

UPDATES FOR 2023-2024 PREPARED AS PART OF THE ANNUAL REPORT TO ECNI

PART A

Updates for actions delivered in 2023-24 on Equality Action Plan 2021-24 – see pages 2-60

PART B

Updates for actions delivered in 2023-24 on Disability Action Plan 2022-25 – see pages 61-87

PART A

Updates for actions delivered in 2023-24 on Equality Action Plan 2021-24

What is the Equality Action Plan?

This Equality Action Plan runs from 2021 until 2024, it is a corporate level document which outlines how we will promote equality and diversity in our ambitions to create a city in which people love to live, learn, invest, work and visit. It also contributes to our compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

What other documents is the Equality Action Plan linked to?

1. The Equality Action Plan is developed from some of the information in the **Audit of Inequalities**, which is a systematic approach to identify inequalities, across the nine Section 75 categories (religious belief, political opinion, race, age, gender, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, people with dependants or without), which are relevant to a public authority's functions.
2. The Equality Action Plan contains some of the key priorities from our Corporate Plan, which will have the biggest impact on inequalities. Our Corporate Plan is a reflection of what people in Belfast have told us they want and the type of leadership they feel the city needs. It takes the priorities of the Belfast Agenda, the Community Plan, and sets out the ways in which the council will deliver these to grow a sustainable, inclusive economy and equitable society. To fulfil our responsibilities, our Corporate Plan not only ensures we deliver the day-to-day services which the people of Belfast rely upon; we stretch ourselves through a series of strategic priorities to ensure we positively affect the lives of everyone in Belfast.

1. Growing an inclusive economy

We will work to create an inclusive, resilient economy through creating good, sustainable jobs.

A thriving urban economy is a key foundation to achieving many of the outcomes in the Belfast Agenda. Not only can a successful economy generate the wealth required to grow local businesses, generate jobs and offer routes out of poverty for struggling families, it is also the main source of revenue for the city's public services, programmes and interventions.

Ref No	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator	Departmental Responsibility	Progress/Update – 2023-24
1.1	Access to Employment work package - Deliver employment academies in sectors focused on workforce demand (Logistics, Social Care, Child Care, Public Sector), removing barriers to people furthest removed from the labour market to enter into or return to employment and/or advance in employment. (Annual programme)	2021-24	Percentage participating in Employment Academies. Percentage into employment (NB reviewed at key checkpoints within the year as the state of play within the labour market becomes clearer)	Place & Economy	<p>Since April 2023, 594 people participated in Employment Academies (with an into-employment rate of 76% for those successfully completing) in sectors ranging from logistics, business support, public sector driving, construction, classroom assistants (Irish Medium), social care, health care,</p> <p>Since April 2023, 594 people participated in Employment Academies (with an into-employment rate of 76% for those successfully completing) in sectors ranging from logistics, business support, public sector driving, construction, classroom assistants (Irish Medium), social care, health care, leisure, fibre optics and childcare/ play work.</p> <p>Of the 594 who started an Employment only 8 dropped out. 329 have fully completed and of these 249 have gained job/better job (76% of those completing). 266 are still participating.</p> <p>In addition to this, 222 started an Upskilling Academy so are in work and are receiving support, qualifications or licences needed to access a better job. So far 11 have completed their training and all have moved onto a better job.</p> <p>52% of participants were male and 48% were female.</p>

				<p>84% of participants stated their sexual orientation as being towards someone of a different sex. 16% were orientated towards the same or both.</p> <p>All participants were under 64 years of age with the 35-44 years age group being the most represented (21%).</p> <p>18% of our participants declared a disability.</p> <p>27% declared as being from a protestant background, 21% as none, 43% as being from a catholic background and 9% as other.</p> <p>44% identified as British, 42% as Irish, 14% identified as other (including a small number who identified as Polish or Portuguese).</p> <p>Of the 619 who started an Employment Academy, so far the attrition rate has been 1.3%, 329 have fully completed and of these 249 have gained job/better job (76% of those completing). 266 are still participating.</p> <p>In addition to this, 222 are undertaking an Upskilling Academy so are in work and are receiving support, qualifications or licences needed to access a better job. These include Level 3-5 qualifications and broken down as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 82 people are undertaking Working with Children/ Social Care Upskilling Level 3-5 - 40 are undertaking Irish Medium Classroom Assistant Upskilling Level 3-5 and - 100 are undertaking Classroom Assistant Upskilling at Level 4. <p>Digital Badging has been introduced across all Employment Academies to provide micro-credentials of what participants have successfully completed and 1623 have been issued to participants in 2023/24 to date.</p>
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1.2	Support five training and skills development projects via the European Social Fund (in partnership with TEO), targeting those who are long-term unemployed, younger people not in education, employment or training and people with disabilities.	2021-24	No. of participants achieving positive outcomes	Place & Economy	European Social Fund (ESF) Programme ceased to exist in March 2023 and the successor programme – UK Shared Prosperity Fund – did not required match-funding. This action is therefore closed.
1.3	Develop a GIS (Geographic Information System) monitoring approach to systematically assist programme development to continue to tackle inequalities in access to the labour market.	2021-24	Effective monitoring mechanism established to better understand inequalities, and the needs of S75 groupings. / Improve quality and quantity of monitoring information to support policy making on Employability and Skills (retrospective measure)	Place & Economy	<p>This continues to progress within E&S. A regional Labour Market Observatory (LMO) is being developed through our work with UU EPIC Futures (Economic and Social Partnering for Inclusive Innovation and Collaboration) and to inform what this needs to look like, we are working with IPPO to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring that we have an agreed vision, purpose and shape of – as well a roadmap for – what is needed for Belfast within a Labour Market Observatory which will bring together information, intelligence and analysis of the labour market within city in terms of demand (job demand, skills gaps etc.), supply (insights into section 75 groups, geospatial deprivation etc.), provision (including ‘what works well’) and policy. - Undertaking mapping of the E&S ecosystem in the city.

1.4	Working with partners and stakeholders across the city to put in place an (enterprise framework) action plan which supports long term ambitions to increase the number of business start-ups, including targeting workless residents, females and young people - and any under-represented groups	2021-24	Increase in % participants from under-represented groups on enterprise awareness initiatives. / No. of business starts.	Place & Economy	<p>Since April 2023, the team has been working with partners to develop and deliver interventions that address the City's challenges in relation to low levels of business start-up, innovation, competitiveness, and productivity. Some of the key achievements in 2023/24 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise awareness activity: engaged 755 individuals, supporting them to progress to start a business. We continue to extend our reach to engage those individuals who are under-represented. This includes an increased focus on support for people with disabilities, individuals who are economically inactive, females and young people providing them with tools to overcome barriers to take positive steps to starting a business. 40 students and graduates also accessed support, 12 of whom are currently accessing salary support through Invest NI's Student to First Sale intervention. We also enabled test trading opportunities for 18 new businesses through our dedicated start up space at St George's Market and many of those are seeking to trade at the market on a more regular basis or are exploring alternative retail outlets for their products. • Start a business activity: Since the launch of Go Succeed in November 2023, we have received 573 enquiries from individuals wishing to start a business in Belfast. This has progressed through to 278 completed diagnostics directly leading to business plan development and 1-1 mentoring. • Support for Social Enterprises and Co-operatives: 57 organisations were supported with one-to-one mentoring, advice, and guidance. Four of these organisations were new co-operatives. The Social Enterprise and Co-operative Support programme has facilitated 28
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					<p>events/workshops with over 350 attendees including a regional networking event, virtual global best practice visit and workshops. Our focused engagement with co-operative organisations has continued, and we organised 10 events, attracting 42 attendees. The Social Economy Incentive Fund launched again in September 2023, with an available pot of almost £50,000 to support social economy businesses to bring forward their business growth plans. 30 applications for support were received, 14 of which were shortlisted to pitch with 11 winners selected. We have been developing our outreach and engagement to increase awareness of the sector, including targeted engagement activity with more than 50 young people in community settings. In recognition of these efforts, Belfast City Council won 'Council of the Year' at the Social Enterprise Northern Ireland Awards in October 2023 for the second consecutive year. Most recently we applied to Social Enterprise Northern Ireland to become recognised as an official Social Enterprise Place, part of a SENI & SEUK initiative and are awaiting the outcome of this. In March 2024 we launched the public 'Social Economy Directory' on the Belfast City Council website and have 40 organisations registered on this across the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the above-mentioned initiatives and support intervention, members of the EBG team sit on various panels/advisory groups including but not limited to, SENI Champions Group, Belfast Business Promise Technical Panel, Social Value Procurement Policy Task & Review Group, and Social Value Working Group, as part of our efforts to support the sector.
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business growth support: as ERDF funded programmes came to an end in March 2023 a 6-month interim growth service was shaped using data from previous programmes and client feedback. This interim service was delivered until the launch of the NI Enterprise Support Service/Go Succeed in November 2023. This ensured support was not paused and Belfast businesses could continue to reach out and receive the support they needed to grow. Through our business growth support, we assigned mentors to 166 businesses availing of 3,367 mentoring hours and delivered 11 workshops with over 140 attendees. Included in the positive outcomes were businesses committing to using their best endeavours to create 196 new jobs within 12 months of completing their mentoring assignments.
1.5	Understand the barrier to employment to support employability skills and capacity building programme for disabled people and those from ethnic minority groups.	2021-22	Use insights to inform programme design	Place & Economy	<p>The LMP strategic assessment has been refreshed in 2023/4 and again identified a number of key groups that were under-represented in the labour market or that faced significant barriers to finding work. These groups include (among others) those with a disability, those living with health issues (including mental health), and ethnic minorities. Likewise, the research identified that there are specific parts of the city where levels of Long-term Unemployment and economic inactivity are more than twice the city average.</p> <p>We have implemented new approaches as a result of this scoping work, beginning with migrants and this has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESOL 12-week English language programme for 24 young people aged 16-24yrs in partnership with Participation and Practice of Rights. Training on rights to work for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers delivered for 32 training and skills providers in Feb 2024.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Social Care Academy underway for migrant workers (with a right to work) and wrap around support including support. • Development of Migrant Employment Academy: IELTS/OET, Statements of Comparability and wraparound support starting with medical professionals. <p>Through LMP we have also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed and implemented a Gateway to Choices programme, offering triage and support for people to access the provision in the city most suited to their needs and aspirations. In 2023/24, Gateway engaged with 867 people and supported 88 into training/education and 170 into work. • Working with Skills for Life & Work providers to deliver a 'Bridges to Progression' programme that adds value by supporting their participants in staying to continue with their participating. • Delivered the Belfast Jobsfair where 850 residents were able to access live vacancies across 65 employers.
1.6	Deliver the Access and Inclusion Programme of capital enhancement projects to encourage engagement with culture, arts, and heritage experiences (subject to funding)	2021-24	Number of small capital enhancement projects delivered	Place & Economy	<p>Four Access and Inclusion projects completed in March 2023.</p> <p>The projects successfully met the programme objectives and need as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased footfall from people with disabilities in 2 Royal Avenue • Improved access, lighting and toilet facilities within an arts and cultural venue, increasing participation by people with disabilities. • Installation of automated door access has increased customer and visitor's numbers to attend classes, workshops and events.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a new, mobile, outdoor art venues has removed barriers that prevent those disabilities from accessing the arts. <p>Access and Inclusion 23/24 reopened in August 2023 and awarded two projects funding. These include installation of a hardwired induction loop system in a large theatre venue and improving access requirements in a city centre venue.</p>
1.7	Develop schemes to support higher participation and representation at cultural events by disabled people such as gig buddies	2021-24	No. of events supported by Gig Buddies	Place & Economy	<p>Project Outcomes for Gig Buddies 2023-2024 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of volunteers • Volunteer training • Delivering accessibility training to staff in other venues • 15 matched volunteer and participants (March 2024) • Collaboration with organisations such as Bluebird Counselling to provide volunteer training. • Gig Buddy Ambassador appointed. • Delivery of audio-described walkthrough video of venue (available online). • Delivery of Safeguarding training for all volunteers • Provision of monthly socials throughout the year + attendance at key music festivals. <p>Support continues of the Gig Buddy Scheme for 2024-2025 with targets including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with Deafblind UK to continue making the venue more accessible (Black Box) • Continue to match volunteers and participants

