

SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

INTRODUCTION

Persistent patterns of socio-economic deprivation remain across the community. Despite the significant progress made in the last number of years towards prosperity, stability and peace there remains sections of the community that have not fully benefited from these changes given the current economic and fiscal situation there is a real risk that deprivation will continue, and may increase unless interventions are put in place.

Creating an economic impact on areas through investment and employment will require communities building their skills, developing strategic plans and utilising physical assets and areas that have been redundant for many years.

The most immediate and effective way out of deprivation is through quality employment. However, there are substantial structural, historic, geographical and social barriers to employment and full participation in the economy for deprived communities.

PROJECT CONCEPT

Tackling these issues requires area based interventions of significant scale and delivered in partnership with communities on a cross departmental basis. The aim of the Social Investment Fund is to reduce poverty, unemployment and physical deterioration in areas.

This programme will address the problems of poverty through targeted employment and investment programmes and securing support from the business community and other organisations. The programme will also include improving the physical environment, linking areas to economic hubs and improving capacity and employability within communities.

It is recognised that to have a long term impact on issues of economic and social disadvantage government responses need to break from a silo approach, where responses operate independently of each other and replace this with an interdisciplinary approach coordinated across all government departments by OFMDFM.

Experience of initiatives such as the West Belfast and Shankill Taskforce, Community Empowerment Programme, Areas at Risk Programme and Neighbourhood Renewal, and the Rural Poverty and Social Exclusion Fund demonstrate the way to tackle these persistent patterns of deprivation is through area based planning and of a scale to make a significant change in the socio economic standing of a community.

Such Interventions must be cross departmental, complementary and additional to existing interventions and developed and delivered in partnership with communities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This programme will be an integrated approach to enhance economic growth, employability and the sustainability of communities. It will

identify best practice that could be replicated in other areas and identify programmes that are additional or complementary to what is currently provided to communities. To tackle the complex, multi-dimensional, nature of deprivation in an integrated way the Social Investment Fund will support communities to:

- **Build Pathways to Employment** by tackling educational under achievement and barriers to employment; tackling skills deficits and promoting jobs brokerage, widening access to the labour market, promoting business start up and social enterprise.
- **End dereliction** and promoting investment in the physical regeneration of deprived communities
- **Increase community services** by regenerating and refurbishing existing facilities and providing play facilities and environmental improvements.
- **Tackling the systemic issues linked to deprivation** including poor mental and physical health (suicide and self harm, young mothers), substance abuse, community safety, children and young people at risk, physical health and enhancing community capacity, confidence and partnership working to end deprivation.

This programme will target identified need in disadvantaged communities to make a real difference and build links to surrounding areas of economic opportunity including city centres and areas of investment.

The programme will be complimentary, additional and build on the work of existing programmes.

CO-ORDINATION

Government and other funding has been available to many of the areas but can often be delivered in a reactive way or addressing a number of different strategies either of statutory bodies or the community. Community organisations may also chase sources of funding to maintain jobs, operations and structure rather than the core strategic needs of an area. There is evidence of projects being competitive rather than cooperative which results in potential impact of resources being diluted to the detriment of the wider community.

There is a need to focus limited resources in more effective ways; to co-ordinate action to promote prosperity and reduce inequalities within and between communities. Government interventions have to be co-ordinated to address the needs of strategic plans agreed with communities.

The Social Investment Fund will seek to ensure area plans build upon existing experience, work and plans

OPERATIONS

The SIF will run over a 4 year period.

Year 1 will be a development phase to build capacity within target communities and to develop area plans and projects. Some consideration may have to be given for interim support of key

programmes and projects within target areas which demonstrate wide spread community agreement.

Technical support will be made available to assist communities to identify needs and work towards practical and tangible solutions. Evidence based research in the community will be used to help develop the strategic plans identifying and prioritising the needs of the area. This support may also be used to help with business cases for projects and to help communities to build sustainable social enterprises and community businesses.

Years 2, 3 and 4 will be the implementation of agreed area plans and programmes. Ongoing evaluation will be build into the development and implementation of area based plans.

OFMDFM will coordinate a strategic response across government to meet the needs of areas by making better use of all existing funding and utilising the assets that exist in the areas. Plans and programmes will be developed and implemented across target areas to deliver effective economies of scale and ensure best practise. These target areas will be identified as “social investment zones”.

ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL REGENERATION

Addressing disadvantage also requires creating more prosperity in targeted areas through investment in the infrastructure to attract businesses and jobs and provide shared space for use by all sections of the community. Capital spend will include direct investment by OFMDFM and provision of capital grants to organisations within an

agreed area plan. Physical regeneration and economic investment will be delivered through a focussed agreed asset based approach to utilise underdeveloped, derelict, vacant or surplus space in areas. This investment will be used to lever resources from other funders, including directing investment to prime sites for economic development, improving arterial routes or environmental improvements of buildings in the area.

Physical development will target brown field sites, derelict buildings or buildings that are run down or seen as discouraging investment or visitors to the area.

