



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Health and Environmental Services Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Health Equity Capacity Building Programme</b>
<b>Date:</b>	3rd February, 2010
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### Relevant Background Information

At its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January, the Committee was made aware of the establishment of a new Joint Public Health Unit which is to be set up between the Council and the Public Health Agency to address health inequalities and reduce the gap in life expectancy between people living in more affluent areas and those in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city. This work links directly to Council's overall purpose, which is to improve quality of life now and for future generations.

The Joint Unit will eventually support a single health partnership for the City (which will sit within a community planning framework). The staff team will support joint planning across agencies and sectors and co-ordinate a work programme around the priorities set by this partnership. This will reduce duplication within the system and ensure that resources are collectively targeted at outcome based work programmes which have the greatest impact.

The Review of Public Administration (RPA) within health and social care has recognised the contribution which local government can make to improvements in health and wellbeing through, amongst other things, joint planning with partners. As a result, elected members now sit on both the Local Commissioning Group and the Board of the Public Health Agency. Furthermore, the RPA process within local government will introduce a new power of wellbeing for district councils.

The January Council also passed a motion in respect of the Council's role in reducing the 'health gap' and directed this Committee to develop a mechanism to ensure that relevant policies or strategies under development will make a maximum contribution to reducing health inequalities. A specific report on this mechanism will be put before the Committee in the near future.

**Key Issues**

In view of the enhanced role for both officers and elected members in the field of health and wellbeing, Belfast Healthy Cities recently carried out an audit of training and development, capacity levels and skills currently available in this area of work across a number of organisations, including the Council. This process included carrying out interviews with officers and members. As a result, a number of recommendations were made as to how to build the capacity levels necessary. Belfast Healthy Cities has now begun to take forward some of these recommendations and has put in place a capacity building programme based on a series of seminars, led by experts in the field. Details of the various seminars are attached to this report.

Any Member wishing to attend all or any individual element of the programme, should contact Mr. T. Crossan, Principal Environmental Health Officer (ext 3276).

**Resource Implications**

There is no cost for attendance at the series of capacity building events.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee notes the details of the capacity building programme and authorise the attendance at the seminars of any member of the Committee who wishes to participate.

**Decision Tracking**

Mr. T. Crossan, Principal Environmental Health Officer, will oversee the booking of Members on the seminars.

**Document Attached**

Programme of Events