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase ambassadors from 1 to 3. <p>The Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Programme aims to support the hospitality sector to be more welcoming and engaged with increasing the value and volume of the purple pound.</p>
1.8	<p>Deliver A City Imagining projects targeting LGBTQ+ groups, ethnic minority and newcomer communities, disabled people, older people, schools and multi-lingual communities</p>	2021-24	No. of participants	Place & Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Pride partnered with Belfast Trad Fest, Trans Pride, Feile an Phobail and Ashton Centre/ Newlodge Arts to increase culture engagement for LGBTQIA+ communities in Belfast. • Creative bursary of £10,000 was allocated to three individuals specifically from LGBTQIA+, minority ethnic and traditional Irish community. • ArtsEkta delivered ‘Belfast Equinox’ a co-designed, cross cultural storytelling event between a collective of artists and communities, attracting 2,527 attendees. <p>Partnership with University of Atypical produced social narrative videos for audiences accessing the following venues: The Lyric Theatre, Duncairn Arts and Cultural Centre, Belfast Exposed, The Crescent Arts Centre, The Grand Opera House, The Mac and Artsekta.</p>
1.9	<p>Development, publication and full public consultation of draft Social Value Policy</p>	2021-22	Publication of finalised policy and guidance	Cross - departmental	<p>The E&S team continued to support CPS in establishing the new approach to Social Value which includes providing direct support to BCC contractors in achieving their E&S and supply-chain related Social Value requirements. This has included supporting more than 40 BCC contracts by providing advice and guidance on contracts such as Innovation Factory, Car Parking Enforcement, Marrowbone Millennium Park, Utilities contracts.</p>

					<p>Officers also provide support of any contractor working in Belfast to meet their own Social Value requirements, such as supporting Harland & Wolff (H&W) contracts which is due to bring thousands of jobs to the city by delivering in partnership with EBG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the Buyer in partnership with Team Resolute including Harland & Wolff – 160 attendees from local businesses. This support has also included convening and collaborating with DfE, Invest NI, Union Learning Fund and colleges to offer support and solutions to workforce planning needs. • Tender Support programme for providers – 46 attendees. • Meet the Broker event for contractors to ‘meet’ organisations from VCSE sector – 88 attendees. • Providing advice and guidance on SV delivery for other public funded contracts including Aecom, NI Water, and Social Housing project in the Markets area. • Support EBG & Peace Plus team to organise and promote Preparation for Tendering series.
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2. Working and learning

BCC will work to ensure people are appropriately skilled for the jobs created in the city.

Education is the foundation for a better life, not only in facilitating future employment and providing access to a fulfilling adult life, but also as a major contributor to a person's wellbeing and to shaping lifelong health. Working with our partners, we will bring forward a work programme which supports the inclusive growth ambitions of the Council with a focus on addressing barriers to progression

Ref No	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator	Departmental Responsibility	Update/Progress – 2023-24
2.1	Focus on young people by delivering the Youth Support Programme targeting young people between 14- 24 years at risk or disengaged from formal education or training/employment.	2021-24	Percentage participating in positive outcomes in education, training and employment	Place & Economy	This programme has concluded given the new developments with DE under Fairstart (and within this the 'Reducing Educational Disadvantages' or RED programme). We continue to deliver the GCSE support programme on an interim basis with the aim of transferring into the mainstream 'Reducing Educational Disadvantages' programme.

3. Living here

Our city and neighbourhoods are vibrant, resilient, and safe places where people choose to live, work, and spend time being healthier and more active.

In our recent residents' survey, 86% of respondents were satisfied with Belfast as a place to live. We want everyone to be satisfied. We want to deliver a high quality of life for everyone. In doing so, we must deliver and plan effective public spaces and conserve our natural environment so it can be accessed and enjoyed.

Ref No	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator	Departmental Responsibility	Progress/Update – 2023-24
3.1	Deliver the Age-friendly Belfast Plan 2018-2021 assess achievements, identify challenges and develop a new Age-friendly Belfast plan 2022-2025	2021	Measure outcomes framework, consult with older people and stakeholder, review baseline information; 2022 develop new plan and begin to deliver	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>In April 2023 Council secured 3 year funding from PHA for the post of an Age Friendly Coordinator (AFC). The AFC has supported the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) in the delivery of the first year of the Age Friendly Plan and the progression of the following actions in line with the 4 themes:</p> <p>The establishment of a city centre connection hub in 2 Royal Avenue called the Grapevine. This pilot project has been led by older people to ensure that the Grapevine is a safe place where older people can drop in for a chat and find out about events etc happening across the city on a weekly basis. In the long term it is hoped that the hub will help combat feelings of isolation and loneliness amongst older people and also help increase greater social connections, both to the volunteers and those dropping in. It is also hoped that issues affecting older people will be reported through the weekly drop ins, creating greater awareness, and allowing signposting to specific support.</p> <p>Tea dances held every 6 weeks in 2 Royal Avenue have provided older people the opportunity to connect with others and improve or learn new dance skills- it also contributes to an increase in levels of physical activity and wellbeing. Many attending have reported how they look forward to the tea dances, putting the date in the diary for months ahead and also how they have created long lasting friendships. There are up to 200 people attending.</p>

					<p>Positive Ageing Month- a number of events and activities were organised during the month of October, as a result older people were able to try new activities/events whether that be a guided historical walk or a movie afternoon, and these enabled people to meet up with others whilst learning a new skill or developing a new interest. At the Age Friendly Convention speakers from several organisations were able to provide attendees with information on the services and support they could offer. There was also an information stand event in 2 Royal Avenue, so that people could find out about health initiatives and financial security on a one-to-one basis- to ensure they were accessing what they are entitled to and also providing tips on how to stay healthy.</p> <p>Seasonal planning, dementia Friendly neighbourhood and citywide isolation meetings have ensured that all partners are more aware of services and support for older people across Belfast and therefore better able to promote key messages, signpost more accurately and target their services according to need. It has also created good partnership working among the different organisations.</p> <p>Age Friendly Design Principles- working in partnership with the Age Friendly Officer in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council there have been meetings with Age Friendly Ireland and also planners/ building control within BCC and ABC Council areas to get a better understanding of the existing housing standards and how these ensure the needs of older people are included in the design processes of lifetime homes.</p>
3.2	Finalise and implement the Belfast Open Spaces Strategy	2021	To be determined as part of the action plan development.	City & Neighbourhood Services	Officers currently reviewing progress to date under BOSS with Gap analysis.

3.3	Develop a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy	2021	To be determined as part of the action plan development.	City & Neighbourhood Services	The draft strategy has been completed and is going through the approval process. It will be presented to committee in Autumn 2024.
3.4	Implement the programme of development of playgrounds across the city to further improve accessibility (following consultation with disability groups in early 2021).	2021	To be determined following consultation with disability groups.	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>Planned Improvement works under PIP 2023-24 are nearing completion. New, and more inclusive play facilities have been constructed at Loughside Park (re-opened March 2024) and North Link (re-opened May 2024). Site works are ongoing at New Lodge playground with completion anticipated in July 2024</p> <p>Alongside traditional equipment the largest playground at Loughside provides a range of inclusive and accessible equipment; a flush roundabout, a special needs harness swing seat, a wheelchair accessible multi play unit, an accessible trampoline and acoustic equipment for sensory play, allowing children of all abilities to enjoy playing together.</p> <p>Improvement works at North Link playground included a new accessible trampoline, communication panels, a special needs harness swing seat and a range of acoustic equipment for sensory play.</p> <p>When complete improvement works at New Lodge will provide a new wheelchair accessible roundabout and play panel fence, acoustic equipment for sensory play and more inclusive junior rockers.</p>
3.5	Achieve Onus Safe City status and retain platinum-level status	2021	Re-accreditation of Onus Workplace Charter- Platinum level / Safe City Status Achieved	CHR	<p>The Council retained Onus Safe City Charter status and retained Platinum Status- Onus Workplace Charter in November 2023.</p> <p>Ongoing financial support for the Raise Your Voice Project to help address misogyny, sexual harassment, and violence.</p>

					Allocated funding for work with our City Partners to provide training to raise awareness in the city of domestic violence.
3.6	Review and implement the council's Toilet Provision Strategy to improve the accessibility of toilets and maintain and promote the Changing Places toilet facility	2021-24	Report on the review of existing process and the number of stakeholder organisations engaged for 19/20. Increase in choice of available Changing Places facilities across the city over the next 24 months.	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>Update is the same.</p> <p>This has not commenced as yet.</p> <p>An approach to toilet provision across the City scape, given new and emerging facilities has been the subject of internal discussions as to a holistic approach. There are now 24 x Changing Places Toilets within the Belfast City Area (including 9 council venues).</p> <p>Audit of existing provision of toilets within OSS open spaces to be carried out within this financial year. To include gap analysis of disabled provision with consideration of changing places opportunities.</p> <p>The new crematorium design includes a Changing Places facility.</p>
3.7	Development of the new crematorium and our intention to acquire additional burial land, particularly for the north and west of the city.	These are medium to long term projects and time scales will be determined as the	To be determined as the projects develop.	City & Neighbourhood Services	The planning application for the new crematorium has been approved by Lisburn City & Castlereagh Borough Council Planning Committee in April 2023. The new crematorium design includes a Changing Places facility. Work is ongoing on acquiring additional burial land including liaison with neighbouring Councils, Mid & East Antrim, Antrim & Newtownabbey and Lisburn City & Castlereagh Borough Council.

		projects are developed			
3.8	Develop a co-design approach to engage communities in Social & Community Recovery planning.	2023-2024	Co-design framework for a Community Support plan	City & Neighbourhood Services	The co-design engagement framework was developed and will be rolled out in 2024/25
3.9	Cultural mapping and understanding barriers (research and engagement) to support the delivery of capacity building programme (with tailored strands inc S75)	2021-24	Publish research document	Place & Economy	Cultural mapping of cultural venues and infrastructure was refreshed in September 23. Stage two of mapping will also be commissioned in 24/25 to focus on studying the soft infrastructure (cultural activity) that takes place across the city.
3.10	Create an Audience Panel that contains a range of voices including those underrepresented in cultural engagement	2021-24	4 focus group meetings held with Audience Panel per annum	Place & Economy	<p>Thrive continued to maintain and support the delivery of the audience panel, although involvement in this project has now ended. University of Atypical delivered training for 20 disability champions.</p> <p>The Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Programme engaged with a lived learning panel of people with a range of disabilities. This group helped to design the programme and</p>

	(proactively recruit those whose voices are not heard as often)				participated in it. It resulted in the development of lived learning training and online itineraries to encourage more people with disabilities to visit the city.
3.11	To develop and deliver the next phases of the City Centre Connectivity Study (CCCS) ie to create a green, walkable, cyclable network of connected streets and places will improve the health and wellbeing for all, revitalise the city's economy and restore a sense of collective pride in the centre of Belfast among the communities within and around it.	2021-24	To be determined as part of the development of the next phases of the Study, which will include public consultation and Equality Screening exercise.	Place & Economy	Council continues to take a civic lead on A Bolder Vision (ABV). With the re-establishment of the Executive, the governance groups have been reconvened to finalise the Strategy in line with council priorities and the emerging Eastern Transport Plan (ETP), which reflects heavily the work of ABV. A number of early projects have been delivered under the banner of ABV including the Waterfront Promenade Framework, Sugarhouse Entry, the delivery of the Green to Grey programme and Active Travel Enablers, Little York Little Patrick Street, the 5C's and Blackstaff Sq. Work continues, including with private sector & public sector partners to develop a pipeline of projects to deliver out the objectives of ABV.

