

Title of Report:	Correspondence Report
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 April 2024
For Decision or For Information	For Information
For discussion In Committee	No

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Healthy & Engaged Communities
Outcome	The Borough comprises cohesive and stable communities which work collaboratively with a range of stakeholders to address issues and deliver on opportunities.
Lead Officer	Head of Community & Culture

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	n/a
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	n/a
Code	n/a
Staffing Costs	n/a

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	N/A
Legal Opinion Obtained	N/A

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present Correspondence for Members consideration.

2.0 The following items are listed:

2.1 Correspondence from the Minister of Communities regarding the 2024/25 budget position and interim funding (Dated 25 March 2024)

With negotiations ongoing with the UK Government, the 2024/25 budget position remains unclear. In response to concerns raised and to alleviate immediate pressures, the decision has been taken to provide a level of financial support to help to sustain services and retain staff and will cover 3 months to June 2024.

Members are asked to note the contents of the correspondence.



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From: The Minister

**Level 9
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG**

Telephone: (028) 90512692
e-mail: [REDACTED]
Our ref: SUB-1142-2024
Date: 25 March 2024

2024/25 Interim Funding Position

I am writing to update you on the current budget position and the outlook for 2024/25. I recognise the important role that the Voluntary and Community Sector has in delivering support and services to our people and to local communities. Your role in recent times has been critical given the impact that the cost of living crisis has had on the vulnerable and on those who have found themselves needing additional, practical support and advice.

I also recognise the impact that budgetary uncertainty has on your staff and your organisations. As you will be aware there are ongoing negotiations with the UK Government regarding the budget. That means that the budget position for 2024/25 for all Government Departments remains unclear. However, it is clear that the financial outlook for 2024/25 is likely to be extremely challenging with significant unmet pressures at NI Block level, and difficult decisions will need to be taken.

In response to concerns raised in relation to the ongoing budget uncertainty, and in an effort to alleviate some of the immediate pressures that organisations are facing, I have taken the decision to provide a level of financial support to help sustain services and to help you retain vital staff. This support will be provided by the Department to cover the three-month period up to 30 June 2024 with interim allocations based on your 2023/24 opening allocation, subject to normal approvals. I need to make you aware that this allocation cannot be interpreted as an indication or commitment to the level of funding



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available for the remainder of 2024/25, given the absence of clarity on the overall budget settlement for the Department.

I can assure you that as Minister for Communities, I am committed to doing everything within my gift to ensure that organisations can continue to deliver critical services to the most vulnerable and to those who are most in need of support and advice.

I appreciate that this will not meet the immediate needs of all organisations, but I hope it goes some way to providing a level of support that will help sustain critical services and retain experienced staff. Officials from across the Department continue to be available to help support organisations and to provide advice and guidance on the various programmes.

I would hope that we will be in a position to confirm your funding allocation as soon as possible once the Executive agrees the 2024/25 Budget and, in the meantime, I am very grateful to you and your organisations for all that you do to support the most vulnerable in our communities.

Yours sincerely,



Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities