Offer for 2026/27 for Generalist Advice in the absence of a Letter of Offer from DfC. 								
2.0	Recommendation								
2.1	<p>Members are asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the contents of the report and • Grant approval for officers to progress funding agreements for Generalist Advice for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027. 50% payments will be issued in advance upon the return of required paperwork with a second payment made pending return of satisfactory paperwork and available budget. • Note that Council does not have any budget to support activity that is 100% funded through the CSP. A further report on other 100% funded elements will be provided when the CSP Letter of Offer has been received. 								
3.0	Main Report								
3.1	<p>Background information</p> <p>Members will be aware that the Department for Communities (DfC) provides an annual grant to Council through its Community Support Programme (CSP) Letter of Offer. This funding provides an element of the budget towards a range of funding programmes including generalist advice.</p>								
3.2	<p>Council has not yet received a CSP Letter of Offer for 2026/27 and therefore does not have any confirmation of the total budget that will be available for 26/27. Any reduction in the DfC allocation will impact on the overall level of the grant budget and potentially awards to the grant recipients. In recent years the CSP Letter of Offer has been received in June/July.</p>								
3.3	<p>Key Issues</p> <p><u>Generalist Advice Funding</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that Council provides funding for generalist advice provision to 5 Advice Consortia covering: Central, East, North, South and West Belfast. The funding is allocated to the consortia using a funding model based on population and multiple deprivation indicators. The list of advice organisations and consortium funding allocation is contained in Appendix 1.</p>								
3.4	<p>Council's contribution to Generalist Advice is 34% of the total allocation. Members are asked to consider if they are content to approve the issue of Letters of Offer and 50% payment in advance of receipt of the CSP LoO.</p> <p>A further report will be presented to committee when council receives the Community Support Programme Letter of Offer from DfC.</p>								
4.0	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>								
4.1	<p>Members are asked to note the following funding that was in place for generalist advice in 25/26.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Programme</th> <th>DfC contribution</th> <th>BCC contribution</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Advice Grant</td> <td>£813,286</td> <td>£411,729</td> <td>£1,225,015</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Programme	DfC contribution	BCC contribution	Total	Advice Grant	£813,286	£411,729	£1,225,015
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4.2	Based on legal advice, if committee approves the issue of 50% funding, Funding Agreements for 2026/27 will contain a condition that the second payment may vary due to the level of funding received from DfC.
5.0	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
5.1	Any reduction in the available budget has the potential to impact on service delivery which may have equality, good relations or rural needs implications for Belfast City Council.
6.0	Appendices - Documents Attached or None
6.1	Appendix 1 - Advice Funding Allocation 2026/27