

Corporate Plan *(DRAFT)*

2025 - 2028



www.belfastcity.gov.uk



Belfast
City Council

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Welcome

“Our residents and our staff are at the heart of everything we do”

Our new Council Corporate Plan is a significant milestone in the development of our organisation. It sets out a clear and positive statement of what we want to achieve for Belfast over the next four years, aligned to our Medium-Term Financial Strategy, it sets out the high-level policy direction for the whole organisation to be delivered through our key strategies, investments, our service delivery plans and the huge contributions that our staff make to the city every day.

The Corporate Plan takes the priorities of the city’s community plan (The Belfast Agenda) and sets out the ways in which the council will deliver these to grow a sustainable, inclusive economy and equitable society.

Belfast is a place where ambition thrives. It’s a place where people get things done, translating aspiration into action. We are proud of what we have achieved over the past two years and are very excited about the future for our council and city as we go forward with confidence to fulfil and advance the objectives of our Corporate Plan 2025–28.

While Belfast has faced unprecedented levels of uncertainty in recent years as a result of global shocks such as COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis, our citizens have demonstrated great resilience and it is vitally important we don’t lose sight of delivering strong local services that contribute to tackling inequalities and improving the quality of life for our residents. As we plan ahead, it is essential that we continue to engage with political leaders and decision-makers at all levels, and with communities across the city to enable us to continue to develop and deliver a successful city that works for everyone.

We are proud to serve Belfast and represent our residents. This is why our new Corporate Plan will put our residents at the heart of everything we do. Our collaborative approach with partners and communities offers a path to redesigning and delivering services that are responsive to local needs and delivering the investment that are essential for continuing success. The new Plan means that citizens, city partners and investors will know what direction the council is heading, what it stands for and provide the opportunity to hold the us to account.

Chair of Strategic Policy & Resources Committee

The city vision

Belfast will be a city re-imagined and resurgent.

A great place to live and work for everyone.

Beautiful, well connected and culturally vibrant, it will be a sustainable city shared and loved by all its citizens, free from the legacy of conflict.

A compassionate city offering opportunities for everyone.

A confident and successful city energising a dynamic and prosperous city region.

A magnet for talent and business and admired around the world.

A city people dream to visit.



Our core values and behaviours

Creativity



We are creative, always seeking new ways of working. Imagining and delivering a bright future for the city. We encourage innovation and new ideas in all that we do; giving positive recognition to those who contribute to our creativity.

Responsibility



We accept responsibility for our actions, individually and collectively. We act responsibly, respecting each other and taking care of Belfast's cultures and the environment.

Integrity



We are open and honest. We adhere to the highest possible ethical standards. We want the people of Belfast to trust us to do the right thing. We trust and support one another.

Problem Solving



We overcome problems through hard work, ingenuity, determination and real resilience. We overcome barriers and resistance and use our creativity to think about challenges in a different way.

Belfast at a glance

Belfast

Northern
Ireland

Scotland

Ireland

Wales

England



348,005 Belfast population



15% of people are aged 65+



72% of school leavers achieve at least 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths



11,400 VAT registered businesses



247,100 jobs in the city (approx)



£28,677 average salary



70,000 students in further/higher education, training or apprenticeships



67% employment rate



96% of school leavers enter education, employment or training



90% of resident properties have broadband coverage; more than double UK average



57% Achieve 2+ A-Levels A* - E



149,200 Households



access to world class airports, harbour and strong public transport infrastructure



800,000 trees with plans to plant 1m more by 2035



33,000 properties at risk of surface water flooding



generates the regions lowest amount of household waste per capital



92% of residents consider the city as welcoming



42% aged 30 years or younger

Our City Priorities

Our Corporate Plan sets out how we will deliver against the strategic priority areas for action (themes) and the significant ambitions set out within the Belfast Agenda for our city and its people. We are committed to a journey of continuous improvement, delivering strong civic leadership and creating a modern and responsive organisation. We want to continue delivering high quality services whilst continuing to invest in local community assets and facilities.

Our focus for the next three years will include:

Theme 1: Our services

Delivering responsive and value for money services.

Theme 2: Our organisation

Ensuring the correct foundations are in place and we continue to be a fit-for-purpose organisation.

Theme 3: Our people and communities

Making life better for all our residents.

Theme 4: Our economy

Creating inclusive, innovative and sustainable growth, learning and opportunity.

Theme 5: Our place

Creating a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city.

Theme 6: Our planet

Creating a sustainable and nature-positive city.

Theme 7: Compassionate city

Making Belfast a welcoming, caring, fair and inclusive city- leaving no one behind.



Our services

Delivering high quality, effective and efficient services that meet your needs is at the heart of everything we do. We will continually strive to invest in improving our services and facilities to ensure they meet the expectations of our services users and improves the lives of the people of Belfast. Below are some of the key services we delivered in 2023-24 and will continue to deliver over the course of this corporate plan. For a full list of all our services, please visit: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/all-services

Our people and communities

- 20 major projects were completed including:
 - The restoration and expansion of Templemore Baths and upgrades at Belfast Zoo
 - Upgrades to Sally Gardens, Areema Drive, Cavehill and Loughside play parks
- Thousands of people were supported through our £1m hardship programme in response to the cost-of-living crisis
- 3,483 housing, 2,336 food safety and 703 health and safety inspections were carried out
- 1,530 daytime and 3,767 nighttime noise requests were responded to
- 1,142 burials and 3,261 cremations were carried out.
- 3,987 births, 3,294 deaths, 1,500 marriages and 20 civil partnerships were registered
- Summer schemes were delivered at 30 community and play centres to 989 children

Our planet

- 200 of our larger vehicles (comprising 90% of our fleet fuel consumption) were switched to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) reducing carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide emissions by 25%
- Nine Faster (50kW+) chargers for electric vehicles were installed at leisure centres
- The proportion of all waste sent to landfill was 29%
- The household reuse, recycling and composting rate was 41%
- 10.5 million bins (including Bryson collections) and 70,000 bulky waste items were collected
- 116 community cleanups involving 1,591 volunteers were facilitated
- 884 fixed penalty notices for littering were issued

12km

walking and cycling path completed as part of **Forth Meadow Community Greenway**

