

6. BELFAST AREA COMMUNITY NETWORK

General Manager responsible:	General Manager, Community Services
Officer responsible:	Lesley Symington, Community and Recreation Unit Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's approval to request for funding (of \$1,500) from the Belfast Community Network towards the costs of the Belfast Area Community Newspaper.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Belfast Community Network has existed since 2001 and has been publishing a community newsletter for the past three years.
3. The annual cost of this project is approximately \$2,900 and the Network is seeking assistance of \$1,500. The newsletter is delivered to every household in the Belfast district every two months. The Network hopes to increase this to a monthly delivery in the future. The Belfast Community Network has 13 local community groups as members and seeks to further pride within the community and enhance community spirit. The latest audited accounts of the Network show its net assets at approximately \$19,000 with around \$13,000 of this made up of fixed assets.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

4. Belfast Community Network has budgeted for an annual total of \$2,904.45 for the costs of producing and delivering 2,100 copies of the newsletter every two months, based on the following:

	\$
Administration (3 hours @ \$35 per hour)	630
Printing costs	1,680
Delivery costs	594
Total	\$2,904

5. The Network occasionally obtains a small amount of advertising revenue. However, it is reluctant to take on advertising as space in the newsletter is limited and the Network wishes to retain the newsletter as a means of community communication. The costs noted above are additional to the reimbursement that is received from the Council towards community newsletters. The Belfast Community Network presently has net assets of \$19,409 with \$13,284 of this in fixed assets. The surplus for the financial year ended 31 March 2005 was \$4,234 from an operating budget of approximately \$27,000.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board allocate \$1,500 from its 2005/06 Discretionary Fund to the Belfast Community Network towards the costs associated with producing the Belfast Area Community Newsletter.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that \$2,000 be granted to the Belfast Area Community Newsletter to meet the difference between the Service Centre allocation of \$500 per annum and the actual cost of producing the Belfast Area Community Newsletter.

BACKGROUND

6. The Belfast Community Network was incorporated in 2001 after a series of meetings of local community groups, schools, doctors and members of the Community Board. The Community Network employs a Community Co-ordinator to promote co-ordination amongst the Network's membership and to undertake programmes and activities in the Belfast area that enhance the well-being of Belfast residents and the community.
7. Some of the activities of the Network include:
 - A youth café and associated youth programmes
 - Information and resources
 - Shopping trips for the elderly
 - OSCAR programme
 - Craft group
 - Community Newsletter
 - Running a community facility
 - Community events (including the highly successful Waitangi Day festival in conjunction with Willowbank and Ko Tane).
8. The Community Newsletter (sample **attached**) includes information about activities of the Network's member groups, upcoming events, programmes and other items of interest to people within Belfast. Its strengths are its simplicity and easy-to-read format, together with its regularity.

OPTIONS

9. The Board has three options available:
 - (a) To grant the Network its full request of \$1,500.
 - (b) To allocate a partial grant.
 - (c) To decline the application.

PREFERRED OPTION

10. The Belfast Community Network:
 - (a) Is the only organisation in Belfast employing a community worker.
 - (b) Has the support of a wide range of local community organisations.
 - (c) Is very active in informing the local community about local programmes and events.
 - (d) Is financially sound, although it does not have a large budget.
11. For these reasons, Option (a) is the preferred option.