Public Document Pack

Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS



9th November 2021

MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will be a hybrid meeting (both remote and in person) in the Council Chamber on Tuesday, 9th November, 2021 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Minutes
- (c) Declarations of Interest
- (d) Schedule of Meetings 2022 (Pages 1 4)
- (e) Item referred back from Council Erection of Dual Language Street Sign at Clifton Street (Pages 5 8)

2. Restricted

- (a) Request for the use of Falls Park for Féile An Phobail Winter Festival (Pages 9 14)
- (b) DfC Community Recovery Funding Update (Pages 15 28)

3. Committee/Strategic Issues

- (a) Update on Community Planning and work of Living Here Board (Pages 29 136)
- (b) Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021 2026 (Pages 137 254)
- (c) Air Quality Monitoring update on Belfast sites (Pages 255 268)
- (d) Food Service Delivery Plan 2021-2022 (Pages 269 298)
- (e) Community Development and Capacity Building Support (Pages 299 304)

4. Physical Programme and Asset Management

- (a) Coláiste Feirste: Review of Operation of Community Access to Sports Facilities (Pages 305 308)
- (b) Preferential Use of Blanchflower (Pages 309 312)
- (c) Community Asset Management Pilots (Pages 313 318)

5. Finance, Procurement and Performance

- (a) Belfast Healthy Cities Value for Money Review (Pages 319 328)
- (b) Update on Review of Partnerships Evaluation (Pages 329 334)

6. **Operational Issues**

- (a) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) BCC and Cavehill Mountainbikers Club (Pages 335 372)
- (b) Proposal for naming new streets and the continuation of existing streets (Pages 373 376)
- (c) Winter Preparedness Update (Pages 377 386)
- (d) Communities Committee NIA Private Tenancies Bill (Pages 387 432)
- (e) ITV 1 Million Minutes Bench at C.S. Lewis Square (Pages 433 434)
- (f) Permission for drone filming at Cavehill (Pages 435 436)



Agenda Item 1d



Subject:

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: 9th November, 2021						
Report	Reporting Officer: Sara Steele, Democratic Services Officer					
Contact Officer: Sara Steele, Democratic Services Officer						
		<u> </u>				
Restric	cted Reports					
Is this report restricted?			Yes		No	X
If	f Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?				
	After Committe	ee Decision				
	After Council D	Decision				
	Some time in t	he future				
	Never					
0.11.1						
Call-in						
Is the d	decision eligible for	Call-in?	Yes	X	No	
1.0	Purpose of Report	t or Summary of main Issues				
		mmittee of the dates and times of the m mittee between January and December, 202	•	of the	People	e and
2.0	Recommendation	s				
	The Committee is Communities Communities	requested to approve the schedule of me mittee as outlined.	eetings fo	or the	People	e and
3.0	Main report					
	Key Issues					

Schedule of Meetings 2022

- 3.1 The monthly meeting of the People and Communities Committee is normally held at 5.15 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. 3.2 However, due to holiday periods and the timing of the monthly Council meetings and, in order to assist with the decision-making process, it has been necessary on occasions to move some of the meetings to later in the month. Please note that as previously agreed, special meetings of the People and Communities 3.3 Committee are also held in respect of Housing Issues and to hear updates from the Belfast City Youth Council. 3.4 Accordingly, the following dates have been identified for meetings of the People and Communities Committee for the period from January to December, 2022. Tuesday, 11th January Tuesday, 25th January - Belfast City Youth Council Tuesday, 8th February Tuesday, 8th March Tuesday, 22nd March - Housing Tuesday, 5th April Tuesday, 10th May Tuesday, 7th June Tuesday, 21st June - Belfast City Youth Council Tuesday, 2nd August – Housing (Annual HIP Update) Tuesday, 9th August Tuesday, 13th September Tuesday, 4th October – Belfast City Youth Council Tuesday, 11th October Tuesday, 8th November Tuesday, 22nd November - Housing Tuesday, 6th December (All meetings will commence at 5.15 p.m.) Financial and Resource Implications 3.5 None associated with this report.
- 3.6

 Equality or Good Relations Implications
 None associated with this report.

 4.0 Appendices Documents Attached
 None associated with this report.



Agenda Item 1e



PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

AGENDA ITEM : PROPOSAL FOR DUAL LANGUAGE STREET SIGN ON CLIFTON STREET

Subject	:	Proposal for dual language street signs				
Date:		9 th November 2021				
Reporti	ng Officer:	Ian Harper, Building Control Manager				
Contac	t Officer:	Roisin Adams, Business Coordinator				
Restric	ted Reports					
Is this	report restricted?	Yes No x				
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?						
After Committee Decision						
After Council Decision						
	Some time in the future					
	Never					
Call-in						
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?						
1.0	Purpose of Report	t or Summary of main Issues				
	To consider the dua	al language street sign application for Clifton Street.				
2.0	Recommendations	s				
2.1						
	Members are asked to:					
	 Reconsider the application for a dual language street sign for Clifton Street given the decision of Council on 1st November 2021; 					
		e request for a survey form to be sent to the secretary of the Belfa I and agree that one be provided; and	ast			

3. Note that, having reviewed the process for this survey, two further properties are to be surveyed and a further report will be brought back to Committee for final determination.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 At Council on 1st November Members asked for a report on the dual language street sign application for Clifton Street to be brought back to committee for consideration
- 3.2 The Clifton Street application was considered under the current policy.

Policy:

3.3 In the introduction section of the policy it states:

"2.0 Introduction

The legislation requires the Council, in deciding whether and how to exercise its discretion to erect a street name in a language other than English, to take account of the views of the occupiers of premises in the street.

For the purposes of this policy occupiers shall be taken to be any person whose name appears in the current Electoral Register plus the owners or tenants in actual possession of commercial premises, but not employees in such premises."

3.4 The procedure within the policy states:

"3.0 Procedure

The procedures for seeking and assessing the views of occupiers and the criteria to be applied in deciding whether to erect a street sign in a language other than English are as follows:

- (i) Only applications supported by a petition representing not less than one third of the people appearing on the Electoral Register of the street for which the application is made will be progressed.
- (ii) Where the foregoing requirements have been met the Council will canvass by post all people appearing on the Electoral Register of that street and seek their views on the request to erect a street sign in a second specified language. This letter is designed so as to make the expression of views as simple as possible. Reply will be by way of a pre-paid envelope and should be returned within one month of receipt.
- (iii) Where two thirds or more of the occupiers appearing on the Electoral Register have indicated that they are in favour of the erection of a second language street sign, then such a sign will be erected. People not returning a reply will be deemed not to be in favour of the application."

- The practice is to consider all residential properties within a street, checking for those residents who are on the electoral register, and checking for commercial properties. In addition, a site visit is carried out to check all the properties on the street during the survey Commercial properties are included in the survey, with one survey form being provided. The policy states that the method of consultation is to canvas by post. The practice is to hand deliver surveys where possible or post them using Royal Mail where this is not possible.
- For the Clifton Street application, based on the information taken from the electoral register, and site checks of commercial properties, 12 surveys were issued, to both residential and commercial properties. Most of these were hand delivered. 2 survey forms were posted through Royal Mail as they could not be hand delivered due to no letter box or no one present.
- 3.7 On review of the processing of this application, it was noted that two properties that had signed the initial petition had not been surveyed as they were deemed to be vacant at the time Officers carried out their physical inspection of the street. However it now appears that they are in fact occupied and therefore will be surveyed and the updated results will be subsequently reported back to Committee.
- In relation to Clifton Street Orange Hall, a survey was posted to the occupier of 82-84 Clifton Street, the address for Clifton Street Orange Hall, as there was no letter box, and no one present at the time of visit. The Service did not receive any communication from the Royal Mail that this has not been delivered.
- 3.9 This address was included in the results provided for the survey. We did not receive a response from this address therefore, as required by the current policy, this was not considered to be in favour of the dual language street sign.
- 3.10 Members are asked to note that a formal request has been made by Alderman Kingston for a survey form to be sent to the secretary of Belfast Orange Hall on Clifton Street.

3.11 Application details:

English Name	Non- English Name	Location	Applicant	Persons surveyed
Clifton Street	Sráid Clifton	Between Carrick Hill, BT1 and Carlisle Circus BT14	Carrick Hill Residents Association	12

3.12 The translation was authenticated by Queens University, the approved translator for Belfast City Council.

3.13 Results for survey carried out for Clifton Street

In accordance with the Council's policy for the erection of dual language street signs surveys of all persons appearing on the Electoral Register plus owners or tenants in actual possession of commercial premises carried out and the following responses were received.