23,700

health and **fitness members** used our gyms, pools, fitness studios and courts

1,000

people (approx) benefited from the **Healthwise programme**

17,941

trees were planted - a total of 110,254 since 2021

58,500

(Approx) Tonnes of waste was recycled, reused and composted

19,000

young people attended, 258 school visits and 447 litter workshops



Our economy

- 688 individuals were engaged in business start-up activities
- 263 business plans produced for start-up businesses
- 57 organisations supported to start a social economy or cooperative business
- 348 existing businesses were supported with business growth activity
- 222 people supported to achieve vocationally-specific, level 3-5 qualifications
- 900 people were supported through Gateway to Choices (G2C) to access training and employment
- 850 people attended our Belfast Jobsfair
- 238 young people benefitted from our GCSE Support Programme
- 1,759 individuals were engaged through enterprise awareness activity
- 816 participants on our Employment and Upskilling Academies

Our place

- 1,300 local planning applications were determined
- 179 dangerous structures dealt with
- Processed 434 entertainment licensing applications and undertook 829 inspections
- 6,143 building regulations applications processed and 15,026 inspections undertaken
- The St Patrick's Day music weekend attracted 30,000 people
- The Maritime Festival attracted 80,000 people
- 213,000 visitors were welcomed to Belfast Zoo
- 310,500 visitors welcomed to City Hall exhibition and guided tours
- Over 234,000 visitors were welcomed and 808 events held at 2 Royal Avenue
- Six new Belfast Bikes stations and six active travel cycle stands were installed
- 112,000 journeys were taken on Belfast Bikes
- New Brown's Bridge on the Lagan towpath was installed
- Funding support for over 100 cultural organisations annually



1,759 individuals were engaged through enterprise awareness activity



351 business plans were developed, supporting the creation of 223 jobs through our support for business start-ups



816 participants on our Employment and Upskilling Academies, with 87% progressing into work or gaining a better job



1,600 new homes were approved



Belfast 2024
an ambitious cultural celebration for our city - was launched



1 million+
Over one million visitors were welcomed to St George's Market

Foundations for Success

Creating a
fit-for-purpose
organisation



Foundations for Success

‘Our ambition is to be recognised for excellence in our role as service provider and as an employer’

We recognise the need to continually develop and improve our internal services to support our key priorities and ambitions set out within this corporate plan. Our foundations reflect our capacity to deliver and achieve successful outcomes both for the organisation and the city and we will work to ensure their strength over the next three years.

People

Our People are at the heart of everything we do. We will prioritise the implementation of our **People Strategy** to provide opportunities for employees to develop and progress within the organisation. We will support departments to develop and implement strategic workforce planning to address resource and skills gaps whilst embedding inclusive growth into our approach to recruitment and apprenticeships. We will also continue to provide capacity building and support for our Elected Members to ensure they are equipped to carry out their roles effectively.

Equality and diversity

Belfast is a vibrant city with a diverse population. We will continue to promote and uphold equality and diversity in how we plan, offer and provide our services. We will deliver our **Race Equality** and **Diversity Action Plans** and make equality central to our policy and decision-making processes.

Digital Technology

Council will continue to explore enhancing our digital services and capability through the implementation of our **Digital Strategy**. This will focus on maximising our technology investments and systems to support service improvement across the council. Our Digital projects will focus on self-service and automation and will aim to improve our ability to create a data-driven culture which fosters the responsible, ethical and innovative use of data to support evidence-based decision-making.

Continuous Improvement

Our Continuous Improvement Programme will continue to deliver a sequenced programme of **improvement projects** that place our citizens at the centre of the services the Council delivers, resolve organisational challenges, rationalise cost, build capacity, agility and capability and enable delivery of our objectives. This work will focus on how we can enhance our services such as Customer Programme, Digital Services, HR, Finance, Procurement

Belfast Agenda (2024-2028)

The Council will work closely with the city partners to help deliver positive outcomes across the city. The **refreshed Belfast Agenda** will underpin the work of Council over the next three years to ensure that we can achieve our ambitions to deliver a city where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy, where everyone experiences better health & wellbeing.

Strategic Partnerships

Partnership working is essential to drive real change in the city – not one organisation can improve the outcomes we want to see for the people of Belfast. To maximise the impact of our partnerships, we will develop a **strategic partnership framework** to target the key partnerships that will benefit the people of Belfast.

Planning & Performance Management

The Council will implement a **planning and performance management framework** that supports the implementation of the corporate, departmental and service plans through regular monitoring, reporting and review.

Customer Focus Programme

Develop and deliver phase 3 of our **Customer Focus Programme** to enhance our services and customer experience.

Celebrating language diversity

Council will implement a **Language Strategy Action Plan** which will promote, protect and enhance the linguistic diversity which exists within and across the city and our workforce.

Asset Management

Our property assets are an important part of supporting and enabling us to transform the way we deliver our services and our regeneration priorities. We will develop an **asset management strategy** which will set the framework for managing our property portfolio effectively.

Finance

The financial sustainability of the organisation is a fundamental priority to ensure that we are effectively resourced to deliver high quality services whilst ensuring value for money is provided to the ratepayer.

We will develop a new **medium term financial plan** 2025-2028 and **efficiency plan** to support the delivery of this corporate plan.

We will also produce a new capital programme financing strategy for 2025-2028 to outline our approach towards financing Council's capital programme.

Funding Framework

A corporate level **funding framework** will be established to enable Council to become more strategic and targeted in relation to securing external investment into city; enhancing services, creating new facilities and assets and transforming local places.

Governance

We will review our **governance arrangements** to ensure effective and efficient political decision-making. We will focus on the implementation of agreed audit actions arising from delivery of the annual Audit Plan and ensure that adequate and effective risk, control and assurance arrangements are in place through our governance framework.

Communications and Engagement

Council recognises the importance of communicating with ratepayers and other audiences via a range of Council channels and platforms to keep people informed of our services and projects. We will continue to innovate in how we **communicate, consult and engage** to ensure our communication tactics reflect changing audience demands and new tools and platforms.

We will also strive to ensure that our staff are continually engaged and informed through the introduction of a modern employee engagement platform that becomes the main internal communications channel for council.

Commercial and Procurement Services

Developing and embedding the corporate approach to **sustainable procurement** activity across the organisation will support our aspirations to ensure that inclusive growth and social value key factors within our procurement policies. We will also refresh our **Commercial Strategy** as part of a medium-term financial plan and efficiency realisation work and develop a procurement approach for resources and fleet.

