



Subject:	Community Development Grants Update
Date:	2 nd April 2019
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services Jacqui Wilson, Business Manager
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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 update Committee on the proposed approach to community development grant funded programmes for 2020/21 as the grants review will not be fully implemented to meet the required timescales.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Note the contents of the report▪ Agree the proposed approach for 2020/21▪ Commission further work to review ways of working, Central Grants Unit role and location, governance structures and evaluation frameworks.

3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Recently consultants have been commissioned to carry out a strategic review of the Council's grant programmes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • critically appraises the underpinning rationale, strategic fit and operational design of current programmes (both individually and as a whole); and, • makes recommendations on the 'suite' of programmes that should be offered in the future and how these programmes should be operated.
3.2	<p>The objective is to ensure that the investment in grants can support the delivery of priority objectives set out in the Belfast Agenda. This is reflected in the Design Principles agreed as attached (Appendix 1). A consultation exercise with relevant internal and external stakeholders is in progress and an internal officers working group has been established.</p>
3.3	<p>The early activities to help improve the programme in the short term are underway such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure all grants streams are assessed by the Central Grants unit (CGU) and are included in the Grant Management System to ensure consistency; • improve administration processes including formalising the principle of proportionality.
3.4	<p>Work is still to commence in the coming months on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the outcomes based approach – education and raise awareness.
3.5	<p>Members will also be aware that we have recently commissioned a consultant to begin work on the review of our community provision. It will be important that as this work progresses, we align any revised grant scheme with any proposed new approach.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Transitioning of Changes:</u> The internal officers working group reconvened in February to discuss the interim arrangements required for 2020/21 to allow time for promotion, application and assessment processes, and reporting to Committee.</p>
3.7	<p>Development work is under way on a new Cultural Strategy and a draft has been presented to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in March 2019. Subject to ratification, detailed implementation and funding plans will be brought to Committee in September 2019, with a view to be operational from April 2020.</p>

3.8	<p>The People and Communities Committee on 4th December agreed to extend the existing contracts on the Community Development Grant Programme subject to the level of DfC funding being confirmed for 2019/20. However to facilitate the transitioning period from then to the end of March 2021, an open call on large grants will need to start mid 2019 (see draft timetable - Appendix 2).</p>
3.9	<p>Members are advised that the level of funding commitment from the DfC under the Community Support Programme for the 2020 /2021 financial year was unknown at the time of writing the report. Members are advised that as a result the above approach will be opened on an 'at risk' basis and may be subject to re-alignment with any changes/amendments to the Departments approach to Community Support. Officers will continue to work with our colleagues at the Department.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The Council's expenditure on Grants in 2017/18 was £5.7m with some of the funding coming from external partners such as Sport NI and DfC. Having a more outcomes focused approach to grants will help ensure that we get the maximum impact from this expenditure and meet the Belfast Agenda outcomes.</p> <p><u>Equality / Good Relations and Rural Needs Implications</u></p>
3.11	<p>The consultation and engagement process referred to above will allow for consideration of any equality, good relations or rural needs implications.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - Design principles Appendix 2 - Draft Timetable for Community Development Grants</p>