	None				
4.0	Appendices				
4.0	There are no direct equality/rural needs implications.				
3.17	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment				
3.16	Financial & Resource Implications There is a cost of approximately £450 to cover the cost of the manufacturing and erection of the dual language street signs in the current locations. The cost for these street signs has been allowed for in the current budget.				
	 Junction with North Queen Street – on metal railings Junction of Westlink on-slip (north) – wall mounted to bridge Junction of Westlink on-slip (south) – wall mounted to bridge A sign on railings at the junction with Carlisle Circus was damaged and is not currently in place. 				
3.15	The practice on siting the street signs is to identify those that exist on the street, and these are either added to or replaced to reflect the street name in a second language, as approved. The position of the street signs on Clifton Street are as follows:				
	Provision of street signs.				
3.14	The Council's policy on the erection of a second street nameplate requires that at least two thirds (66.6%) of the people surveyed must be in favour of the proposal to erect a second street sign in a language other than English.				
	 9 people (75%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate 1 person (8%) was not in favour of the erection of a second nameplate 2 people (17%) did not respond to the survey 				
	12 surveys were issued, 10 hand delivered, 2 posted using Royal Mail. The results were:				

Agenda Item 2a

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.



By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.



Agenda Item 2b

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.



By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.



Agenda Item 3a

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Subje	ect:	Community Planning Update: Living Here Board				
Date:	Tuesday 9 November 2021					
Reporting Officer: Ryan Black, Director of City & Neighbourhood Services				es ·		
Kevin Heaney, Programme & Portfolio Manager						
Cont	Contact Officer: Karen Anderson-Gillespie, Programme & Portfolio Coordinator			ordinator		
Restr	icted Reports					
Is this	Is this report restricted? Yes $\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \$					
	If Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?	_			
	After Committe	ee Decision	_			
	After Council I	Decision	_			
	Some time in the future					
	Never					
Call-i	n					
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?						
1.0	Purpose of Report	or Summary of main Issues				
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on community planning with					
	a specific focus on th	e work being taken forward by the Living Her	re Board.			
2.0	Recommendations					
2.1	The Committee is as	ked to note the:				
	(i) ongoing work being progressed by the Living Here Board (LHB).					
	(ii) alignment and synergies between the Board and the work of the Committee.					
	(iii) ongoing opportunities for Elected Members to input and shape the work being taken					
	forward through the Community Planning Partnership, including the refresh of the					
	Belfast Agenda and delivery action plans, over the coming months.					
3.0	Main report	Main report				
	Background					
3.1	The LHB is co-Chaired by the Council's Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Hea					
	and Social Care Boa	rd's Assistant Director and Commissioning Le	ead for Bel	fast. The Board		

comprises Council officers and a range of its Community Planning Partners, including representation from the Statutory and VCSE sectors. The areas of collaborative focus being taken forward by the LHB, as set out below, clearly aligns with the remit of the Committee and seeks to support vulnerable people and communities as well as creating integrated approaches to improving service provision and support within the city.

Members will be aware of the ongoing review and refresh of the Belfast Agenda. Since the launch of the engagement programme in June 2021, we have been continuing the conversation with our city partners and stakeholders, including our delivery boards, to examine the key challenges, opportunities, and priorities for the city for the period 2022-26. To help inform the new Belfast Agenda a co-production approach was adopted with city partners and stakeholders and is being rolled out in three phases: i) a review of existing priorities, ii) planning what needs to happen next and iii) consulting on our plans.

3.2 Living Here Board Workshop 7 July 2021

A workshop was held with members of the LHB as part of the first phase of engagement. The workshop focused on:

- (i) Shaping and informing the refresh of the Belfast Agenda.
- (ii) Securing collective agreement on priorities and interventions that the Board will drive forward over the next 18months, to further support community recovery.
- (iii) Considering how the Board could work more effectively (maximise productivity and partners expertise and commitment).

The out-workings of this workshop will combine with other inputs and feed into subsequent engagement phases, allowing us to co-design action plans and a relevant, refreshed Belfast Agenda which will deliver a positive impact for everyone in the city.

A detailed report providing an overview of the Board workshop session is attached in Appendix 1. A number of key overarching areas for Members to note from the workshop discussion include:

- ✓ General consensus that the priorities identified in the emerging Belfast Agenda delivery framework (2022-26) reflect the key challenges and opportunities for the city.
- ✓ Recognition of the importance and need for strong collaboration and commitment from all partners, with resources mobilised to enable delivery.
- ✓ Highlighted the opportunity to consider and adopt new agile approaches taking account of lessons learned in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ✓ Advocated the need for priorities and actions to be specific, using simple and clear language.
- ✓ Supported the need for the Board to organise itself to support delivery, with welldefined sub-structures as necessary and a focus on additionality.