City innovation

Council will prioritise the development of an **Innovation Strategy and Policy** to help drive service transformation. We will collaborate closely with partners to influence investment in digital infrastructure in the city and support the work of Innovation City Belfast and the Innovation Commissioner. Council will also provide strategic guidance and support on innovative approaches for the city and the Council - integrated with key corporate strategies. Develop a strategic approach to managing and curating city data to support innovative approaches to delivering on the Belfast Agenda.

Our people and communities

Making life better for
all our residents



Our people and communities are at the heart of Belfast, and we will strive to ensure that we can positively impact the quality of life and wellbeing of all our residents. We will work to deliver impactful neighbourhood improvements for residents and continue to address key issues at a local level.

We will also continue to engage with key partners and networks to encourage more participation and engagement in communities, ensuring that local people can have a say in the key challenges within their neighbourhoods.

Community and Neighbourhood Regeneration

Physical Programme

Ongoing delivery of the **£500m programme of physical projects**, creating new community assets and facilities across the city and working in partnership to leverage significant investment from others.

Invest in our neighbourhoods

We will work with our community planning partners to develop a joined-up approach to **neighbourhood regeneration** by developing tailored, place-based interventions addressing specific social economic needs.

We will take a strategic approach towards the development and management of **neighbourhood assets and facilities**, exploring opportunities for community wealth building and asset transfers to support and facilitate community ownership where possible.

Focus will also be given to developing key **arterial routes** that flow through our communities to maximise connectivity.

We will continue to develop ways to strengthen **community participation** through inclusive co-design and ensure residents have a say in issues and interventions in their areas through participatory budgeting.

Enhance our open spaces and physical assets

Enhancement and improvement of our **public spaces and facilities** will be prioritised to support accessibility as well as physical, social and mental wellbeing for all.

This work will include the continued delivery of our annual **Playground Improvement Programme** to ensure that young people can access high quality outdoor play facilities from an early age. We will also deliver animation programmes in our 5 new parks: Pairc Nua Colainn, Ballysillan, Marrowbone, Colin Glen and Pitt Park.

We will continue to deliver on our **Belfast Open Spaces strategy** vision for 2035 through the

implementation of a revised action plan, in line with its strategic principles.

We will work with our partners to deliver the **Greenways and Access to the Hills Programme** including projects at Black Mountain, Colin and Sydenham.

Build capacity within our communities

Our communities are an essential part of the fabric of Belfast. We will provide physical investment, revenue support and funding to **enhance community capacity**. We will continue to build on our engagement framework to ensure that the support that we offer meets local needs and addresses key challenges to help deliver long lasting and sustainable impact.

We will also continue to be **responsive** in times of need and develop interventions to support those most affected by emerging or ongoing social issues such as the cost-of-living crisis and support our local VCSE organisations through Council managed grant programmes.

Health Inequalities

Support the delivery of integrated health services

We will continue to work in partnership with key agencies to deliver a local area approach to **reduce health inequalities** and address key health related challenges across Belfast. Improved coordination and integration of established systems and processes can help to deliver a 'One Belfast Vulnerability Model' to support interventions such as **Complex Lives** which specifically targets vulnerable people identified as being impacted by chronic homelessness.

Increase opportunities for people to be physically active

Evidence demonstrates that leading an active life with a healthy lifestyle brings multiple health benefits. We want to increase the number of people in Belfast that lead active, healthy lifestyles throughout the course of their lives.

Our approach will be underpinned by our new **Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy** which will bring together partners across the community, voluntary and statutory sectors with residents, clubs, schools, leisure providers and others to develop a locally led approach to improving participating in physical activity, recreation and sport.

We will also continue to invest in our leisure provision through our **Leisure Transformation Programme** to ensure that our leisure centres and programmes deliver quality services that meets the needs of our communities.

We will deliver our Parks Improvement Programme and continue to deliver our pitch surface replacement programme. This will ensure our facilities are kept to a high standard, enhancing the playing experience and delivering health benefits.

Our economy

Creating inclusive,
innovative and
sustainable growth,
learning and opportunity



Council is committed to ensuring that Belfast has a thriving and prosperous economy that is a hub for businesses and provides diverse employment opportunities for our population. Belfast and the Belfast City Region are central to driving productivity, innovation and growth in the Northern Ireland economy contributing more than two-thirds (£27.4bn, 2019) of Northern Ireland's economic output (Gross Value Added) and home to 40% of the total Northern Ireland business base, with an employment share of 63% of the Northern Ireland total.

Belfast region city deal

The highly ambitious Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) represents a new way of working between central and local government and regional partners. The deal secured a bespoke package of investment from central government and the BRCD partners of more than £850 million to support the delivery of a shared vision to deliver “inclusive economic growth that delivers more and better jobs, a positive impact on the most deprived communities and a balanced spread of benefits across the region”.

Over the next three years we will work to implement the first £200m of BRCD funded projects emerging in the city (Studio Ulster, Digital Twin, Belfast Rapid Transit 2, Lagan Pedestrian Bridge, Momentum One Zero, I-REACH, Augment the City and Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology).

We will also continue to work closely with partners to support the delivery of other programmes such as the NI wide Digital Transformation Flexible Fund.

Productivity and innovation

We will work with our partners, government, and key agencies to create more and better jobs that are sustainable and rewarding. We will focus on delivering the benefits of the **Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD)**, supporting innovation and application of advanced technologies that will drive the economy of the future in digital and creative industries, financial services and FinTech; life and health sciences and MedTech; and advanced manufacturing, engineering and green economy.

This will include delivery of the first phase of the £55 million BRCD **Innovation Challenge Fund** which aims to address the emerging needs and unique characteristics of the region and is designed to stimulate collaborative innovation and investment. The fund will stimulate innovation to address the region's 'Grand Challenges' of (i) artificial intelligence and data, (ii) health and wellbeing and (iii) sustainability and resilience.

We will promote the critical role of Belfast and the Belfast Region in driving productivity and

delivering inclusive growth and work collaboratively with public and private sector partners to support and encourage continuing international, business and government investment in the Region.

Inclusive, sustainable growth and opportunity

We will work with partners to deliver high quality enterprise support covering all stages of the business growth lifecycle. The **Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed)** – led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the 11 local authorities – will offer an enhanced menu of flexible support to anyone thinking about starting or growing a business. There will be specific support for key target groups including female entrepreneurs and those with a disability. It will also provide targeted support for social enterprises and cooperatives.