4. Cross-cutting

Our cross-cutting priorities will have a multitude of social, economic, and environmental benefits for the city.

These priorities include once in a lifetime opportunities to fundamentally change the city, culturally, physically and economically and help achieve the big ambitions of the Belfast Agenda.

Ref No	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator	Departmental Responsibility	Update/Progress – 2023-24
4.1	Design, implement and pilot an Inclusive Growth Decisions Making Framework	2021-24	The BCC inclusive growth decision-making framework is agreed and rolled is out.	City & Organisational Strategy	<p>Following further engagement with wider Departments and Senior Officers the final draft toolkit has now been taken forward for piloting. Six projects spanning all Departments have been chosen and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardship Fund • Community Support Programme • Belfast Stories • Sustainable Food Strategy • Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility • Participatory Budgeting – Take 5 <p>Each of the pilot teams have attended a workshop to walk through the toolkit and start to identify areas to embed inclusive growth within their area of work. In addition the C&OS data team have undertaken further work in relation to mapping the IG Cohorts and the underlying linkages between these groups and inequalities. A further meeting has been held with the Equality Officer to ensure a consistent, clear message is being given to staff and to identify future areas of synergy in relation to capacity building. A Logic Model and To R have been developed for the pilot phase to enable us to develop a M&E framework to further improve the toolkit and its implementation going forward and the first interim evaluation will be carried out after a period of 6 months. Alongside</p>

					this work information will be gathered to help inform a capacity building programme of work for staff.
4.2	Co-design an Inclusive Growth City Charter in collaboration with our city partners which encourages/ offers recognition for those organisations who adopt business practices as employers, procurers or in the delivery of services which have been proven to create more inclusive economic growth	2021-24	A draft charter is finalised and publicly consulted on by April 2021. / A final charter programme is launched, and a range of businesses sign up by April 2022. / The charter actions/initiatives acknowledge the additional barriers many groups of citizens face in employment and are designed to mitigate against these barriers. / A number of city partners/employers adopt more inclusive growth	City & Organisational Strategy	<p>Following a significant period of co-design and engagement, BBP went live 24 April 2023. 28 organisations onboarded during the pilot phase and were involved in shaping and refining the model of delivery. An evaluation of the pilot was carried out October 2023, providing key insights and recommendations for full programme roll-out of BBP.</p> <p>Following approval of EDU Growth proposal BBP is a key commitment in the BA to 2028. At year end, 46 businesses signed up as Supporter organisations, and are on their journey to accreditation. 3 organisations achieved membership status within the first year of delivery. Protect our Environment pledge has had significant challenges, dedicated resources and onboarding partner organisations have delayed the testing the technical assessment of pledge. Translink NI onboarded as a partner organisation, enabling essential testing of the pledge. Further engagement with anchors proved promising, with an additional 2 organisations in agreement in principle to support pledge 3, with the view to onboard 2024.</p> <p>8 specialist partners provide technical advice, support and assessment of the 8 pledge areas.</p> <p>Staff resources have been impacted with the departure of the EBG Officer and delays in recruitment.</p>

			business practices. / There is an increase of awareness around the benefits of inclusive growth business practices amongst employers across Belfast, with sharing of best practice. / Economic growth opportunities across the city are more accessible to all residents.		
4.3	Design and deliver the Shared Spaces programme	2022-23	Delivery of physical programme under the PIV Shared Spaces and Services Theme	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>The delivery of physical programme under the PEACE IV Shared Space & Services theme was supported with the delivery of an animation projects, which comprised of volunteering, community activity, youth civic education and animation.</p> <p>These project elements enabled 651 participants to utilise the space for activity. In addition, 8,000+ people attended animation events in the newly created space</p>

4.4	Build relationships across communities to increase confidence using and developing shared spaces and services	2021-24	% increase in the no of participants who feel safe attending event, activities, and facilities in areas associated with a different background.	City & Neighbourhood Services	All activity delivered through the PEACE IV programme concluded in June 2023. As such the update as previously provided is the final position in relation to PEACE IV.
4.5	Help address issues of demarcation and division including flags, murals and other symbols	2021-24	Delivery of actions within BCC Good Relations Plan working towards a Shared City vision.	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>The Good Relations Unit received a cut of 43% of the contribution from The Executive Office towards their contribution to the overall Good Relations Action Plan. As such, several projects within the Action Plan had to be reduced in scope. However, within the overall Action Plan 33,436 participants were recorded as having participated in Council support Good Relations Programmes. These ranged from the provision of small grants, events, direct delivered programmed and programmes that were tendered out for.</p> <p>The Unit was also allocated responsibility for the allocation of £475,000 of “Asylum Dispersal” funding from the Home Office. This was allocated towards projects to support those people who are living in hotels, awaiting decisions on asylum claims.</p> <p>In addition, the Good Relations team supported a range of internal Council services in areas such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic development - Assessment of Dual Language Street signs - Support for the Customer Hub in responding to issues such as flags on lamp posts <p>Support for Council units and sections on areas of racial equality, inclusion and general Good Relations obligations</p>

4.6	Design and deliver the Interfaces programme	2021-24	<p>% increase in the no of participants who feel safe attending event, activities, and facilities in areas associated with a different background. / Contributions towards physical works and programming that encourage attitudinal change and an even greater sense of belonging and social value.</p>	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>In 2023-24, a range of actions were delivered at interface areas as part of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan to support relationship building between communities living at interface areas across Belfast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North Belfast Lantern Parade with New Lodge Arts - Peace in the Park at Alexandra Park - Christmas Pantomime event at Dunmurry - Christmas Wonderland event at Suffolk - Santa Comes to Colin - Cross Community Christmas Event at St. Comgalls - Christmas Market at Lanark Way - Winter Wonderland event at Holy Family YC - Youth Christmas event at Belfast Interface Project - Cross Community Carol Service at City Life Church - Cross Community St. Patrick's Day Ceilidh at St. Comgalls <p>The following innovative localised interface projects were delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - West Meets East Community Centre Interface Programme - Shared Youth Interface Programme by Belfast Interface Project - Shared Education Schools Programme with 9 schools from interface areas <p>As an example of the outcomes assessed, the following was collected from the Cross Community Carol Service at City Life church:</p> <p>Feedback is as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 68% of participants indicated that they had previously attended a Good Relations event - 28% said they had never been to a Good Relations event
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 48% of participants were male - 52% were female - 22% of participants were between 13 and 18 years old - 26% of participants were between 19 and 35 years old - 30% were between 36 and 64 years old - 22% were over 65 years old - 84% of participants said they had no long-term illness, disability or medical condition - 14% said they had - 50% of participants said they were from a Catholic background - 50% were from a Protestant background - 2% of participants described themselves as Mixed - 98% of participants described themselves as being White <p>As a result of attending the event:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 64% of participants indicated that their knowledge of cultural traditions/backgrounds had increased - 94% said they had a better attitude towards people from a different <i>religious</i> background - 86% said they had a better attitude towards people from a different <i>ethnic</i> background - 100% of participants felt the event had played a positive role in bringing people together from different backgrounds <p>100% said they would recommend this event or a similar one to family and friends.</p>
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4.7	Encourage a re-imagining of the cultural significance of upcoming commemorations under the Decade of Centenaries	2022-23	Development of a Decade of Centenaries Programme based on the DOC principles on Shared perspectives. / % increase in the number of participants who feel comfortable socialising in a shared space they would not normally visit	City & Neighbourhood Services	This project completed in 2021.
4.8	Encourage cultural expression to be celebrated and undertaken within a culture of lawfulness	2021-24	% increase in the number of participants who think the culture and traditions of Catholics, Protestants and minority ethnic people add to the richness of and diversity of Northern Ireland society.	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>Again, two significant projects were delivered as part of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan over 2023/24 within the two main communities to support positive cultural expression. For the Council's St. Patrick's Day events, investment was provided to ensure that these were delivered with Good Relations Outcomes at the core.</p> <p>In preparation and delivery of the annual St Patrick's Day parade in Belfast we appointed various suppliers to assist with Cross Community Engagement Workshops and community outreach Programmes.</p> <p>Beam Creative targeted 18 Cross Community & Voluntary groups and schools (inclusive) from North, South, East and West Belfast to create neutral art works to showcase in the St Patrick's Day Parade.</p> <p>Streetwise Circus ran a cross community circus stilt walking workshop for young adolescents to perform in the parade.</p>

				<p>Circusful ran neutral workshops with the Youth Circus to showcase and perform various circus skills and costume design.</p> <p>Media Footage of some of the works from our community workshop outreach programmes:</p> <p>https://www.instagram.com/travellernorthernireland/reel/C4ntWIMoDqM/</p> <p>https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/video-news/watch-scenes-from-the-st-patricks-day-parade-through-belfast-city-centre/a1613670692.html</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6zyakPlaN8</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/reel/1425745298368311</p> <p>https://planetradio.co.uk/cool-fm/local/news/in-pictures-st-patrick-day-celebrations-2024/</p> <p>In the evaluation of these events, the feedback was as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100% of participants were 12 years old and under - 53% of participants indicated that they had previously attended a Good Relations event - 47% said they had never been to a Good Relations event - 58% of participants were male - 42% were female - 100% of participants said they had no long-term illness, disability, or medical condition - 26% of participants said they were from a Catholic background - 74% were from a Protestant background - 100% of participants described themselves as being White <p>As a result of participating in this project:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 89% of participants indicated that their knowledge of cultural traditions/backgrounds had increased - 84% said they felt more positive towards people from a different religious background - 68% said they felt more positive towards people from a different ethnic background - 95% of participants felt the event helped bring people from different backgrounds together
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100% of participants said they enjoyed taking part in the event - 95% said they would encourage family and friends to attend this event <p>Within the Unionist Community The District Council Good Relations Programme 2023/24 made provision for a beacon programme. This element of funding supports the provision of bonfire beacons as an alternative to traditional bonfires in areas where there is community support for this option.</p> <p>Prior to providing a beacon, a site engineer report must be undertaken to determine if the identified site is suitable from a health and safety perspective. In addition, beacons must be inspected for repair and then to be filled. The condition of the beacons was assessed by RPS Engineering Group. This has ascertained that out of the 16 Beacons, 9 were suitable for use and 7 will required a range of repairs. Repairs were then carried out.</p> <p>Beacons Programme timeline and summary of quarter 2 activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of interest correspondence forwarded to groups in late April 2023. • Beacon Repair Works were instructed and completed. • 11 groups responded with the request to have a beacon and were confirmed. • DFI granted approval for their sites. • NIHE granted approval for their site. • RPS Engineering carried out site inspections to assure Council that each site was suitable from a health and safety perspective. These site inspections were completed in early June 2023. • BCC approvals were finalised after satisfactory beacon site inspections were completed. • Good Relations officers issued 11 Beacon Agreement forms to the participating groups. • Additional safety fencing and pedestrian barriers installed by WJM Building Services at beacon sites at Brown Square and White City Community Centre.
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events with beacons took place on the 11th of July at the 11 agreed sites – no incidents reported. <p>List of 11 beacon sites and organising groups on the 2023 Beacons Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haig St/Lord Street junction • Clara Street • Grove Street East • Highspring Avenue • Loughview/White City • Ainsworth Avenue • Ballysillan Park • Browne Square • Dunmurry • California Close • Green Space in Cregagh Estate
4.11	Build the capacity of disengaged and marginalised citizens and community leaders and changemakers to engage	2021-23	No. of engagement projects undertaken in collaboration with pre-engagement through the VCSE panel	City & Organisational Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed the review of Belfast Agenda and published a new strategic document and accompanying action plans. In line with our equality scheme. Draft versions were issued for public consultation with the draft EQIA and Rural Needs Impact Assessment. 4 EQIA related workshops were also held during this time. • Completed our first PB pilot – Move More and Eat Well. This was supported by our VCSE Panel and community sector partners who helped encourage participation. Thanks to the nature of the PB process and the help of the VCSE, we achieved the following successes: • We held 14 information sessions in various local community venues plus 1 online session. These, and other outreach efforts, were supported by our VCSE partners. • A third (33%) of all applicants were from un-constituted groups which demonstrates that the PB reached new people and communities. 30% of successful projects were