- ✓ Greater alignment of partner corporate/ business plans with the priorities of the LHB and the Belfast Agenda.
- ✓ Agreement on the use of a structured Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) approach and the importance of measuring success impact.

Workshop participants agreed that the current focus and work of the LHB is relevant over the next 18months, as Covid-19 has heightened these issues, widened existing inequalities and reinforced the need for the continued focus. There will be scope for partners to further refine the work as part of the action planning phase. The LHB work programme focuses on the following:

- i) Addressing Health Inequalities:
 - ✓ Drugs, alcohol, mental health, and homelessness Belfast Complex Lives approach.
 - ✓ Avoidable winter deaths Belfast Warm and Well Project.
 - ✓ Promoting positive emotional wellbeing.
- ii) Enabling community recovery and area planning (including the multi-agency support hub pilot in South Belfast)
- iii) Improving outcomes for children and young people through the Belfast Area Outcomes Group (BAOG) developing an integrated, inter-agency approach to early intervention (including children and young people fulfilling their potential, early years support and family programmes).

3.3 Living Here Board meeting 13 September 2021

In addition to the planned workshop in July, the LHB also held a virtual meeting on **Monday**13 September 2021, a summary note and slide-deck from the LHB is attached in Appendix

2. Whilst the Committee may have previously discussed some of the areas below, some important points for Members to note from the LHB discussion include:

i) Belfast City Covid Research Report

Board members were presented with an overview, key findings, lessons learned and next steps of the research. The report (see attached in Appendix 3) highlighted the important role and success of the VCSE sector in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and in supporting vulnerable people in the community. The contents of the research report were also noted at the Strategic Policy and Resources meeting on 18 June 2021. Partners commended the research report and the importance of harnessing this work, to keep the focus and momentum going and influence regional and city approaches.

3.4

Addressing Health Inequalities

3.5 ii) Supporting vulnerable people with Complex Lives.

The Board received a practical overview of the ongoing work associated with the development and delivery of the complex lives whole system model in Belfast including the scope of the approach and the preparations that are underway for 'Day 1 readiness' at the end of October. The prototyping phase of the complex lives approach are due to take place from November – April 2022.

iii) Belfast Warm and Well Project

Board members received a short update of the project, noting the progress of year 2, limitations around the year 2 evaluation process due to Covid-19 and proposed actions planned for winter 2021/22. Board members agreed to proactively seek to raise awareness and encourage their frontline staff to promote and support the scheme.

Area Planning and Delivery

iv) Wider University and Lower Ormeau (WU&LO)

Elected Members will be aware of the significant and complex challenges in this area. Board Members were provided with a brief update on the ongoing work with government departments and local stakeholders to bring forward an integrated and targeted approach and proposal. Progress will continue to be reported through the LHB as the proposal is further developed and refined.

Within this context, Board Members were provided with an update on a proposal to re-connect CCTV cameras within the Holyland area and how this could be developed and resourced. This is just one of the many interventions to be taken forward to address issues of community concern in the area i.e. crime and ASB. Partners agreed to establish a small task and finish group of core partners to further develop and refine the proposal and report back to the LHB.

v) Department of Health – Integrated Care System (ICS) NI Draft Framework

A short presentation was made to the Board on the proposals for the new ICS model in NI, to help raise awareness amongst partners of the emerging framework and approach. Elected members will recall approving the draft council's consultation response at the People and Communities committee meeting on the 7 September 2021. Partner engagement is ongoing to ensure alignment, as work is currently underway to implement elements of the ICS model by March 2022.

3.7

3.6

3.8

As the engagement work on the refresh of the Belfast Agenda continues, the next phase will bring focus to delivery and members of the LHB will further unpack priorities and co-design action plans, to be delivered over the next four years i.e. 2022-26. Action plans will need to:

- ✓ Align to the strategic priorities agreed.
- ✓ Identify convening leads secure partner buy-in and shared ownership.
- ✓ Comply with the principles of Community Planning (i.e. outcome focussed, create added value and isn't business as usual).
- √ Take account of experience and lessons emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ✓ Consider a range of inputs (e.g. feedback from phase I engagement; continuation of relevant work; feedback from Board workshops and local data and intelligence).
- 3.9 Members will continue to be engaged in this process as it develops into early 2021. Regular updates of the LHB will be brought to the Community Planning All-Party Working Group and the People and Communities Committee going forward, providing the mechanism for informing and engaging members in relation to the Living Here work programme.