We will continue to develop our **City Markets**, in recognition of the key role that they play in enhancing the economic offering, vibrancy and employment opportunities in the city.

Economic activity and employment rates in parts of Belfast are amongst the lowest in Northern Ireland. Employment rates and income levels also vary greatly across the city, and this can create barriers and exacerbate social exclusion challenges. We will therefore prioritise creating inclusive pathways to good employment opportunities through the delivery of **Belfast Employment Academies** which are short, intensive employment interventions designed to better equip residents to find good jobs.

Our work will include the ongoing collaboration with a wide range of partners through the **Belfast Labour Market Partnership (LMP)** which is focused on improving Belfast's employability outcomes and labour market conditions.

The labour Market Partnership (LMP) will be a key enabler to build sector specific upskilling pathways, connecting residents with new or better employment opportunities, particular in our key growth sectors and areas of opportunity. We will also target support for disadvantaged groups and places to ensure inclusivity and address existing imbalances. This work will require close collaboration with a wider range of community-based partners whose outreach and engagement work is essential in enabling us to attract participation from across key target groups. We will work with partners to build

consensus around how we can make most effective use of resources to increase labour market participation, including consideration of any future Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) interventions.

Council will continue to work with partners to optimise links between the business community and education/ training providers to enable young people and adults to develop the skills and qualifications they need to progress in the workforce, at whatever stage of their career they are in. Skills development is central to creating the conditions for sustained innovation, excellence, and growth for our Belfast businesses.

We will also support the delivery of the **Belfast Business Promise** which represents a new accreditation for employers who are working together to make Belfast a city that provides good jobs, better wages for employees providing good jobs, whilst also supporting a sustainable local economy and building a healthier city for everyone. It will create a community of organisations committed to improving how they do business together.

Council will continue to support and strive for the creation of a **sustainable circular economy** to ensure that materials aren't wasted and nature is regenerated. We will also work with

partners to help develop an ecosystem that supports and encourages innovation and collaboration in green tech amongst existing companies and start-ups and delivers the skills so essential to converting the net-zero challenge into an economic opportunity.



Our place

Creating a liveable and
connected, vibrant and
competitive city



A key ambition of the Belfast Agenda is to attract a further 66,000 residents to the city by 2035 and work in partnership with key agencies to ensure that all residents have access to the high-quality, sustainable homes they deserve. In order to achieve this, Council has a key role to play in terms of supporting housing led regeneration across the city.

We also want to ensure quality placemaking and that Belfast is a liveable city in which local people are connected to their community and both residents and visitors are able to connect with jobs, services and amenities in safe, active, accessible, and sustainable ways in the long-term.

Enhancing our city centre is also crucial to ensure that Belfast is a thriving and inclusive destination for residents and visitors alike. We will continue to strengthen and build on our sense of place by accelerating major regeneration schemes. These will seek to deliver inclusive economic, social and environmental benefits, whilst protecting and enhancing access to our built and natural heritage.

Quality Place-Making and Housing Led Regeneration

While the Council does not have direct responsibility for building new homes, it does have a range of powers relating that can support quality place-making and contribute to housing quality and housing development. These include the implementation of our Local Development Plan, HMO licensing, building control, planning control, non-statutory regeneration activities, economic development, promoting the city to investors and using our own land for household development and regeneration.

Local Development Plan

The Belfast **Local Development Plan** (LDP) 2035 Plan Strategy was adopted in 2023 and sets a vision for how Belfast should look in the future. The LDP will guide investment decisions in the city, supporting the ambitions of the city for inclusive, sustainable growth and development.

Over the next three years, the Council will produce the Local Policies Plan (LPP) which will contain local policies and site-specific proposals in relation to the development and use of land. The Plan will set out designations and land use zonings required to deliver the Council's vision, objectives and strategic policies.

To support the Local Development Plan and the strategic growth of the city, we will implement our **planning improvement programme** and streamline our planning application processes to provide a more efficient, effective and customer-focused service.

Support and work with partners to address housing challenges

Council will continue to work with partners such as Northern Ireland Housing Executive to support

increased provision of social homes through the Social Housing Development Programme.

We will procure and engage with our long-term private sector partner (PSP) to act as a **master developer to deliver residential-led, mixed-use developments** in support of our city's growth targets.

Working with partners we will seek to **Accelerate City Centre Living** through the transformation of derelict and underutilised city centre buildings into mixed-use and residential tenures.

Strategic Site Assessments

A key priority for Council will be to deliver Phase Two of our **Strategic Site Assessments** to bring forward housing-led regeneration schemes

Active and Sustainable Travel

Connectivity is vital for a city to be successful. Whilst Belfast is the transport and logistical hub for the entire region, it must also meet the needs of our communities, ensuring they have access to jobs and to each other. Improving connectivity within the city centre as well as between the city centre and neighbourhoods is critical to our future success.

We will work to deliver and implement an overarching programme on connectivity, including **access, active and sustainable travel and connectivity** across the city.

Strategic Place Making Partnerships

The **Eastern Transport Plan** (ETP) is a strategic framework for bringing forward climate commitments, supporting the integration of a prioritised and modernised public transport system and a network of walking and cycling routes across a number of Council areas including Belfast. The Council will work closely with the Department for Infrastructure to ensure that the ETP aligns with and supports our ambitions for a connected and sustainable city.

Future City Centre and Wider City Regeneration and Investment

We will lead on the delivery of a range of strategic regeneration and investment schemes across Belfast to ensure that the potential of the wider city is maximized in a way that benefits all citizens and results in improved outcomes for communities.

This will include the delivery of our **£10 million Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund** that will support local VCSE groups across the city to deliver capital projects in their communities which help develop neighbourhood tourism, improve environmental sustainability, and support the city's social economy.

We will also work to secure funding to sustain the long-term use of **2 Royal Avenue** in line with the acquisition objectives and recommendations set out in the operator feasibility report.

Future City Centre Programme

Our **Future City Centre Programme** seeks to address challenges facing the city centre. These include the emerging retail, tourism and hospitality landscape and the need to reimagine and diversify to future-proof the city centre. We will reimagine the city centre, promoting mixed uses, open and green spaces and community infrastructure.

A Bolder Vision

An ambitious blueprint developed jointly by Council, Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure to explore a shared approach to creating a more attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant city centre. The vision is built on the principles of promoting wellbeing for all; prioritising walking, cycling and public transport; creating lively, safe and green streets; and removing barriers to movement between the city centre and surrounding communities.