The strategic area plans will identify locations needing investment and also capable of providing a return on investment by having a direct economic impact. Procurement for buildings and contracts for tender will include social clauses enabling the provision of employability training, apprenticeships, jobs for unemployed people or benefits to be developed for the community.

Management Considerations

The Fund will be managed or coordinated through OFMDFM with other government departments and their partner organisations working with the targeted communities to identify and develop projects. Plans and programmes within the area of benefit will be considered for support where they demonstrate community agreement and fit within a strategic area plan.

The programme will build on the best practice and experience of government departments and communities on projects such as Community Planning, the North Belfast Community Action Unit and the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Taskforce, Areas at Risk Programme and Neighbourhood Renewal.

Social Investment Zones will be hubs of high deprivation drawn together and identified and resourced on the basis of;

- a. The neighbourhood renewal areas
- b. The multiple deprivation output areas
- c. The Community Empowerment Programme areas
- d. Areas at Risk Programme
- e. Rural poverty measurements

Examination of the highest levels of deprivation indicates that the most deprived communities can be found within the large urban centres however there is considerable deprivation located across the region.

Of the 500 most deprived target output areas, 387 are located in communities in the greater Belfast and Derry/ Londonderry areas.

However, the Fund recognises that deprivation occurs across a wide range of other areas. We have identified 8 possible Investment zones which contain a concentration of highest multiple deprivation areas. The area plan for each area must clearly identify the need for the proposed intervention.

The possible 8 Investment zones are;

- i. Greater North Belfast CEP areas
- ii. West Belfast and Shankill Taskforce Area
- iii. Greater East Belfast, North Down and Ards
- iv. Greater South Belfast and Laganvalley
- v. Derry/Londonderry and greater North West
(potentially 2 zones)
- vi. Antrim area (to include areas in Antrim Town;
Ballymena; Carrickfergus and Larne)
- vii. North Armagh (to include areas in Craigavon,
Lurgan and Portadown)
- viii. Border (including areas across Newry and
Mourne, Armagh City, South Armagh;
Fermanagh South Tyrone and West Tyrone)

It is proposed that these areas are flexible, bringing in other relevant smaller areas if necessary on the basis of identified need for an intervention. Each area plan will target areas within the zone on the basis of need for the intervention proposed.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

Ministers and officials have met with a range of community organisations and stakeholder groups regarding their views on tackling disadvantage and prioritising issues for government. These discussions have highlighted regional differences in terms of capacity and capability, even in areas where community infrastructure is regarded as strong, re-emphasising the need for the Investment Zone approach- an approach which provides the

opportunity for a genuine community development focus which would build capacity and cohesion across the investment zones as well as allowing for greater collaboration and sharing of best practice. Further discussions will be carried out by OFMDFM officials with other departments and organisations on the role out of the Social Investment Fund. It is also intended to have a consultation on the Fund Proposal commencing in early May 2011.

The development of the area plans for each Social Investment Zone will be based on local consultations with communities, organisations, agencies and departments.

This project will address PSAs 3, 7, 11 and 12 addressing anti poverty measures, promoting good relations and investment in infrastructure and sustainable development in communities.

STRUCTURE

The successful management of the programme requires the full participation of government departments, relevant agencies and other funders. OFMDFM will manage the centralised fund and coordinate across departments and with the steering groups to ensure proposals address the core objectives of the fund.

A ministerial committee led by First and deputy First Ministers will oversee the strategic planning and control of the programme and will include ministers from appropriate departments, representatives from funding agencies, business representatives and community representatives. It will be their role to not only provide strategic direction, but to approve the area based plans.

Each Social Investment Zone will establish a steering group. Each steering group will bring together community, political, statutory agency and business representatives.

The role of a Social Investment Zone steering group will be to consult widely with the all relevant stakeholders and ensure the views are reflected in the draft strategic plans.

Each steering group will collaborate and integrate their plans with existing intervention programmes including Neighbourhood Renewal, Areas of Risk, West Belfast & Greater Shankill Taskforce, North Belfast CEP Programme and other relevant initiatives including emerging initiatives such as the new Contested Spaces Programme. Plans and programmes within the area of benefit will only be considered for support where they demonstrate community support and fit within an agreed area plan. The Steering groups will also be tasked with overseeing implementation and delivery and ensuring no duplication with other interventions and initiatives.

Technical assistance and support for communities will be available through the planning and delivery phases..

The steering groups will take ownership of the development of the area strategy and determine the priorities to be addressed.

Capacity building programmes will be initiated to ensure that all have the opportunity to contribute to the development of an area plan.

Communities will be assisted, to develop strategies capable of implementation. The area plans will identify the desired impact and outline activities and results which are measurable in terms of their inputs and outputs.

FUNDING

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Resource	£8m	£10m	£11m	£11m
Capital	£0m	£10m	£15m	£15m

ADMINISTRATION

The programme will be administered by OFMDFM working in partnership with other departments and the steering groups to maximise the impact of government and other interventions to the community across all relevant departments and agencies and other sources of funding.