					<p>also un-constituted meaning new groups are now 'partnered and engaged' with council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through PB, residents decided which projects get funded putting decision-making power in the hands of local communities. • We received 675 in-person and 1822 online voting papers. • Unlike many of our formal consultations, the in-person PB process enabled younger people to have a voice. 43% of those submitting a ballot paper were aged 24 and under, with a third (34%) aged 4 – 13 years of age, reflecting the family friendly nature of the events. In contrast, only 9% of voters were aged 24 and under for the online voting. • Building on this pilot, we commenced a second MMEW PB. The design team was widened to help ensure the needs of women and people with disabilities (with regards participation in sport) could be targeted. Voting was held online in February with 7,064 people voting. • In June 2023, we established a cross-sectoral Co-design Steering Group, co-chaired by the VCSE Chair. This group oversaw the creating of a co-design framework for the Belfast CPP. Between September 2023 and January 2024, we held 5 workshops to inform and design the framework. This included a mix of statutory and VCSE partners, and Belfast residents. The draft framework is due to be finalised in 2024.
4.12	Produce a consultation and engagement toolkit for officers	2021-24	% of residents who agree that council consults with and listens to	City & Organisational Strategy	We have re-convened C&E Ref Group and work has commenced to review our C&E framework and the supporting mechanisms. In the meantime, we continue to provide informal written guidance to officers and held several meetings and discussions with

	and provide ongoing advice and capacity building		the views of local residents (survey in 2021 and 2023)		<p>services to plan effective engagements including on sensitive consultations such as Irish language signage and city centre by-laws.</p> <p>We issued 6 newsletters to participants registered on the Your Say Belfast (YSB) platform to advise them of council consultations. These are usually issued quarterly, but we increased this because of the nature and volume of consultations.</p> <p>In 2023-24, 10,994 people responded to council consultations (responses to surveys via Your Say Belfast Platform) up from 8, 846 in 2023-23.</p> <p>Despite our various efforts to increase participation, the 2023 resident survey results show a fall in the number of residents who agree that council ‘consults and listens’ – falling from 63% in 2021 to 50% in 2023. However, this downward trend is reflected in UK council perception surveys (with researchers suggesting that ongoing austerity, the covid legacy and distrust of UK government affecting satisfaction with local government).</p>
4.13	Work with community planning partners to improve how data is accessed and utilised to ensure the Belfast Agenda process understands and takes action to address inequalities	2021-24	Belfast Agenda Dashboard updated. / Consultation and engagement gives all people equal opportunity to participate	City & Organisational Strategy	Work has commenced in creating the database that will be used to generate the dashboards. This data is owned by a mix of our community planning partners and will be the first time that a dashboard has been created with the partnerships data held in one single repository. The Our Planet theme has lead on the development of the dashboard as a pilot and will be introduced to the Belfast Agenda Delivery Boards shortly.

4.14	<p>Promoting Inclusive Growth (IG) through the Belfast Region City Deal Action 1 (over 10 years) Develop clear and robust arrangements to monitor how well actions to promote IG through the BRCD are delivering. This will help us to report on progress at both a geographical and on a priority group basis to improve understanding of what types of interventions and policy changes work best in which circumstances</p>	2021-23	Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements in place and communicated to partners	Corporate Services - BRCD	<p>The BRCD Programme Management Office (PMO) is supporting partners as they begin their procurement processes so that contractors build in social value considerations to their tender responses. Training has been provided to all project sponsors in this regard.</p> <p>The BRCD PMO is utilising the Strategic Investment Board's (SIB) Social Value Portal to monitor the contribution BRCD project contractors are making through delivery of their Social Value Plans. These results are incorporated into our quarterly performance reports. The information collated can be segregated in various ways to understand the scope of the impact.</p> <p>Contractors are also sign-posted to relevant E&S supports as we come to understand the job opportunities and skills needs they require.</p>
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	and for which groups.				
4.15	<p>Promoting Inclusive Growth (IG) through the Belfast Region City Deal Action 2 (over 10 years)</p> <p>Deliver new and better jobs to the BRCD region and support the region's economic recovery efforts. This will be done in the context of IG and will include programmes and interventions to enable all groups, particularly those furthest from the labour market, to avail of the opportunities emerging through</p>	2021-24	<p>Establish an Employability and Skills programme to support the ambitions of the BRCD</p>	Corporate Services - BRCD	<p>The PMO is continuing to support delivery of the BRCD Programme of Investment.</p> <p>Delivering <i>inclusive</i> economic growth, a key ambition of the city and growth deal approach, involves ensuring that emerging job opportunities can be accessed by as wide a range of people as possible.</p> <p>To ensure people are in a position to avail of opportunities we are -through a NI wide Cross Deal Skills group - continuing to work to understand the skills landscape that underpin the areas of investment relevant to the Deal projects through production of a series of sectoral skills assessments.</p> <p>To date we have completed skills assessments for the Construction and Advanced Manufacturing sectors and have made significant progress in respect of skills assessments for the digital and Virtual Production sectors.</p> <p>The results will help the deal partners to identify opportunities to drive inclusive growth.</p>

	the capital investment.				
4.16	Develop, roll out and deliver new physical programme: £8m Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund, through an open call process. The Fund will focus upon a number of key thematic areas and reflect the priorities agreed within the City Recovery Framework: environmental/sustainable projects, neighbourhood tourism and social enterprise.	2021-24	Number of projects completed, number of consultation exercises encompassing Section 75 groups	Property & Projects	<p>Stage 2 Development - Business Cases and OBA report cards were completed for all 21 projects.</p> <p>16 Stage 2 projects were selected to progress to Stage 3. Stage 3 Delivery preparation has commenced with some projects progressing to procurement stage –Cliftonville Community Enterprise, USEL Green Growth & Circular Economy and The ACT Initiative Community Hub and Visitor Centre.</p> <p>2 additional projects were selected to progress to Stage 2. Business development is underway.</p> <p>6 Stage 2 East Belfast projects will go to the East Area Working Group for recommendations in June 2024.</p>
4.17	Delivery of Physical	2021-24	Number of projects	Property & Projects	Consultation exercises have been undertaken using the widely accessible YourSay platform regarding the development of Reconnected Belfast: Waterworks and

	<p>Programme including £180m Capital Programme for council assets. Also management, development and delivery of externally funded programmes such as the Executive Office's flagship good relations programme Urban Villages, at approx. £46m.</p>		<p>completed, number of consultation exercises encompassing Section 75 groups</p>		<p>Alexandra Park and Black Mountain Pathway Project. All of our consultations are promoted through PR, Council's website and social media channels. Some of the consultation exercises included in-person and online meetings/events e.g. Reconnected Belfast – Waterworks and Alexandra Park pre-planning consultation included the following: Women and Girls consultation event; Youth consultation event; Presentation and discussion with Disability Advisory Panel; and Engagement with IMTAC - Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee.</p> <p>Black Mountain Pathway Project – Two information events in accessible venues - Highfield Community Centre and Newhill Community Centre.</p> <p>Lockhouse – onsite consultation event.</p> <p>Further consultation events for Lagan Gateway Phase 2 have taken place and consultation meetings have been undertaken for the new crematorium development.</p> <p>In addition, consideration of accessibility needs is an important aspect of all our projects and this year we have ensured provision through a number of projects, such as:</p> <p>Phase 1 of Black Mountain Shared Spaces project- Work has progressed well. The facility will be accessible throughout and includes a lift and a changing places facility. Bi-lingual signage has also been installed. Phase 1 will complete in June 2024. Work on Phase 2 will commence in 2024/25.</p> <p>Shankill Shared Women's Centre is progressing well and will have a changing places facility, lift access to all floors, and disabled toilets.</p> <p>Installation of Changing Places in the Belfast Zoo.</p> <p>Installation of a community garden with raised planters and disability access as part of the Upsurge project in south Belfast.</p>
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					<p>Installation of a Changing Places room and accessible toilet facilities in ABC Trust Health & Leisure Hub.</p> <p>Installation of lift and accessible toilet facilities in Bredagh Clubhouse.</p> <p>Furthermore, we undertake audits of our own facilities and through our maintenance programme we ensure the installation of new disability toilets or upgrading of existing ones where necessary.</p>
4.18	Deliver Pandemic Recovery Plan	2021-23	Developed understanding of impact of Covid 19 on existing inequalities	Cross - departmental	Covid Revit Programme activity is delivered and the programme closed.

5. Our organisational priorities

As our city becomes more ambitious so must we.

To do this, we can only succeed with the wholehearted support and enthusiastic contribution of our staff. To harness this energy, they need to feel valued and understand how they contribute. As an organisation, if we want to perform these capabilities to the best of our abilities, we must continuously look to improve how we do things. We have therefore agreed priorities that will help us improve our capability. For example, in order to provide the best customer experience possible, we have developed a customer focus programme that will enhance the experience felt by all our customers.

Ref No	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator	Departmental Responsibility	Progress/Update – 2023-24
5.1	Ensure that the council communicates effectively with its citizens, using assistive technology and maintaining standards such as Plain English and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines AA standards	2021-24	Website to provide assistive technology and follow new and current Plain English and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines AA Standards.	Cross-departmental	<p>CNS - Bulky Waste - 40% of contact for this service now channel shifted to online form (7,500 requests) with 53% of booking requests made via e-form in last 2 months. 100% positive customer feedback on the online booking process. Firetext communication and the utilisation of Elogii has become business as usual, with the service still experiencing the increased presentation rate from customers.</p> <p>Bulk text to customer for notification of changes to holiday bin collections: SMS message sent to 1,000 customers with impacted bin collection day on Easter Monday. Reduction in number of customer reports of missed collections over Easter. Bulk text to be utilised to notify customers of collection changes for July holidays.</p> <p>Report-it App has had some 23k reports since commencement. This has led to a reduction in service requests and provided key information in the reduction of no access numbers and the increase of 2nd attempt collections.</p> <p>Public notification of Service failure. Working demo presented to the Web Panel May 24. Trial to take place over next two months – initial figures look at 1000</p>

				<p>reports a month. This will look to publish live time information re: collections to the web to inform customers in the first instance that we are aware of collection issues. This will reduce contact at the customer hub.</p> <p>COS - The YSB platform is WACG compliant. Training and advice is provided to staff to ensure consultations are as accessible as possible.</p>
				<p>All Events communications are via External Affairs, Communications & Marketing department.</p> <p>New assets include accessible and inclusive itineraries that are available online via video and also communicated via social media.</p> <p>We continued promotion of our Vacant to Vibrant programme including promotional videos which have subtitling.</p> <p>External Affairs, Communications & Marketing - our websites partially comply with the Web Content Accessibility Standards 2.2 Level AA to widen access to our information to all users, including people with disabilities. Between November 2023 and April 2024, we implemented the recommendations of the Web Usability August 2023audit report on manual accessibility to improve Belfast City Council, Belfast Castle, Belfast Zoo and Malone House websites. This was carried out after a procurement process to select a supplier, which would employ a range of people with various disabilities to test our site.</p> <p>To ensure we maintain best practice in accessibility.</p> <p>The Silktide Index https://index.silktide.com, which measures accessibility levels for all public sector sites in the UK, evaluates Belfast City Council website at 97% - an 'excellent' score. To achieve a higher score, we would need to tag all PDFs (WCAG</p>