We will prioritise the development of **A Bolder Vision Delivery Plan** that will identify a range of outline pilot projects and interventions that will be most beneficial for city centre.

Cultural and Tourism Development

We will continue to work with our partners to deliver on our ambitions to grow our tourism industry, offer an improved visitor experience, strengthen our position in national and international tourism markets while developing sustainably to attract more people to the city and to encourage them to stay longer and spend more.

Neighbourhood tourism

We will prioritise growing our tourism product by investing in **neighbourhood tourism projects** and supporting the incredible range of community and cultural festivals and events that take place across the city. We will also continue to invest in an annual major events programme and seek to attract large scale events such as the Fleadh Cheoil, with all the benefits that these bring both to our economy and the liveability of the city.

Cultural Strategy and Tourism Plan

Council will drive delivery on our **Cultural Strategy and 10-year Tourism Plan** 'Make Yourself At Home' to create a culturally vibrant city which embraces and embeds culture, arts, events and festivals at its heart.

We will build on the legacy of **Belfast2024**, a cultural celebration for our city that delivered a wide-ranging programme of creative local projects and events throughout 2024. We will embrace our new status as a UNESCO City of Music and deliver the Multi-Annual Cultural and Arts Support Programme.

This will support local VCSE groups across the city to deliver capital projects in communities which help develop neighbourhood tourism, improve environmental sustainability and support the city's social economy.

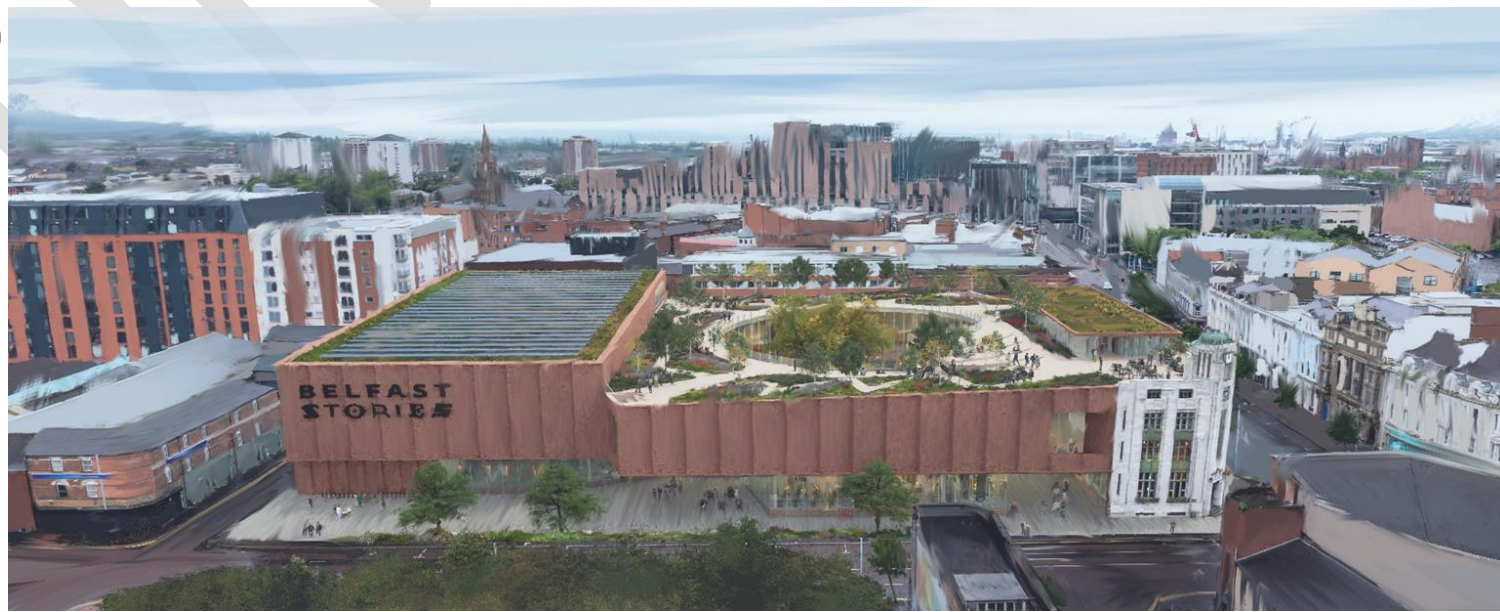
Belfast Stories

Belfast Stories is a key project within the Belfast Regional City Deal (BRCD). Due to open in 2030, it will be located in the historic Bank of Ireland building and the surrounding 5,000 m2 site at the top of Royal Avenue. The key strategic objectives of Belfast Stories are to:

- Grow Belfast's economy through tourism led regeneration and support for screen-based creative industries.
- Create and sustain a diversified, vibrant city centre where people want to live and work, visit, and invest.
- Support a greater sense of connection with Belfast.

Belfast Stories brings together three threads as one:

- A public space – a place for everyone to gather, helping us to express our unique identities and share them with others.
- A visitor attraction which clearly communicates the spirit of the city – its past, its present and its future.
- A creative hub where writers, musicians, artists and film makers can meet to create and collaborate.



Our planet

Creating a sustainable,
nature-positive city



We are committed to tackling climate change and biodiversity loss head on to ensure that Belfast can be a place where people and nature thrive together, a place where we can reduce waste and single-use plastics, harness green energy and plant more trees.

To deliver a sustainable city we will work with our residents and industries to reduce their carbon footprints. Belfast has a great opportunity to lead the way in providing global green solutions by leveraging our unique market access and international networks to become a hub for low carbon design and manufacturing. We will therefore support our industries to thrive on all the opportunities in the green economy whilst creating a much cleaner environment.

Re-naturing the city and increasing resilience to climate change

We will support and shape a city that is learning and building on its existing strengths to become a green, transformed, and healthy city, resilient to the effects of climate change, attractive for green investment and provides a high quality of urban life for its citizens.

We will value our natural ecosystems and nurture and expand these further in areas most needed such as our inner city, to protect and support urban communities to thrive.

We will deliver our **Tree Strategy** to help manage and improve the tree-scape in the city, to provide a resilient and diverse urban forest for future generations.

The strategy will have a 10-year lifespan and sets out a commitment to delivering key priorities and actions over the next ten years.

