



Subject:	Update on Review of Partnerships Evaluation
Date:	9 November 2021
Reporting Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Alison Allen, Neighbourhood Services 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 update members on the outcome of the review of partnership funding previously agreed by Committee and to consider future funding for those organisations within scope of the review.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Given the conclusions of the review of partnership funding arrangements, it is recommended that Committee agree to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Agree in principle to fund each of the partners at the same level for the 22/23 financial year (£200,109 in total), subject to the completion of the 22/23 revenue estimates process- Set SMART targets and an increased focus on outcomes in all contracts- Link deliverables to Belfast Agenda and other funding partners in all contracts- Enhance promotion of partnership efforts to increase public awareness

3.0	Main report																
	<p data-bbox="256 136 435 170"><u>Background</u></p> <p data-bbox="164 185 1453 371">3.1 Members are aware that City and Neighbourhood Services works in partnership with a number of organisations that share common strategic objectives and that some of this work has developed through the provision of annual financial support to deliver against agreed outcomes.</p> <p data-bbox="164 432 1436 517">3.2 Many of the partnership funding arrangements are historical and have been rolled on from year to year and not as part of a mainstreamed open call or other funding process.</p> <p data-bbox="164 573 1433 707">3.3 As such, Members agreed in June 2019, that these funding arrangements would be reviewed with a focus on alignment with the Council’s Corporate Plan, the Belfast Agenda and overall value for money.</p> <p data-bbox="164 745 1437 887">3.4 Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 completion of this review was delayed significantly and in February 2021, Members agreed to carry forward funding at the same levels as previously to the organisations within scope of the review. This included:</p> <p data-bbox="164 891 212 925">3.5</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="256 898 1426 1317"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="256 898 1254 954">Project</th> <th data-bbox="1254 898 1426 954">Funding</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 954 1254 1003">Belfast Hills Partnership</td> <td data-bbox="1254 954 1426 1003">£36,900</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1003 1254 1055">Lagan Valley Regional Park</td> <td data-bbox="1254 1003 1426 1055">£67,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1055 1254 1106">Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails)</td> <td data-bbox="1254 1055 1426 1106">£5,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1106 1254 1158">Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project)</td> <td data-bbox="1254 1106 1426 1158">£55,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1158 1254 1209">Mary Peters Trust</td> <td data-bbox="1254 1158 1426 1209">£5,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1209 1254 1261">Bryson Energy (previously Play Resource)*</td> <td data-bbox="1254 1209 1426 1261">£31,209</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1261 1254 1317">TOTAL</td> <td data-bbox="1254 1261 1426 1317">£200,109</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="256 1350 1453 1435">* Note – Play Resource Warehouse is no longer in existence and instead have merged with Bryson Energy.</p> <p data-bbox="164 1491 903 1525">3.6 <u>Partnership Funding Review Terms of Reference</u></p> <p data-bbox="256 1574 1310 1659">An extensive review has been undertaken of all of the above partnership funding arrangements. The review specifically examined the following in detail:</p> <ul data-bbox="316 1709 1445 1995" style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically appraise the strategic fit of each of the partnership funding arrangements, specifically examining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The extent to which the funding arrangement successfully delivers on its stated intended outcomes ○ The strategic fit with the Belfast Agenda and Council strategic frameworks and plans 	Project	Funding	Belfast Hills Partnership	£36,900	Lagan Valley Regional Park	£67,000	Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails)	£5,000	Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project)	£55,000	Mary Peters Trust	£5,000	Bryson Energy (previously Play Resource)*	£31,209	TOTAL	£200,109
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- Any added value the Council/city is benefitting from by being part of a wider partnership funding arrangement
- Review the value for money of the funding arrangement, specifically examining:
 - The underpinning rationale or case including value for money assessment
 - Whether partnership funding is the most appropriate, efficient and effective delivery mechanisms
- Assess the ongoing and future relevant/appropriateness of the partnership funding arrangement, considering any changes that may be required to enhance the relevance/appropriateness

3.7 All organisations within scope were involved in providing information for the review.

Partnership Funding Review Conclusions

3.8 Summary tables of the outcome of the review against the above specification are provided at appendix 1 for Members information.

The main recommendations of the review are as follows:

3.9 **1. Continue funding**

Given the evidence of strategic alignment, added value and value for money, it is recommended that all of the partnership funding arrangements are agreed in principle at the same level for 22/23, subject to the completion of the 22/23 revenue estimates process. It is further recommended that any future review of these arrangements should be tied to the Council's overall review of community provision (which will include funding arrangements).

3.10 **2. Set SMART targets and an increased focus on outcomes**

Funded partnerships should work with Council to design up-to-date targets/deliverables and mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting purposes. This would include SMART targets, increased focus on outcomes and a standardisation of the contractual arrangements. All of this will improve future measurement of impact.

3.11 **3. Link deliverables to Belfast Agenda and other funding partners**

It is important, that future deliverables/ targets aligned to the funding arrangements are explicit in their link to the Belfast Agenda. This will ensure that collective successes of the various funded partnerships build on the Community Plan aspirations to the benefit of all Belfast City Council residents. It is also advised, for the higher value contracts, that the Council liaise with other funders of the partnerships to collectively

<p>3.12</p> <p>3.13</p> <p>3.14</p> <p>3.15</p>	<p>agree deliverables that are aligned to common priorities, thereby generating better results and outcomes from the funding.</p> <p>4. Enhance promotion of partnership efforts</p> <p>The review found extensive evidence that a lot of benefits are derived from the funded partnerships, and it is important that the Council allocate resources to better promote their relationship with the various partnerships – so that residents understand the collective efforts of the Council, co-funders, partnerships, and beneficiaries in achieving the Council’s priorities under the Belfast Agenda and other key policy frameworks.</p> <p>5. Longer-term funding cycle to facilitate planning</p> <p>The review recognised the annual nature of budgeting within local government, however, made reference to the improved forward planning and service delivery if a longer term funding cycle could be provided to these partner funding arrangements.</p> <p>Whilst this is recognised as desirable, given the wider financial support provided to the community/voluntary sector on an annual basis and the Council’s wider review community provision (including financial support), it is NOT recommended that funding is allocated beyond the 22/23 financial year at present to these partners.</p> <p><u>Financial implications</u></p> <p>The total financial allocation for these arrangements is £200,109 and this will be considered as part the 22/23 departmental revenue estimates.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None identified at this stage but kept under continuous review</p> <p><u>Abbreviations</u></p> <p>LVRP (Lagan Valley Regional Park) KNIB – LHLH (Keep NI Beautiful Live Here Love Here) BHP (Belfast Hills Partnership) PRW (Play Resource Warehouse) KNIB – Eco Schools (Keep NI Beautiful Eco Schools) ORNI (Outdoor Recreation NI) MPT (Mary Peters Trust)</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Review of Partner Funding Conclusions Summary Tables</p>