Financial & Resource Implications

3.10 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Costs associated with the implementation and facilitation of the LHB are currently being met within existing council budgets.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

3.11 There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications and no Rural Needs Assessment required for the recommendations outlined above.

4.0 Appendices – Documents Attached

Appendix 1: LHB Workshop Summary Report.

Appendix 2: Notes and slide deck of the LHB – Monday 13 September 2021.

Appendix 3: Belfast City Covid research report.





The Belfast Agenda

Living Here Board

Workshop Summary Report
7 July 2021



1 Introduction

Members of the Living Here Board (LHB) agreed at its meeting on the 17 May 2021 to hold a workshop to feed into the Belfast Agenda Refresh process and focus attention on the identified priority areas and collaborative action for the Board over the next 6 – 18months. The workshop was hosted virtually by Belfast City Council via MS Teams, chaired by the LHB Co-Chair Iain Deboys and facilitated by Anne McMurray.

Appendix 1 contains the list of attendees.

1.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the workshop was to explore and unpack the current focus of activity and collective energy of the LHB, the difference and desired impact sought and to inform the development of a 6-18 month action plan which will contribute to the Belfast Agenda ambitions and desired outcomes.

Specifically, the objectives of the workshop were to:

- 1. Challenge and reaffirm the current priorities and focus of activity of the Board.
- 2. Consider and identify requirements and/ or opportunities for new priorities and collective actions taking into consideration impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 3. Identify convening action leads for the priorities and associated actions.
- 4. Consider how the Board could work more effectively (maximise productivity and partners expertise and commitment).

Appendix 2 sets out the workshop format.

2 General Considerations

A number of key overarching areas for consideration that emerged during the workshop discussions are summarised below:

- Importance and need for strong collaboration and commitment from all partners, with resources mobilised to enable delivery.
- Opportunity to consider and adopt new agile approaches taking account of lessons emerging in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Priorities and actions need to be specific with simple and clear language.
- Important that the LHB organises itself to support delivery, with well-defined substructures as may be necessary and a focus on additionality.
- Greater alignment between the priorities of the LHB, and Belfast Agenda. Alignment of partner corporate/ business plan with the priorities of the Belfast Agenda.
- Use of a structured Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) approach and measuring the impact of interventions.

3 Priorities and Collective Focus

3.1 Belfast Agenda Refresh - Open Discussion

The first session of the workshop reviewed the emerging delivery framework of the Belfast Agenda. John Tully (BCC) set the context for the workshop providing an update on the Belfast Agenda Refresh Process and emerging draft framework i.e. vision, outcomes and priority themes, which has been co-designed with a core sub-group of Community Planning partners. Anne McMurray highlighted that the Belfast Agenda sets out the vision, ambitions and roadmap for Belfast up until 2035.

Anne facilitated an open discussion amongst partners asking the following questions:

- i. Does the framework have face validity?
- ii. Are partners committed and bought into the ambitions?
- iii. Are these the right priority themes to focus on over the next four years?

3.2 Belfast Agenda Refresh – Summary of open feedback

This section summaries the key points received from the open discussion:

- Iain Deboys (HSCB & Co-Chair) Mental health and emotional wellbeing should be made more explicit and included as part of the emerging overarching priority framework.
- Natasha Brennan (LORAG) the Strategy for mental health and emotional wellbeing should be at the core of the plan of work going forward.
- John Tully (BCC) highlighted that the language and focus of the priority framework will be reviewed/ refined as part of the co-design process, with a broader set of supplementary priorities emerging and will be a major focus for action planning.
- Kevin Bailey (WBP) the vision needs to extend beyond the city centre to neighbourhoods. Important that we adopt a layered approach covering city, area and neighbourhood level. In terms of the cross-cutting themes, need to consider health language and health planning and how the Integrated Care Systems (ICS) and the life course approach is aligned and integrated.
- John Tully (BCC) conversations are ongoing with the DoH and the BH&SCT re: alignment between the emerging proposals for the reconfiguration of the ICS and areabased approaches.
- Carol Diffin (BHSCT & Chair of BAOG) supports the vision. Suggests that the wording 'trauma informed' and being a 'compassionate city' be considered as part of any refinement process to reflect recovery from conflict and Covid.
- Gerry Largey (BHSC Trust) it's important to reflect Belfast as a place that people choose to live and raise their family i.e. family friendly city, within the vision - which would reflect the broader health agenda and economic argument.
- Briege Arthurs (Forward South Partnership) in relation to the economic focus, it will be important to further unpack inclusive growth needs of the city with greater emphasis on