Creating a sustainable circular economy

There is a real opportunity for Belfast to become a leading-edge city in driving forward a **sustainable circular economy** that minimises waste and promotes the sustainable use of natural resources.

This offers a potential route to **reducing waste**, reversing environmental harm and increasing the sustainability of products and supply chains.

Over the next three years, we will transform our throwaway economy into one where waste is reduced, resources are circulated and nature is regenerated. Leaving no-one behind, we will

maximise the social opportunities of the transition and reduce the risks so that everyone benefits.

We will deliver local solutions to sustainable, healthy, and affordable food for our citizens. bring together the right people to tackle the barriers that are preventing the uptake of energy efficiency measures in buildings across the city and develop a heat network project for the city centre to create jobs and prosperity. In particular we will:

- Promote sustainable circular economy approaches.
- Promote a Just Transition to Net Zero in Belfast.
- Increase the use of Electric Vehicles in Belfast and improve access to charge points.
- Reduce energy consumption (and bills) of housing and public and commercial buildings.
- Decarbonise the heat supply to buildings in the city.

Promote sustainable circular economy approaches

We will support the development of circular economy systems where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated. We will work to **reduce the carbon / environmental impact of municipal waste** across Belfast and working in partnership with others to ensure items are reused, recycled or recovered.

We will deliver the Shared Island funded **Circular Economy Feasibility and Business Case** in partnership with Dublin City Council and the **Horizon Europe funded UP2030 project** which aims to embed net zero in urban planning.

Sustainable Food

Council is supportive of the need to produce, process, distribute and dispose of good food that can contribute to thriving local economies and sustainable livelihoods, protect the diversity of both plants and animals and the welfare of farmed and wild species whilst avoiding damaging or wasting natural resources or contributing to climate change.

We will therefore seek re-accreditation as a Sustainable Food City and prioritise the development of a **Belfast Sustainable Food Strategy**. We will also coordinate the Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership and create and deliver the Belfast Sustainable Food Place whilst supporting community-based approaches to sustainable food in Belfast.

Innovating to Net Zero

Climate Action Plan

The Council will deliver its Climate Action Plan which sets out a roadmap to achieve its net zero ambitions. The plan features a range of actions across five key themes –Tools for Transition, Energy and Buildings, Transport, Waste Management and Adaptation.

Enable the city to decarbonise at scale

Over the next three years, we will deliver on our ambition and roadmap to become a 'Carbon-Neutral City' by working with city partners to deliver the **Belfast Local Area Energy Plan** and develop a portfolio of net zero projects to achieve the city's emission reduction targets and support an inclusive transition to net zero.

We will lever existing and planned assets and investment through place-based interventions to become an exemplar of a low carbon economy creating opportunities for training, employment and green growth. The aim is to expand existing clusters of net zero technology companies which exist in the city to create a burgeoning **GreenTech sector** which drives growth across NI and helps realise the objectives of the Green Growth Strategy.

We will continue to deliver our **Fleet Strategy** gradually replacing existing old fleet with new low emission vehicles; investing in necessary infrastructure on our assets to support the transition for instance upgrading the electrical infrastructure at Duncrue to support EV vehicles.

Investment in the physical and digital infrastructure to develop a GreenTech ecosystem will encourage innovation and collaboration amongst existing companies and start-ups to draw in more investment and to unlock new high-growth technology for domestic use and export. In particular we will:

- Support local energy projects.
- Create an exemplar net zero park to design and demonstrate green technology.
- Develop a stable supply of green energy to the Net Zero Park and surrounding lands to support the industrial cluster.
- Accelerate the transition to low carbon manufacturing.
- Support Green Multi-Modal Mobility.

Compassionate city

Making Belfast a
welcoming, caring,
fair and inclusive city -
Leaving no one behind



As a compassionate city, we recognise the complexity and diversity of our people, and we are determined to make life better for everyone. To do this it will be vital to build on the innovation, expertise and assets which already exists within our communities. We will continue to develop pathways connecting and engaging everyone, particularly those harder to reach. Working collaboratively, through specific actions and through our overall approach to programmes and projects we are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind.

Inclusive growth and anti-poverty

Promoting and embedding Inclusive Growth

Council is committed to inclusive growth and ensuring the success of the city reaches every citizen. Our aim is to support and connect all residents with economic growth to create vibrant communities where everyone has the opportunity and aspiration to succeed. We recognise that the council must take the lead and demonstrate how we use our range of powers to create an inclusive city. In our role as a civic leader, this includes signing up to the Belfast Business Promise (our inclusive growth city charter) and integrating inclusive growth into Council's decision-making processes so that we can support social mobility and create more inclusive labour markets and places across the city. We will continue to work with city partners, particularly key anchor institutions, to respond to the imperative to develop a more inclusive economy.

Addressing vulnerabilities and responding to societal challenges

We will continue to work with partners and stakeholders to help address vulnerabilities and key issues that impact on individuals and communities across the city. This will include the continued implementation of 'Complex Lives' which is a whole-system approach focused on people experiencing chronic homelessness. The Complex Lives initiative seeks to improve collaborative working between statutory bodies and voluntary sector organisations, so as to provide the right support to people who need it at the right time and in the right place.

We will also continue to respond to societal pressures such as the cost-of-living crisis to provide much needed support for children and young people, families and individuals across the city. This will include developing targeted and joined up approaches to address food, fuel and transport poverty and their impact on low-income households and adopting a responsive approach to other pressures that may emerge over the next four-year period.

Good relations and shared future

Good Relations Action Plan

Over the past five years, the number of displaced people has increased globally, and whilst not large, the asylum seeking and refugee population is growing in Northern Ireland, with the majority accommodated in the greater Belfast area. Refugees and asylum seekers represent some of the most vulnerable people in our society and they often find themselves settling in areas with the highest levels of multiple deprivation, causing further stress to communities who themselves are still recovering from division and conflict.

We will therefore prioritise **supporting new communities** to ensure that Belfast is a diverse and vibrant city where all people can live in peace, as equals. This work will include the implementation of our Good Relations Action Plan and mainstreaming of Good Relations into Council work, to promote positive cultural change. We will also develop an inclusive Belfast Intervention Plan to address inequalities and support the inclusion and integration of all including ethnic minorities and deliver racial equality, shared education and cultural inclusion programmes and activities.

We will work across government and with communities to deliver programmes such as the Urban Villages initiative which helps transform local places, create thriving spaces and deliver good relations outcomes.