					<p>2.0.A 1.3.1) and ensure pages don't require zooming and scrolling in two dimensions on small screens (WCAG 2.1 AA 1.4.10)</p> <p>The website (https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/) includes the ReachDeck digital inclusion toolbar. ReachDeck provides speech, reading and translation support tools to help ensure information is easier and more accessible for people.</p> <p>The website is assessed and approved annually by the Plain English Campaign (http://www.plainenglish.co.uk).</p> <p>Our content is written to Plain English Campaign standards, so it can be widely and easily understood.</p>
5.2	Develop a new Customer Hub designed around customer needs	2021-24	New professional customer hub designed and implemented. Customer satisfaction with the HUB service.	City & Organisational Strategy	<p>Customer Hub has handled over 590,000 customer contacts in its three years of operation with average customer satisfaction of 81%.</p> <p>Introduction of online channel for bulky waste collection requests achieving 50% channel shift of requests to online form following digital first not digital only principle.</p> <p>Bulk text functionality introduced to inform customers of bin collection changes on bank holidays for Easter 2024.</p> <p>Updated Complaints Handling Procedure introduced in Jan 2024 including staff training and redevelopment of CRM for complaint handling.</p> <p>Development of bin collection service updates on website to take place in 2024/25</p>
5.4	Improve engagement with customers	2021-24	% of issues understood impacting on different groups of people leading to a better-informed	Cross-departmental	<p>COS - We continue to provide advice and guidance to services undertaking consultations and engagement – how to capture appropriate s.75 data within surveys and how to ensure equality of opportunity in terms of participation.</p>

across all S75 categories			decision-making process and improved customer service	<p>During 2023-24, council carried out 7 formal policy consultations, 5 of which included draft equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments and 2 which included draft EQIAs.</p> <p>As part of the phase 3 consultation on the Belfast Agenda, we issued a draft EQIA and Rural Needs Impact Assessment and held 4 EQIA related workshops were also held during this time.</p>
				<p>E&S facilitate an E&S Provider Network which provides local organisations - who work with those further from the labour market – with information on upcoming opportunities to enable them to prepare and match their participants (who are underrepresented in the labour market) with the upcoming opportunities. Over the last year this has grown to 358 are members of this network across 115 organisations who represent a wide range of Section 75 groups: disability organisations, women’s centres, youth-based projects, migrants’ groups etc.</p> <p>This has resulted in participation rates on Employment Academies of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14% coming from an ethnic minority. • 18% with a disability. • 48% are women. • 15% identifying as LGB. • 12% young people (under 25yrs) • 23% older people (45yrs+) <p>The Events Team completed an Inclusive Events Template for each event to identify how we can continually improve the inclusive nature of our events. Examples of this are accessible features and facilities at events. Council events take place in neutral space with terms & conditions of entry.</p>

					The Tourism Team delivered the accessibility and inclusive tourism programme that included a seminar to engage the tourism industry, online training, in person training and online information resources.
5.5	Provide accessible channels of communication to reflect diverse customers' needs	2021-24	Greater opportunities for two-way communication using a range of customer feedback tools and measures. An accessible online service Translated documents of interest available on request	Cross-departmental	<p>The Events Team completed an Inclusive Events Template for each event to identify how we can continually improve the inclusive nature of our events in respect of communications for example, use of signer and palantypist, large black & white signage.</p> <p>The Tourism Team have developed a number of communication channels to champion accessibility and inclusion. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible and Inclusive online and in person training • Best practice training video • Accessible and Inclusive video itineraries • Accessible and Inclusive Seminar live streamed and streaming on demand <p>The EDU team have developed a final draft 'Making Communications Accessible' guide to support staff in dealing with language and communication requests e.g. alternative formats and Sign Language interpreters. The Guide is expected to be finalised in 2024/25.</p>
5.7	Develop and deliver Gender, Disability, LGBTQ+ and Minority and Inclusion workforce	2021-24	Activity in plans agreed, resourced and delivered.	CHR/ cross departmental	<p>Gender Action Plan</p> <p>Activity in Belfast City Council's Gender Acton Plan is grouped under the following headings:</p> <p>Gender Equality in the Council</p> <p>Reviewed terms of reference and structure for Women's Network Group, developed and delivered a programme of events and activities throughout the year including a workshop on effective presentation skills.</p>

diversity action plans				<p>Held an in-person event in City Hall to celebrate IWD</p> <p>Review of Induction to welcome back & support those who were on long term absence.</p> <p>Women's sector invited to participate employability outreach initiatives.</p> <p>Council has maintained silver level diversity Charter Mark and continues to work towards gold level.</p> <p>The corporate induction programme has been revised to include specific detail on equality, diversity and inclusion responsibilities at employee, manager and senior manager level.</p> <p>Ongoing promotion of Belfast City Council as an employer that values and supports equality and diversity (interlink, external website, job information for potential applicants, media releases, City Matters, social media).</p> <p>Onus Domestic Violence Charter – retained Platinum level. Training ongoing</p> <p>Training delivered on Managing in a Political Environment to relevant officers.</p> <p>Targeted active travel- promoted Sustrans Women into Cycling programme.</p> <p>As part of the review of the Work Life Balance Handbook, additional leave provisions were introduced for miscarriage and unsuccessful fertility treatment.</p> <p>Gender Equality in the Community</p> <p>Funding provided for external IWD event.</p> <p>Staff event held in City Hall to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance. A Transgender flag was displayed at City Hall to mark the occasion.</p>
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				<p>City Hall illuminated in colours of Trans flag to support Transgender Day of Visibility on 31 March.</p> <p>Sexual orientation and gender awareness training session delivered by Rainbow Project.</p> <p>Embedding LGBTQ+ Inclusion in your Supply Chain Training delivered by Stonewall.</p> <p>Gender Equality in the Economy</p> <p>As part of the Enterprise support interventions, we have developed and delivered an Inclusive Enterprise Pathway. This intervention aims to ensure enterprise is a viable option for individuals who have entrepreneurial potential and belong to a group currently underrepresented within enterprise, including women. Creation of this pathway has increased the visibility, and accessibility, of early business start-up activity that is key to nurturing the development of ideas and business networks to support potential female entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Following engagement with numerous organisations representative of underrepresented groups we developed and delivered 20 virtual workshops in 2023/24 with total attendance reaching over 700 people (67% female attendance).</p> <p>In addition we ran and supported a number of female targeted events including:</p> <p>19th April 2023</p> <p>Women in Business <i>International Voices Conference</i> (Over 400 attendees)</p> <p>6th December 2023</p>
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				<p>Women in Business - <i>Inspiring Enterprise: The magic is within you</i> (57 attendees)</p> <p>7th February 2024</p> <p>SistersIN - <i>Inspiring Entrepreneurs: Celebrating Female Entrepreneurial Leadership and Empowering the Next Generation</i> (Attendees 131)</p> <p>BCC facilitates an Employability and Skills Provider Network which provides local organisations - who work with those further from the labour market – with information on upcoming opportunities to enable them to prepare and match their participants (who are underrepresented in the labour market) with the upcoming opportunities. Over the last year the network has grown to 358 members across 115 organisations who represent a wide range of Section 75 groups: disability organisations, women’s centres, youth-based projects, migrants’ groups etc.</p> <p>This has resulted in participation rates on Employment Academies of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14% coming from an ethnic minority. • 18% with a disability. • 48% are women. • 15% identifying as LGB. • 12% young people (under 25yrs) • 23% older people (45yrs+) <p>Active barrier-removal occurs for those participating on Employment Academies has included paying for childcare provision for parents with caring responsibilities, travel and subsistence expenses etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have hosted two conferences on Building and Inclusive Labour Market, which has included targeted engagement with and promoting the benefit of
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				<p>services provided through women’s organisations such as Women’s TEC, WRDA, TWN etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have also offered providers in the city with access to Digital Badging for their participant groups and this includes women’s organisations. This provides micro-credentialing of the skills and achievements of those participating on developmental programmes. <p>We also provide Upskilling Academies in female-dominated sectors (education, health and social care, working with children sectors) which include upskilling qualifications to underpin accessing better employment at QCF Level 2 through to Level 5. In 2023/24 this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 105 people supported on Irish Medium Classroom Assistant Upskilling Level 2-5 • 100 people supported on Classroom Assistant Upskilling Level 4 • 82 people supported on Working with Children/Social Care Upskilling: Level 3-5 <p>Gender Equality in the City</p> <p>Active property management and development is a core activity of Estates who work with both internal and external stakeholders to achieve maximum use of our assets for both service delivery and revenue purposes. Gender issues are considered as part of departmental boards and project boards for both departmental use of assets and individual asset schemes. Governance relating to all projects is cross departmental to provide suitable staff resources and this will be further supported by an Asset Management Strategy and Board being taken forward by Property & Projects.</p>
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				<p>Two sculptures were installed in City Hall grounds celebrating the lives of two prominent social reformers - Mary Ann McCracken and Winifred Carney. They were unveiled at a ceremony at City Hall on 8 March to coincide with International Women's Day 2024. The design of the two statues reflects the values and activities for which they are best known and marks another important step in the council implementing the recommendations of a 2012 EQIA report which focused on ensuring we created a 'good and harmonious environment' through our displays at City Hall and its grounds.</p> <p>Property & Projects is mindful of ensuring that design and public investment benefits everyone including women and girls and will undertake future relevant consultation activities that will help inform design appropriately.</p> <p>As part of the community consultation on Reconnecting Belfast: Waterwork and Alexandra Park during 23/24, a specific engagement event was held with women and girls to ascertain their views on safety and inclusivity of the parks and future proposals.</p> <p>Retained Onus Safe City status</p> <p>Ongoing financial support for the Raise Your Voice Project to help address misogyny, sexual harassment and violence</p> <p>Provided £3000 external funding for training to raise awareness around sexual harassment.</p> <p>Continued to deliver a pilot to provide free period products for the public in council building and facilities pending implementation of period product legislation.</p>
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				<p>Race Equality Action Plan</p> <p>39 director and senior managers attended Cultural Competence and Anti Racism training.</p> <p>Coaching sessions were also delivered on a 1-1 basis to directors to assist them to identify impactful and meaningful actions for inclusion in the Race Equality Action Plan.</p> <p>LGBT+ Action Plan</p> <p>This workforce action plan has been developed to ensure that our organisational culture and working environment allows staff to feel comfortable to be their whole selves at work and that policies and practices empower talent development at all levels and the removal of any form of discrimination. It also aims to increase the understanding of the wider workforce of issues facing the LGBT+ communities.</p> <p>Activity included:</p> <p>Rainbow Project delivered an awareness raising session on sexual orientation and gender awareness to targeted groups – 8 participants from Customer Hub and Birth, Deaths and Marriages</p> <p>Stonewall delivered one training session on Embedding LGBTQ+ inclusion in your supply chain- 10 participants.</p> <p>The corporate induction programme has been revised to include specific detail on equality, diversity and inclusion responsibilities at employee, manager and senior manager level.</p> <p>Peer mentoring / reverse mentoring is ongoing.</p> <p>Delivery of unconscious bias training is part of ongoing corporate course schedule.</p>
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				<p>Staff intranet and social media used to promote Transgender Awareness Week and LGBT+ Awareness Week etc.</p> <p>Held a fundraising bake sale.</p> <p>Held a joint fundraising coffee morning with Women’s Network Group.</p> <p>Staff network, friends and allies participated in Belfast Pride.</p> <p>A Pride flag was displayed at City Hall to celebrate Pride.</p> <p>A Transgender flag was displayed at City Hall to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance in November and City Hall illuminated in colours of Trans flag to coincide with Transgender Day of Visibility on 31 March.</p> <p>Hosted a Transgender Day of Remembrance event in City Hall.</p> <p>Contributed to and hosted an event by local LGBT+ service providers and other networks across NI.</p> <p>Included a non- binary option on the BCC application and monitoring forms.</p> <p>Used social media to promote BCC as an inclusive service provider e.g. Pride; TDOR; LGBT+ History Month.</p> <p>Disability Action Plan</p> <p>(progress below relates to actions not already outlined elsewhere in this update relating to the Disability Action Plan)</p> <p>210 reasonable adjustments have been provided during 2023-2024. Of these 61 were DDA related- 16 were permanent adjustments/ arrangements and 194 were temporary. Examples of adjustments included phased return to work; time out for medical appointments; reduced hours; manual handling restrictions; extended trigger points; removal from phone rota; lighter duties; manual handling restrictions; flexible retirement; change of working hours; sign language interpreters</p>
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					Fifteen reasonable adjustment requests at interview stage were requested. One request was declined due to commercial sensitivity.
5.8	Improve participation in employment among those furthest from the labour market through ring-fenced entry-level posts (where possible), pre-recruitment training programmes, work experience, guaranteed interview scheme and reasonable adjustments	2021-24	Job opportunities ring fenced to the long term unemployed and targeted pre recruitment and training	CHR	<p>Worked with employability partners, including disability organisations across the city to deliver pre-employment training academies to support ring fenced opportunities for the long term employed, for General Operative posts and made 5 permanent appointments from this exercise.</p> <p>Worked with employability partners including disability organisations across the city to deliver an information session as part of the Combined HGV/LGV Driver loader recruitment campaign which offered guidance on completing the recruitment process and gave a practical insight into the role. Mock interviews were also offered as part of this opportunity. 7 people who attended the information session and applied for the positions were offered permanent driving roles.</p> <p>Supported the DfC Job start Programme with eight placements.</p> <p>Ongoing work with employability partners to promote BCC as an inclusive employer and support applicants furthest removed from the labour market.</p>
5.9	Encourage participation of disabled people in the	2021-24	Three disability staff network meetings held each year	CHR	2 network meetings held.

