



Subject:	Integrated Advice Partnership Fund In-year Allocation Uplift.
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 Council has received a Letter of Variance (LoV) from DfC in relation to the Community Support Programme (CSP). The LoV makes provision for an additional in-year allocation of £79,784.78 for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund.																		
2.0	Recommendation																		
2.1	Members are asked to; • note the contents of the report, • approve the Chief Executive to accept the LoV on behalf of Council • consider the allocation options presented and agree their preferred option • grant delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to make awards for eligible activity based on the option agreed.																		
3.0	Main Report																		
3.1	Background information																		
	Members will recall that officers advised in November 24 of additional temporary funding from DfC of £248,253.48 through the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund for activity in 24/26. The objective of the fund is to 'Improve the uptake of free, independent regulated debt advice through a collaborative partnership approach'.																		
	Following committee approval, members sought proposals from existing Lead partners within each advice consortia for projects that would meet the aims of the scheme. Advice Space (formerly Citizens Advice) was the only provider to submit a project proposal for 2024-25 and was awarded funding for delivery of a citywide project in January 2025, which includes delivery in central and east Belfast.																		
	Members agreed that council would invite further applications from all BCC funded advice organisations. Based on all proposals received covering the duration of the fund the following funding allocations were agreed;																		
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Area</th><th>Organisation</th><th>Allocation</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>City Centre and East Belfast</td><td>Advice Space</td><td>£94,022.80</td></tr> <tr> <td>South Belfast</td><td>Southcity Resource and Development Centre (SRDC)</td><td>£36,389.43</td></tr> <tr> <td>North Belfast</td><td>The Vine Centre</td><td>£60,392.32</td></tr> <tr> <td>West Belfast</td><td>Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT)</td><td>£57,448.94</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td>£248,253.49</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Area	Organisation	Allocation	City Centre and East Belfast	Advice Space	£94,022.80	South Belfast	Southcity Resource and Development Centre (SRDC)	£36,389.43	North Belfast	The Vine Centre	£60,392.32	West Belfast	Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT)	£57,448.94		
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3.4	Table 1 Council received a Letter of Variance (LoV) from DfC in relation to the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund on 10th September 2025, this was provided through the Community Support Programme (CSP).																		

	The LoV makes provision for an additional in-year allocation of £79,784.78 for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund.																														
3.5	The department have advised that the additional funds must be spent in line with the existing Memorandum of Understanding for the Fund. However, councils retain flexibility to determine whether the funding will be used to enhance current delivery or support new initiatives.																														
3.6	Members may wish to note that following an in-year review of the Fund and the success of initiatives, the Department will consider extending the Fund beyond March 2026. This may also include consideration of an Account Directive to allow funds to be carried over into 2026/27. Timely reporting will be essential to support this assessment and to enable us to notify councils of any extension.																														
	However, there is no guarantee that DfC will permit funds to spent after 31st March 2026 and council will allocate funds on the basis that they support activity which takes place before 31st March 2026.																														
3.7	Officers have contacted the four organisations that are currently in receipt of funds and they have advised that they would have the ability to use additional funds. Following committee approval of an agreed approach, all projects will be asked to submit proposals outlining how they will spend funds to deliver activity that meets the parameters of the Fund.																														
3.8	Members are asked to consider the following options for the additional in-year allocation and agree their preferred option. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the allocation per option. • Option 1 Allocation based on % of the current funding to each group. • Option 2 Allocation based on an equal split between the four organisations <table><tr><th>Organisations</th><th>Current Allocation</th><th>Allocation % Of Total</th><th>Option 1 Uplift based on %</th><th>Option 2 Uplift Equal Split</th></tr><tr><td>Advice Space</td><td>£94,022.80</td><td>38%</td><td>£30,217.45</td><td>£19,946.20</td></tr><tr><td>SRDC</td><td>£36,389.43</td><td>15%</td><td>£11,694.99</td><td>£19,946.20</td></tr><tr><td>Vine Centre</td><td>£60,392.32</td><td>24%</td><td>£19,409.14</td><td>£19,946.20</td></tr><tr><td>USDT</td><td>£57,448.94</td><td>23%</td><td>£18,463.19</td><td>£19,946.20</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>£248,253.49</td><td>100%</td><td>£79,784.78</td><td>£79,784.78</td></tr></table> Table 2	Organisations	Current Allocation	Allocation % Of Total	Option 1 Uplift based on %	Option 2 Uplift Equal Split	Advice Space	£94,022.80	38%	£30,217.45	£19,946.20	SRDC	£36,389.43	15%	£11,694.99	£19,946.20	Vine Centre	£60,392.32	24%	£19,409.14	£19,946.20	USDT	£57,448.94	23%	£18,463.19	£19,946.20	Total	£248,253.49	100%	£79,784.78	£79,784.78
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3.9	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> The administration of this fund will be carried out by existing staff, there is no financial impact for council as 100% funding is being provided by DfC. The allocation for Belfast is as listed below. All expenditure must be incurred by 31/3/2026.																														
3.10	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> Belfast City Council is undertaking a screening exercise on this fund.																														
4.0	Appendices																														
4.1	N/A																														