PeacePlus

PEACEPLUS is a European Union funding programme designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, building upon the work of the PEACE and INTERREG programmes.

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) has provisionally allocated up to €17,433,277 to us for a Local Community Action Plan to fund community activities and infrastructure projects that help build peace and reconciliation in Belfast. We have worked with communities and partners across the city to further develop the plan for Belfast which will deliver projects on the following three themes: local community regeneration and transformation; thriving and peaceful communities and; celebrating cultures and diversity.

We will prioritise the implementation of the Local Community Action Plan throughout the next four-year period to deliver real and lasting peace and reconciliation across Belfast.

We will continue to progress funding bids to secure significant investment in enhancing existing assets across the city including Waterworks Park and Alexandra Park.

Community Safety

We will continue to work to ensure that Belfast is a safe city that encourages cooperation with and inspires confidence in the justice system and the police. We will therefore continue to engage in our multi-agency Police and Community Safety Partnerships and implement a new Police and Community Safety Action Plan for the city.

Older people

Belfast Age Friendly Plan

We want Belfast to be a great place to grow older. To do this, we need to plan for an increasing aging population in a way that ensures our older people can continue to live happier, healthier and more connected lives. We will therefore prioritise delivering on the 2022-2026 Belfast Age Friendly Plan which sets out a range of important priorities and actions for Council and partner organisations to implement to support the health and wellbeing of our older people.

Children and young people

We want all our children and young people to have the best start in life and will work closely with key agencies and partners to ensure that early intervention and early years support is available for all across Belfast.

Council will also work to ensure that we can empower our children and young people to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives to achieve a sustainable, inclusive and child-friendly place to live. We will facilitate, an active and engaged Belfast City Youth Council who work

Older people are at the heart of what we do. We could not fulfil our vision of Belfast being a city where older people live life to the full without the input, support and challenge provided by Greater Belfast Seniors Forum, the six local older people's forums and the many groups they represent.

We want to ensure that the needs of older people are taken into account during service development and to help maximise the benefits of older people's experience.

with relevant fora and elected members to ensure that the needs of children and young people are reflected within our Belfast Agenda and council priorities.

We will also prioritise the development of a three-year action plan for play development across the city to ensure children and young people have access to high quality play opportunities from an early age.

We know that the pandemic has provided a number of key challenges, particularly for older people, however city-wide and community-based collaboration thrived during Covid-19. Older people were at the heart of this collaboration, both as volunteers and recipients of support. We will build on this partnership approach in tackling the challenges that older people have said are important to them.





Financing the plan

Our corporate plan is based on a planned investment of £251.54 million for 2024-25. This includes a projection of £ 199.53 million from the district rate, £24.53 million from fees and charges, £13.98 from grant funding and £13.50 million from other.

Where we get our money from

We get our money from these key areas:



District rate (from householders and businesses)	£199.53m
Fees and charges (Money received for services like waste disposal and building control)	£24.53m
Grants (For example from Europe and central government)	£13.98m
Other (For example rents and licences)	£13.50m

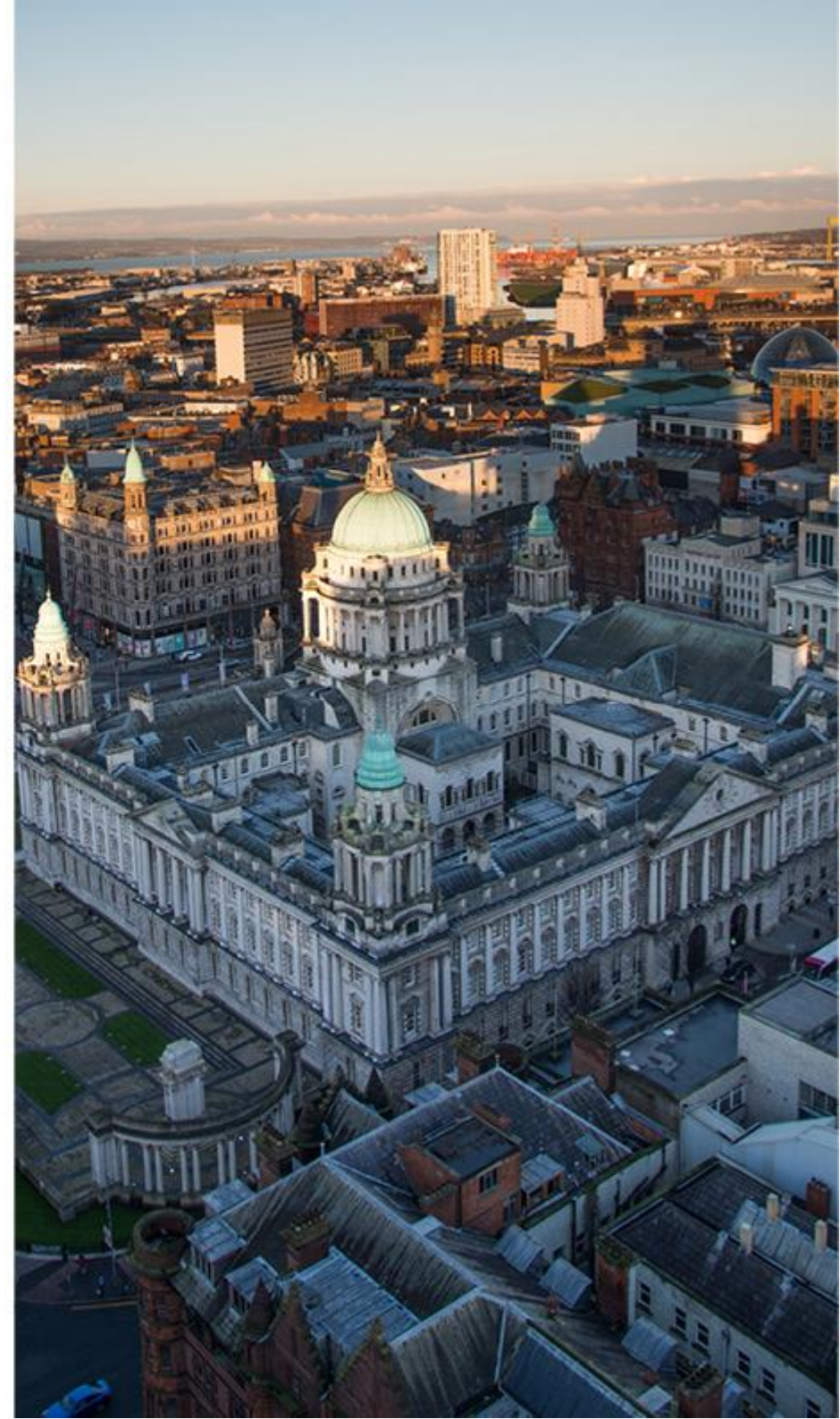
Total planned income for 2024-25
£251.54m