	workforce, Sign Language Users Forum and Disability Staff Network (DA)				
5.10	Encourage participation of LGBT+ people in the workforce and LGBT+ staff network 'Proud'	2021-24	Improved promotion of our commitment to equality and diversity both internally and externally	Cross-departmental	<p>A number of articles have been published on staff intranet to raise awareness of different LGBT+ events/ initiatives e.g., Pride; Transgender Day of Remembrance; Transgender Day of Visibility; Trans Awareness Week; Bi Awareness Week; LGBT+ awareness raising sessions; participation in Stonewall's LGBTQ+ survey</p> <p>Advertised three senior positions through Stonewall.</p> <p>Information relating to the LGBT+ staff network is included in the jobs section of the website; promoted at induction, diversity and disability awareness training.</p> <p>A number of staff and their family members participated in a guided Pride Walk and picnic.</p> <p>A Pride flag was displayed at City Hall to celebrate Pride.</p> <p>Participated in Belfast Pride.</p> <p>A Transgender flag was displayed at City Hall to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance in November and City Hall illuminated in colours of Trans flag to coincide with Transgender Day of Visibility on 31 March.</p> <p>Staff intranet and social media used to promote Transgender Awareness Week.</p> <p>Contributed to an event facilitated by local LGBT+ service providers and other Networks across NI.</p>

					<p>External Affairs, Communications & Marketing - Articles continue to be publicised on staff intranet and digital signage screens to raise awareness of different LGBTQ+ events/ initiatives. For example, Pride, Transgender day of remembrance as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will you walk with Pride this Saturday? • Pride Bake Sale • Calling all LGBTQIA+ colleagues and allies • Be proud – show strength - support colleagues • LGBTQIA+ Awareness Week
5.11	Encourage participation of all staff in the workplace	2021-24	Hold event/ workshop for both male/ female staff to jointly explore/ discuss diversity and gender issues and identify any areas/ issues to be addressed.	Cross-departmental	P&E - International Women's Day officers attendance and participation and participation within WSG.
5.12	Review and amend workforce monitoring form	2021-24	Monitoring form reviewed and revised to capture additional information including: · reasonable adjustments required by applicants as part of the recruitment and selection process; Gender identity; Sexual orientation	City & Organisational Strategy	N/A

5.13	Carry out a voluntary monitoring exercise for all staff	2021-24	Voluntary monitoring exercise conducted and up to date information available	CHR	Voluntary monitoring survey not yet completed for operational reasons.
5.14	Work to achieve Diversity Charter Mark Silver Award	2021-24	Silver Diversity Charter Mark Achieved	CHR	Council has maintained silver level and continues to work towards gold level diversity Charter mark.
5.15	Develop opportunities for Equality and Diversity Champions both at SMT and Elected Member level	2021-24	Equality and Diversity Champions appointed	Cross-departmental	Six elected members appointed as Disability Ambassadors.

5.16	Continue to deliver a suite of equality and diversity awareness training to all staff including diversity, general disability awareness, targeted disability awareness, bi and trans awareness training (classroom based and on-line)	2021-24	No/ of sessions delivered; Training evaluation indicators: Quality of training; Increased understanding; Increase in skills levels	CHR / EDU	<p>11 disability awareness sessions delivered- 5 for managers (35 attendees) and 6 for employees (78 attendees).</p> <p>10 diversity sessions delivered- 4 for managers (34 attendees) and 5 for employees (58 attendees).</p> <p>Stress awareness for managers- 5 sessions delivered (52 managers attended).</p> <p>Positive mental health- 6 sessions delivered (63 employees attended).</p> <p>Jam Card training – 2 sessions delivered (25 attended).</p> <p>A new network of Health and Wellbeing Champions has been appointed.</p> <p>A new Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan has been developed.</p> <p>The Health and Wellbeing hub ‘Staywell’ included advice and guidance on a range of health, wellbeing and disability issues e.g. information and support to support physical health; focus on healthy eating for heart health.</p> <p>A number of events and initiatives have been delivered and articles have been included on Interlink-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep better • Living with Arthritis • Supporting Colleagues with Mental Health Issues • Menopause Awareness for Partners/ friends/ Colleagues • Age Awareness training • Mindfulness session • Cancer Focus Keeping Well Van- Duncrue Complex and Park Road Depot • Men’s Mental Health- Mood Matters • Managing Disability related absence
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power to the Pocket • Healthy Heart • Ovarian Cancer Awareness • Making the most of your money • Prostate cancer Awareness <p>The number of employees who participated in the events and initiatives was 262.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing initiatives continue to be delivered.</p> <p>LGBT training</p> <p>Rainbow Project delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness raising session on sexual orientation and gender awareness to target groups– 8 participants from Customer Hub and Birth, Deaths and Marriages training session on Embedding LGBTQ+ inclusion in your supply chain- 10 participants. <p>Section 75 Training</p> <p>Four sessions focused on Screening Training and was delivered to 43 attendees. Context was provided by raising awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories. Staff were recruited based on their involvement in the assessment of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the Scheme commitments.</p>
5.17	Strategic Leaders and Elected members	2021-24	No/ of sessions delivered; Training evaluation indicators: Quality of training;	Cross-departmental	A number of elected members attended the inaugural Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Seminar curated and delivered by the Tourism Team.

	attend leadership equality training		Increased understanding; Increase in skills levels		
5.18	Review participation in council's new engagement framework to identify participation gaps or areas for improvement	2021	Participation rates by gender, age, disability, race and community background. (Registrations on new platform). / Assess seldom heard or other s.75 participation rates as applicable. / Consultation and engagement gives all people equal opportunity to participate	City & Organisational Strategy	The review of usage was completed. We continue to provide advice and guidance to services and look to continuously improve how we engage and consult but this has become routine work.
5.19	Research best practice and assess council's engagement and participation of young people and develop best practice	2021-24	2021	City & Organisational Strategy	The work with the youth council was put on hold until the new YC was recruited and inducted. The YC has been briefed on the council's YSB platform and an initial conversation held about what the council could do to better reach and engage young people. The YC are to consider how they might want to use this for the YC and for wider young people engagement. As part of the pilot PB process, we deliberately ensured that the voting events were family-friendly, e.g. each event included fun activity games that children, young people and adults would enjoy. We also used fun and visible ways to collect data e.g. a token counter to monitor age ranges and happy / sad face poster with sticky dots to collect satisfaction data.

	guidance for council officers				Unlike many of our formal consultations, the in-person PB process enabled younger people to have a voice. 43% of those submitting a ballot paper were aged 24 and under, with a third (34%) aged 4 – 13 years of age, reflecting the family friendly nature of the events. In contrast, only 9% of voters were aged 24 and under for the online voting.
5.20	Support platforms, networks and forums, such as the Older People's Forum, Disability Advisory Panel and Migrant Workers' Forum, that widen engagement, targeting in particular those most at risk of being "seldom heard"	2021-24	% attendance at each meeting from cross section of organisations/individuals; % of staff/members who understand purpose of these networks and forums and find it useful; Effective feedback mechanism established, and used by members	Cross-departmental	<p>CNS - The Reference Group on Older People is a working group of the People and Communities Committee which meets on a quarterly basis and consists of an elected member from each of the political parties. The group met 3 times on 19th Sep 2023, 12th Dec 2023 and 19th March 2024.</p> <p>P&E - Across P&E Dept, various units attended Council for a including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism Culture Heritage and Arts Unit attended Disability Advisory Panel and D-Deaf and Disabled Advisory Group around our co-creation framework during 2022. - The Lead on Accessible Tourism has liaised with the Older People's Forum and Disability Advisory Panel in the development and delivery of the Accessible Tourism Programme year 22-23. <p>Employability and Skills attend all Migrant forum meetings and have a standing item on the agenda on Employment Academies and economic Development Update to ensure all Migrant forum members are aware of and can refer their participants to upcoming opportunities.</p> <p>Employability and Skills attend all Migrant forum meetings and have a standing item on the agenda on Employment Academies and Economic Development Update to ensure all Migrant forum members are aware of and can refer their participants to upcoming opportunities. This has resulted in 14% of those participating on an Employment Academy coming from an ethnic minority.</p>

					<p>In addition to this, over the last year our E&S Provider Network has grown to 358 are members of this network across 115 organisations who represent a wide range of Section 75 groups: disability organisations, women's centres, youth-based projects, migrants' groups etc.</p> <p>This has resulted in participation rates on Employment Academies of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18% with a disability. • 48% are women. • 15% identifying as LGB. • 12% young people (under 25yrs) • 23% older people (45yrs+) <p>The Tourism Team has established an Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Advisory Group to include Visit Belfast, Tourism Ireland, Tourism NI, BCC and the NI Tourism Alliance.</p>
5.21	Use our engagement platform to encourage and build capacity within communities to engage with council using dialogue and	2021-23		Cross-departmental	<p>COS - During the year we lead on work to develop a co-design framework for the CPP. This included 4 public and cross-sectoral workshops to develop the framework. A further workshop was held in February to present and consider the draft framework. The Framework will be finalised over summer 2024 and presented to CPP in the autumn.</p> <p>We issued 6 newsletters to registered YSB participants and in 2023-24, 10,994 people responded to consultations, up from 8, 846 in 2023-23. This is based on responses to surveys via YSB and does not count those who attended in-person or online events.</p>

	qualitative mechanisms				<p>We completed our first pilot PB - 675 people voted in-person (across 3 areas) and 1822 voted online (1 area). A second PB was run during 2023-24. This time voting was entirely online, with 7,064 people casting votes across the four areas of Belfast.</p> <p>A third PB – the Bank of Ideas – has been agreed and will be launched in April 2024.</p>
5.22	Deliver Equality Scheme Implementation Plan	2021-24	Annual compliance report to EDNS / No. of complaints	Legal & Civic Services	The annual compliance report is combined with the annual report, which is reported to all Chief Officers and the Council. One complaint was received during this reporting year.
5.23	Deliver Rural Needs Action Plan	2021-24	Annual compliance report to EDNS / No. of complaints	Legal & Civic Services	The annual compliance report is combined with the annual report, which is reported to all Chief Officers and the Council. No complaints were received during this reporting year.
5.24	Effective Leadership in S75 demonstrated through the Equality and Diversity Network	2021-24	At least 3 meetings of both Operational and Strategic levels of the Equality and Diversity Network. / Completed audit of S75 processes.	Legal & Civic Services	Significant organisational change has continued to impact the structure of both the Operational and Strategic levels of the Equality and Diversity Network and the number of meetings held. Actions were taken on areas of risk through other mechanisms including the Corporate Management Team. Actions to address outstanding issues will take place in the 24/25 year.
5.25	Explore development of baseline of equality related	2022-24	Information of relevant equality data communicated to all staff available to all staff. /	Cross-departmental	COS - We are developing, through the data team in C&OS, a database of information that will ultimately be available as a cross departmental resource. Linked to the Inclusive Growth programme of work this will include data about

