



Subject:	Department for Communities Letter of Variance for Council Community Support Programme 2017/2018
Date:	5 December 2017
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services, ext 3260
Contact Officer:	Cate Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525

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	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• note correspondence received from the Department for Communities (DfC) November 2017, regarding Welfare Reform;• seek Members agreement to accept the subsequent offer of additional in-year funding under the Community Support Programme (CSP) from DfC; and• in line with contract conditions, to consider and agree the allocation of the additional grant of £61,103 towards provision of the City-Wide Tribunal Service to the end of March 2018.

2.0	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accept the additional in-year grant as outlined in the Letter of Variance; and • consider and agree the allocation of the in-year grant of £61,103 to the request made by the Belfast Advice Group, endorsed by the five Advice Consortia members, for the provision of the City Wide Tribunal Service to the end of March 2018.
3.0	Main Report
	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>3.1 In preparation for the introduction and roll-out of Welfare Reform DfC has supported front-line advice organisations via grant-aid and capacity development. Council currently administer an annual grant programme of £931,765, 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> <p>3.2 In addition to this annual grant, SP&R Committee (February 2017) agreed the allocation of £100,000 to the Belfast Advice Group towards the provision of a city-wide tribunal service for 2017/18. To date Council has been the sole provider of Grant-aid in support of the tribunal service. The £100,000 allocation was just under half of the projected total costs to provide the service in 2017/2018.</p> <p>3.3 Belfast Advice Group haS indicated that this funding is due to run out in December, and that they will no longer be in a position to provide the service if they do not attract additional funding. At their meeting in November the Belfast Advice Groups endorsed a proposal that should funding become available via in-year allocation the priority for this investment is the provision of the tribunal service.</p> <p>3.4 The cost for the provision of the tribunal service for the period December 2017 to March 2018 is estimated at £59,900.</p> <p>3.5 The in-year allocation as per the Council's Letter of Variance is £61,103.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.6 The in-year allocation 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> <p>3.7 The programme is Citywide and open and accessible to all sections of the community.</p>

4.0	Documents Attached
	<p>None</p> <p>(The Letter of Variance has yet to be received by the Council. It will be sent to members for consideration in a separate email as soon as it is received.)</p>