Where we plan to spend our money

Where we plan to spend our money£ m

Planning Committee	£8.94m
Strategic Policy & Resources Committee	70.86m
People & Communities Committee	120.61m
City Growth & Regeneration Committee	£28.85m
Capital financing	£22.27 m

Total planned expenditure for 2024-25
£251.54m



Measuring and Reviewing our Progress

We will implement a performance and improvement framework to enable council to monitor the delivery of our identified actions and support the achievement of our agreed performance targets. The council's monitoring and reporting structures have been designed to ensure proper oversight and accountability arrangements are in place, and to provide our Elected Members and management teams with assurances that our governance arrangements are robust. This helps to ensure transparency, accountability and drive continuous improvement.

To support the ambitions of our corporate plan, an accompanying annual Corporate Delivery and Improvement Plan will be developed that details what will be delivered against each of our priorities and associated performance indicators and targets. Reporting arrangements for the Annual Corporate Delivery and Improvement Plan are detailed below:

Annual Corporate Delivery and Improvement Plan	
Reports to	Frequency
Corporate Management Team Oversight Board	Quarterly
Standing Committees	Bi-annually
Full Council	Bi-annually

Updates are provided to the relevant Standing Committees and full Council by relevant Chief Officers at mid-year and end of year to facilitate appropriate scrutiny, challenge and evaluation.

As well as reporting against the corporate plan, we are also required to publish an annual self-assessment of our Performance Improvement Plan and statutory targets on the Council's website by 30 September each year. This is supported by quarterly updates to CMT, the council's Audit and Assurance Board and Audit and Risk Panel as well as the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee to track progress regularly throughout the year.

Our Elected members

In May 2023, a new council was elected. Belfast City Council has 60 democratically elected councillors, representing ten District Electoral Areas, as indicated in the map. Our councillors play a key role in representing the interests of their constituents and ensuring that the views of their electoral areas and the entire population of Belfast are reflected in the decisions that the council takes.



Belfast
City Council

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/your-council

Balmoral (Belvoir, Finaghy, Malone, Musgrave and Upper Malone)



Councillor
Natasha Brennan
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Tara Brooks
Alliance



Councillor
Sarah Bunting
DUP



Councillor
Dónal Lyons
SDLP



(Lord Mayor) Councillor
Micky Murray
Alliance

Black Mountain (Andersonstown, Ballymurphy, Beechmount, Colin Glen, Falls Park, Shaw's Road and Turf Lodge)



Councillor
Ciaran Beattie
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Arder Carson
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Paul Doherty
SDLP



Councillor
Micheal Donnelly
Sinn Féin



Councillor Róis-
Maire Donnelly
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Áine McCabe
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Ronan McLaughlin
Sinn Féin

Botanic (Blackstaff, Central, Ormeau, Stranmillis and Windsor)



Councillor
Áine Groogan
Green Party



Councillor
Tracy Kelly
DUP



Councillor Emmet
McDonough-Brown
Alliance



Councillor
Conor McKay
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Gary McKeown
SDLP

Castle (Belvue, Cavehill, Chichester Park, Duncairn, Fortwilliam and Innisfayle)



Councillor
Brónach Anglin
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Fred Cobain
DUP



Councillor
Conor Maskey
Sinn Féin



Alderman Dean A
McCullough
DUP



Councillor
Sam Nelson
Alliance



Councillor
Carl Whyte
SDLP

Collin (Dunmurry, Ladybrook, Lagmore, Poleglass, Stewartstown and Twinbrook)



Councillor Michael Collins
People Before Profit
Alliance



Councillor
Joe Duffy
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Matt Garrett
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Caoimhín McCann
Sinn Féin



Councillor Clíodhna
Nic Bhranair
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Séanna Walsh
Sinn Féin

District Electoral Areas



Court (Ballygomartin, Clonard, Falls, Forth River, Shankill and Woodvale)



Councillor
Christina Black
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Claire Canavan
Sinn Féin



Alderman
Frank McCoubrey
DUP



Councillor
Ron McDowell
TUV



Councillor
Ian McLaughlin
DUP



Councillor
Nicola Verner
DUP

Lisnasharragh (Cregagh, Hillfoot, Merok, Orangefield, Ravenhill and Rosetta)



Councillor
Séamas de Faoite
SDLP



Councillor
Davy Douglas
DUP



Councillor
Bradley Ferguson
DUP



Councillor
Eric Hanvey
Alliance



Councillor
Michael Long
Alliance



Councillor
Brian Smyth
Green Party

Oldpark (Ardoyne, Ballysillan, Cliftonville, Ligoniel, New Lodge and Water Works)



Councillor
Nichola Bradley
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Jordan Doran
DUP



Councillor
JJ Magee
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Paul McCusker
Independent



Councillor
Ryan Murphy
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Tomás Ó Néill
Sinn Féin

Ormiston (Belmont, Garnerville, Gilnahirk, Knock, Sandown, Shandon, and Stormont)



Councillor Hedley
Abernethy
Alliance



Councillor
Christine Bower
Alliance



Councillor
Anthony Flynn
Green Party



Alderman
James Lawlor
DUP



Councillor
Jenna Maghie
Alliance



(Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Andrew
McCormick DUP



Alderman Jim
Rodgers OBE
UUP

Titanic (Ballymacarrett, Beersbridge, Bloomfield, Connswater, Sydenham and Woodstock)



Councillor
David Bell
Alliance



Councillor
Ruth Brooks
DUP



Alderman
Sonia Copeland
UUP



Councillor
Pádraig Donnelly
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Sammy Douglas
DUP



Councillor
Fiona McAteer
Alliance

Strategy, Programmes
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City Hall

Belfast

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www.belfastcity.gov.uk/corporateplan

Access to information

As part of our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations, we want to ensure that everyone is able to access the documents we produce. This document is available in alternative formats such as Braille, easy-read, audio, large print and also in other languages on request by contacting: 028 9027 0234.



Belfast
City Council