	<p>information for use by staff in all aspects of the council business</p>		<p>Access to equality data sets</p>	<p>Inclusive Growth Cohorts and Equality Data. We are working with the Equality Officer to develop this further.</p> <p>E&S are utilising their work on Digital Badging to embed equality monitoring across Employment Academies and have also utilised Digital Badging to measure participant progress along the employability continuum as well as undertaking participant evaluations of interventions at key stages, including up to 6 months post-programme.</p> <p>The Tourism Team have facilitated 9 new accessible and inclusive training assets that have been developed with 3 new accessible and inclusive training videos.</p>
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Glossary

CNS – City and Neighbourhood Services	JBOs – Jobs & Benefits Offices
P&E – Place and Economy	JU EPIC - Ulster University Economic and Social Partnering for Inclusive Innovation and Collaboration
FR – Finance and Resources	IPPO – International Public Policy Observatory
COS - City and Organisational Strategy	SENI - Social Enterprise Northern Ireland
IG – Inclusive Growth	SEUK - Social Enterprise UK
SP&R – Strategic Policy and Resources Group	ERDF – European Regional Development Fund
SPG – Supplementary Planning Guidance	LMP – Labour Market Partnership
EDNO – Equality and Diversity Network (Operational)	ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages
EDNS – Equality and Diversity Network (Strategic)	IELTS/OET – International English Language Testing System and OET (Occupational English Test)
Corp Comms – Corporate Communications	CPS – Corporate Procurement Service
BRCD – Belfast Region and City Deal	VCSE – Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (Panel)
CRD – City Regeneration and Development Division	SV – Social Value
E&S – Employability and Skills	RED - Reducing Educational Disadvantages (DENI)
EBG – Enterprise and Business Growth	EQIA – Equality Impact Assessment
LDP – Local Development Plan	SA – Sustainability Appraisal
ABV – A Bolder Vision	SEA – Strategic Environmental Assessment
V2V – Vacant to Vibrant	RNIA – Rural Needs Impact Assessment
2RA – 2 Royal Ave	PBMSA – Purpose built Managed Student Accommodation
CHR – Corporate Human Resources	ETP – Eastern Transport Plan

PART B

Updates for actions delivered in 2023-24 on Disability Action Plan 2022-25

Disability Discrimination Order (Northern Ireland) 2006

What is the Disability Action Plan?

This Disability Action Plan runs from 2021 until 2024, it is a corporate level document which reaffirms Belfast City Council's commitment to fulfilling our statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006) which places new duties on public authorities to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

The council's Disability Action Plan sets out how we propose to positively meet these new duties.

Strategic priority	Outcomes	Action Measures	Timescale	Responsibility	Performance Indicators	Update/Progress – 2023-24
Strategic Priority 1 Encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life	Disabled employees are supported to input into action planning	The Disability Staff Network to input into future action planning	Every year	CHR	Disability Staff Network to meet at least 3 times a year Disabled employees input into action planning	2 staff network meetings held
	Improved visibility and support for people with disabilities	Seek approval to appoint a senior Disability Champion	2022	CHR	Senior Disability Champion nominated/ appointed	Six Elected Members nominated as Disability Ambassadors
	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	The Disability Staff Network to provide support on future action planning	Every year	CHR	Disability Staff Network to meet at least 3 times a year	2 staff network meetings held
	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	Identify opportunities to ring-fence certain BCC posts to long-term unemployed, including those with a disability	As and when opportunities arise	CHR	Consider suitability of campaigns for pre-recruitment and training programmes Ring-fence 20% of places available on	Worked with employability partners across the city including disability organisations to deliver pre-employment training academies to support ring fenced opportunities for the long term employed, for General Operative

		and ensure any pre-recruitment and training programme caters for any reasonable adjustments			pre-recruitment and training programmes to people with disabilities	<p>posts and made 5 permanent appointments from this exercise. Of the 5 participants on the programme who declared a disability, 3 applied for the role and 2 were recommended for appointment.</p> <p>Worked with employability partners across the city to deliver an information session as part of the Combined HGV/LGV Driver loader recruitment campaign which offered guidance on completing the recruitment process and gave a practical insight into the role. Mock interviews were also offered as part of this opportunity. 7 people who attended the information session and applied for the posts were offered permanent driving roles.</p> <p>Supported the DfC Job start Programme with eight placements.</p> <p>Ongoing work with employability partners to promote BCC as an</p>
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						inclusive employer and support applicants furthest removed from the labour market.
	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	Review recruitment process in respect of adjustments provided to applicants with autism and learning difficulties	2023	CHR	Types and number of recruitment and selection process changes successfully implemented	Not progressed to date
	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	Consider all requests for reasonable adjustments as part of the selection process	Every year	CHR All Depts	% of reasonable adjustments requested, considered and provided	Fifteen reasonable adjustment requests at interview stage were requested. One request was declined due to commercial sensitivity.
	Disabled people have the opportunity to find out about the range of job opportunities available and are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	Participate in careers/employability activity targeted towards disabled people i.e. careers fairs, mock interviews,	Every year	CHR	Attend 4 events a year. This will be dependent on a full lifting of restrictions	Delivered one employability talk to students from disability organisations. Attended Belfast Special Schools Business Education Partnership careers fair.

		site visits, employability talks				Attended one meeting of the Belfast Special Schools Business Education Partnership meeting. Offered support for mock interviews and employability talks to students- no contact from schools made
	Disabled people have the opportunity to participate in work experience	Facilitate at least 30 work experience placements for people with disabilities Participate in annual job shadowing initiative promoted by NIUSE (internal)	Every year	CHR	30 placement opportunities facilitated, including three via the job shadowing initiative. This will be dependent on a full lifting of restrictions	Placement opportunities were resumed on a gradual basis. One person with a disability was placed
	Participate in Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI) Disability Positive Audit	Every 3-4 years	CHR		Completed the EFDNI Disability Positive Audit- achieved AAA* accreditation status	Not applicable for 2023/2024

	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support staff with disabilities	Provide ongoing advice and support to employees in relation to reasonable adjustment requirements	Every year	CHR All Departments	Monitor number of reasonable adjustments requests and those subsequently provided Create database of types of reasonable adjustments made	Completed
	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support staff with disabilities	Develop a Reasonable Adjustment Passport to record an employees agreed workplace adjustments	2023/24	CHR/ABLE Network	Reasonable Adjustment Passport developed	Being progressed
	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support staff with disabilities	Conduct a voluntary monitoring exercise and investigate how disclosure in declaring a disability can be encouraged	2023	CHR	Publish results from investigation /voluntary monitoring and make recommendations as appropriate.	The planned voluntary monitoring survey has not been progressed yet for operational reasons

	Improved opportunities for disabled people to engage with and influence policy makers	Consult and engage with Disability Advisory Panel in relation to the physical programme/ capital projects of the council	Every year	Property & Projects	Number of changes made to policies/ services as a result of their input	Property Maintenance attended on 27 th September to provide information on the role of the Unit and to discuss a 'wish-list' of maintenance items. Reconnecting Belfast – Waterworks & Alexandra Park presented to Disability Advisory Panel on 13 th September on proposals for this park improvement development.
	Disabled people who are considering starting a business are supported	Work with disability organisations to develop targeted outreach to encourage and support disabled people to consider enterprise and start a business.	Every year	Place and Economy	Number of events, attendees at events and referrals to business support	There were 20 separate events/workshops completed in 23/24 that included significant outreach and engagement with several organisations working with people currently underrepresented in Enterprise including people with disabilities. Work continues to ensure all business start activities are accessible and promotion of activities are visible to all with all events being promoted through organisations that include:

						<ul style="list-style-type: none">• USEL• NI Union of Supported Employment• GEMSNI• The Association for Inclusive Entrepreneurship NI• Disability Action• Mencap• Adapt NI• Cedar Foundation• Autism NI• ArtsEkta• Prince's Trust NI• Orchardville• Centre for Health and Wellbeing• Learning to C.H.A.N.G.E
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Strategic priority	Outcomes	Action Measures	Year	Responsibility	Performance Indicators	Update/Progress for 2023-24
<p>Strategic Priority 2 Promoting positive attitudes towards Disabled People</p>	<p>Improve accessibility within shared spaces programmes</p>	<p>To deliver a physical programme under the PIV Shared Spaces and Services Theme</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p>Property & Projects</p>	<p>Construction of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway is estimated to be completed in 2022/23</p>	<p>Work on Forth Meadow Community Greenway completed in 23/24 except for signage which is underway.</p> <p>Work on Phase 1 of Black Mountain Shared Spaces project has progressed well and will be launched at the end of June 2024. The facility is accessible throughout and includes a lift and a changing places facility. Bi-lingual signage has also been installed. Work on Phase 2 will commence in 2024/25.</p> <p>Work on Shankill Shared Women’s Centre has progressed well. The centre is accessible throughout and has a changing places facility, lift access to all floors, and disabled toilets. Completion and launch of the Centre is expected in June 2024.</p>

	Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people	Organise specialist training/workshop for Project Sponsors/Project Managers/APMs regarding the relevant DDA issues on capital build scheme	2024	Physical Programmes	Deliver one training session and further sessions if required. % of staff who found the training useful	No further update. Options are being researched and will be scheduled on a later date if suitable. Officers are aware of the important relevance of DDA issues on capital build schemes and consideration of accessibility needs is an important aspect of all our projects.
	A physical Customer Hub will be in place to offer 'digital assist' support	Ensure that digital platforms benefit all customers with a disability and disability stakeholders, including through assisting user with webform training and provision of computer facilities for	Every year	Customer Focus	People with a disability will have access to a point –of- service supported on-line resource within the Hub.	Service is provided ongoing at the reception within CWB. Digital assist also offered for telephone contact with staff offer to submit online forms on behalf of customers. E.g. order a bin form.

		public use where possible				
	Public attitudes to disabled people are more positive and negative attitudes are challenged	Facilitate biennial event on a current theme linked to council priorities e.g., International Day for People with Disabilities and Sign Language Week Evaluate feedback and develop an action plan to improve disability initiatives, where appropriate	Every year	CHR EDU	1 event held with external/internal press and communications Attendance by a wide range of relevant organisations and disabled people Feedback used to improve further events and future policies/initiatives	Disability Action in partnership with the council hosted an event in City Hall to mark IDfPwD
	Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in	Consult with internal staff and stakeholders to explore the	2025	Customer Focus	Number of communication tools for people with	Frontline staff training delivered by Signvideo in Q1 2024 to staff in Customer Hub, City Hall and leisure centre staff on sign

	the cultural life of the city on an equal basis	introduction of appropriate communication tools for people with learning disabilities at customer centres e.g. City Hall, Belfast Zoo.			learning disabilities at customer centres. Deliver a JAM Card training programme for front-line staff Become an Autism NI Impact Champion	language interpretation services available at all venues. Review of plans to provide JAM training and Autism NI Impact Champion took place in Q3 2023. Plans to progress in 2024/25.
	Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis	Consult with internal staff and stakeholders to explore the introduction of appropriate communication tools for people with learning disabilities at customer centres e.g. City Hall, Belfast Zoo.	2025	CHR	Number of communication tools for people with learning disabilities at customer centres. Deliver a JAM Card training programme for front-line staff	Jam Card <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have created our own team of JAM Card Champions • 49 Staff across the council have been trained on the Jam card • Our champions will ensure the JAM Card is continually embedded into the organisation by training our staff that have enthusiasm and passion around inclusion. • Staff are empowered to provide continual promotion

					<p>Become an Autism NI Impact Champion</p>	<p>of JAM Card, support colleagues with their understanding and address any barriers for people with disabilities or communication barriers.</p> <p>Autism Impact Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We now have 3 sites working on their Autism Impact Award - Belfast Zoo, Belfast Castle and Malone House which last for 3 years. • Belfast Zoo have achieved the accreditation so a further 12 employees from the 2 new sites attended training • Sites have developed their own action plans to make them more accessible and inclusive for autistic employees and customers. • They receive help and support internally, from each other and Autism NI to develop their plans and make any adjustments
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						<p>needed to build an inclusive and welcoming environment for autistic individuals within BCC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Castle and Malone House continue to work towards completing the programmes
	<p>Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis</p>	<p>Deliver the Inspiring Communities theme which identifies disabled people as a priority area and removing barriers to participation to ensure all sections of the community engage with high quality culture, arts and heritage</p>	<p>Every year</p>	<p>Place and Economy</p>	<p>Deliver small capital enhancement projects that will increase access for disabled people to quality cultural product and experiences</p> <p>Deliver partnership programme with University of Atypical.</p>	<p>Access and Inclusion 23/24 reopened in August 2023 and awarded two projects funding. These include installation of a hardwired induction loop system in a large theatre venue and improving access requirements in a city centre venue.</p> <p>Partnership with University of Atypical produced social narrative videos for audiences accessing the following venues: The Lyric Theatre, Duncairn Arts and Cultural Centre, Belfast Exposed, The Crescent Arts Centre, The Grand Opera House, The Mac and Artsekta. University of</p>

						Atypical delivered training for 20 disability champions.
	Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis	Review the temporary pavement café licensing scheme and associated guidance with a particular focus on its impact on disabled people and considering opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity	2022	Place and Economy	Level of complaints related to access uses at licensed Pavement Cafés	In September 2023, Council agreed that the temporary scheme would expire on 31 December 2023 and a permanent scheme was to be introduced. Following this agreement a public consultation was carried out including various targeted engagement sessions with S75 groups in the last quarter of 2023. The permanent scheme commenced on 1 st January 2024 with a transition period of 4 months. We have heard the issues raised through consultations/engagement from people with disabilities and recognise there is a balance to be reached in terms of meeting the needs of people with varying disabilities. Mitigations will include close monitoring of the implementation of the scheme in terms of impacts, managing the

						numbers of complaints received and ongoing engagement with sector 75 groups. From 1st April 2023 to 31st December 2023, there were 5 complaints received under the temporary scheme around access. Since the introduction of the new permanent scheme on 1st January 2024 to 31st March 2024 (the transition period), there were no complaints in relation to this issue.
	Staff will be engaged, and awareness will be raised about particular disabilities	Include disability related information in staff e-briefings, staff newsletters/ magazines, staff meetings, email, intranet, internet (internal) Develop an annual disability awareness calendar and	Every year Every year	CHR	% of internal communications documents which featured disability related information Calendar in place and awareness delivered	A number of articles relating to health and wellbeing/ disability featured on staff intranet and Staywell

		deliver associated awareness raising/ communication				
	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support people with disabilities, focusing on communication	Provision of Sign Language courses for employees	2023/ 24	CHR	1 BSL course 12 employees (2 from each Department) to be able to communicate in Sign Language	BSL course delivered- 9 participants
	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support people with disabilities, focusing on communication	Provision of specific targeted course to employees	Every year	CHR	Deliver 2 tailor made disability courses to employees	Autism Impact Award training delivered by Autism NI- 12 employees attended Managing and Supporting Colleagues with Mental Health issues - Training delivered by EFDNI - 31 employees attended Managing disability related absence- training delivered by EFDNI - 22 managers attended
	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support people with	Explore opportunities to	2023/24	CHR- L&D/EDO	Agree a plan to deliver awareness raising	Autism Impact Award <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We now have 3 sites working on their Autism

	autism	improve autism awareness and become an autism friendly employer e.g. Autism NI Award; JAM card			(numbers per department, per year etc)	<p>Impact Award - Belfast Zoo, Belfast Castle and Malone House which last for 3 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Zoo already have achieved the accreditation. An additional 12 employees from the 2 new sites attended training • Sites have developed their own action plans to make them more accessible and inclusive for autistic employees and customers. • They receive help and support internally, from each other and Autism NI to develop their plans and make any adjustments needed to build an inclusive and welcoming environment for autistic individuals within BCC • Belfast Castle and Malone House continue to work towards completing the programmes
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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next Steps will be to complete the programmes, celebrate and promote our award-winning approach to inclusion. The next site to go for the award will be City Hall.
	Develop the capacity of staff to ensure awareness of the legal obligations in relation to employment and service delivery	Roll-out Diversity Awareness training programmes for council employees: continue delivery of disability equality awareness training. continue to seek nominations from staff with disabilities to provide specific	Every year 2023	CHR	<p>Deliver 12 disability awareness training sessions to managers and employees</p> <p>Deliver 12 diversity awareness training sessions to managers and employees</p> <p>All new staff to attend training within 6 months of commencing employment</p>	<p>11 disability awareness sessions delivered- 5 for managers (35 attendees) and 6 for employees (78 attendees)</p> <p>10 diversity sessions delivered- 4 for managers (34 attendees) and 5 for employees (58 attendees)</p> <p>17.6% of new staff in 2023/2024 attended diversity awareness training within 6 months of commencing employment</p> <p>21.0% of new staff attended disability awareness training within 6 months of commencing employment</p>

		<p>awareness raising session around disability. continue providing access to diversity e-learning programme. continue delivery of classroom-based diversity training. identify and target awareness raising sessions on specific areas of disability; incorporate equality and</p>			<p>All Tier 3 Managers to attend Equality and Diversity module</p>	
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		diversity module into Tier 3 Training				
	Develop the capacity of Members to ensure awareness of the legal obligations in relation to employment and service delivery	Include disability awareness sessions for Members in the Members Training Programme and include Disability Action Plan in the members Induction Programme Upload the Disability Action Plan to the Members Portal	2023	CHR	Communicate outcomes of research and plan next steps if applicable Disability Action Plan uploaded to the Members Portal	Not progressed
	The capacity of staff/ volunteers will be increased to help them manage their own emotional health and well-being	Provide emotional health and wellbeing awareness training for staff (internal)	Every year	CHR	Deliver at least 4 Positive Mental Health training sessions % of staff who found the training useful	Positive Mental Health- 6 sessions delivered

						96.8% of attendees completed an evaluation form- 100% of them found the course useful
	The capacity of staff/ volunteers will be increased to help them manage their own emotional health and well-being	Provide training for managers in managing stress and mental health issues (internal)	Every year	CHR	Deliver 4 stress awareness training sessions % of staff who found the training useful	Stress awareness for managers- 5 sessions delivered 98.1% of attendees completed an evaluation form- 100% of them found the course useful
	Disabled people are supported to access employability initiatives	Work with disability support organisations to address barriers to access to council interventions and increase engagement by those with disabilities. Provide specific adaptations/support to enable participants to	Every year Every year	Place and Economy	Number of yearly engagements held with disability organisations to promote new employment initiatives, mentoring support and work placements. Number of engagements with disabled people. 6 monthly retrospective measurement of participant numbers on	The E&S Provider Network has grown to 358 are members of this network across 115 organisations who represent a wide range of Section 75 groups including disability organisations. Regular 'newsletter' and workshops are held for the E&S Provider Network on upcoming academies – and provision of 'the

		take part in council employability initiatives			disability focused employment initiatives	<p>year ahead' with key details on employers, jobs, eligibility, pre-requisites, programme content, duration, additional support offered (childcare, sign-language interpreters, travel, subsistence etc.).</p> <p>E&S host on average 10 events and roadshows across the city to engage under-represented groups for Employment Academies and directly link organisations such as, NIUSE, Action Mental Health, JBOs, NOW Group, USEL, Orchardville, Specialisterne etc.</p> <p>We strive to ensure that we offer Employment Academies in jobs and sectors suitable and attractive to the range of those under-represented in the labour market and have found that the newest Employment Academies in Tech and Professional Service (e.g. admin) is naturally attracting</p>
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						<p>average participants with a disability.</p> <p>This has resulted in participation rates on Employment Academies of 18% from those with a disability.</p> <p>Through our membership of RSA Cities of Learning, we have also designed digital badges for all those completing Employment Academies that recognise the skills being developed through a digital award. We also offer this to 25 organisations in the city, including those supporting those with disabilities (such as Triangle, Orchardville and Specialisterne) who have created a suite of digital badges for their participants.</p>
	Sign Language Users are aware of the availability of accessible information and make use of it	Develop an approach to translated Sign Language "welcome"	2023	Communications, Marketing and External Affairs	Installation of new screens in place providing information translated in Sign Language.	Continued promotion via media and social media channels

		information at identified council venues liaising with relevant departments on the installation and procurement of new screens.				
	Sign Language Users are aware of the availability of accessible information and make use of it	To provide a clear description on website and City Matters of what services are available in Sign Languages to members of the public. This includes how to request documents/forms in Sign Language, how to request an interpreter/translator and how to	2022	Communications, Marketing and External Affairs Customer Focus	Accessible material is provided in Sign Language.	Sign Video information is published on contact us web page: https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/contact/main-council-offices#176-5 Accessibility statement is reviewed and updated regularly highlighting online content that is non-compliant with accessibility regulations., https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/accessibility

		call the council using SignVideo Relay Service.				
	Sign Language Users are aware of the availability of accessible information and make use of it	To expand the provision of Sign Language translation on popular pages on the website.	2024	Communications, Marketing and External Affairs	Sign Language translated videos provided on popular pages on the website.	Website lists council venues where SignVideo is available on contact us page: https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/contact/main-council-offices#176-5
	Disabled people are aware of accessible communication within the council	To support departments in the consideration of accessibility to Council documents, services and facilities from a disability perspective	Every year	Communications, Marketing and External Affairs	Several identified BCC online material and electronic documents to be produced in accessible formats	Where PDFs must be published for a statutory reason, or otherwise, we highlight this in the Accessibility Statement. We are not responsible for areas of the site, like YourSay. We continue to raise awareness of accessibility requirements online with internal departments. convert and publish large strategy documents in HTML-pages and make departments aware of the timescales involved.

	Disabled people are aware of the availability of accessible information and make use of it	Increased provision of an accessible City Matters magazine for disabled people	Every year	Communications, Marketing and External Affairs	Audio version of each bi annual City Matters magazine produced	We publish information on our services and facilities that are available to disabled people, https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality-and-diversity/supporting-people-with-disabilities
	Disabled people are aware of the availability of accessible information and make use of it	To promote Disability Communications tools on social media and the council internal and external websites.	Every year	Communications, Marketing and External Affairs	Several disability related articles to be shared on social media and the council's internal and external websites	We provide external links to AccessAble's audits of our venues and facilities. This information lists access and other services that accommodate disabled people.