- supporting people with additional needs and BAME communities. Important that we enable and support people to participate in the economy and society as a whole.
- Cate Taggart (BCC) within the context of the city and communities emerging from a pandemic, it is important that we seek to create a sense of hope and fun, for all ages, particularly young people. Belfast would benefit from a narrative around 'hope'.

3.3 Reviewing the LHB Priorities and Focus – Group Discussion

Anne McMurray introduced the first Group discussion, providing partners with the opportunity to consider, challenge and reaffirm the current priorities and focus of activity of the LHB. There were three discussion groups.

- Group 1: Improving Health and Wellbeing and Maximising Social and Community benefits for housing (Health and Housing)
- Group 2: Integrated approach to neighbourhood regeneration (Neighbourhood Regeneration)
- Group 3: Improving outcomes for Children and Young People (Children and Young People).

Each group worked through a template, answering the following questions:

- i. Are the current priorities the right ones to focus on for 6–18 months?
- ii. Are there any additional priorities that need focus?
- iii. What's currently going well/ what's having an impact?
- iv. What's proving difficult/ barriers preventing delivery?
- v. What opportunities may exist?
- vi. What are the linkages to the emerging cross-cutting themes?

3.4 Reviewing the LHB Priorities and Focus – Group feedback

This section summarises the feedback received from each of the 3 discussion groups:

Group 1: Health and Housing

- Current Priority Areas (i. ii.)
 - Agreed that the two areas were the right priorities to focus on over the next 6-18 months and are also aligned to the PfG. No new priorities were identified.
 - Need to drill down to a neighbourhood level and the specific outcomes we seek to achieve (e.g. addressing the wider impact of housing on health and wellbeing, deprivation etc).
 - Definition needs to be clear i.e. are we targeting general health and wellbeing or targeting health inequalities?
 - The approach needs to be data led, focussed on assessing the trends of relevant indicators and seek to turn the curve. Important that we identify the right indicators to give focus and provide a basis to measure success (e.g. areas where there is a

- widening of the health inequality gap/ negative data trends e.g. obesity, alcohol, drugs & anxiety).
- There was a query on whether the four ambitions (2035) will still apply in the Belfast Agenda refresh as this will impact focus?

What's going well/ having an impact (iii.)

- Belfast Warm and Well initiative and integrated approach to addressing avoidable winter deaths including the commitment and enthusiasm of support partners.
- Partners working well together and with local communities in response to Covid.

Barriers to delivery (iv.)

- Long-term focus and commitment required to tackle structural issues associated with housing.
- Practical challenges that need to be addressed including the lack of suitable land to build housing, in specific parts of the city (e.g. North Belfast), specific issues associated with housing development along interface areas.
- Ability to bring together shared resources and policy levers to deliver joint priorities.

Opportunities (v.)

- How the community planning partners can work together to better utilise and maximise local community infrastructure and assets as well as developing integrated community-based approaches.
- Opportunities to engage citizens in new innovative ways to support service provision and improve outcomes (e.g. Wigan deal cited as example, putting in place reciprocal agreements/ pledges between communities and service providers).
- Consider a neighbourhood approach, but it is important that this is also balanced with a citywide approach.

Linkages (vi.)

- Highlighted the connections between housing, creating shared space and promoting good relations and a shared future.
- Reference also made to synergies of the infant mental health strategy: (https://belfasttrust.hscni.net/wpfd_file/belfast-infant-mental-health-strategy/)

Group 2 - Neighbourhood Regeneration

Current Priority Areas (i. ii.)

- Agreed with the priorities identified, suggested that clear and simple language is used to explain and communicate ambition.
- Agreed Belfast Agenda priorities should be mainstreamed and a focus of core work of relevant partners.
- Important to bring together and mobilise the right partners to support implementation e.g. convening focused delivery sub-groups.

 Need to consider how we measure success including e.g. impact on population indicators (turning the curve) and performance measures (measure impact).

What's going well/ having an impact (iii.)

 The agile and cross-sectoral approach adopted to responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. Important that we build upon the successes of this approach and mainstream these as custom and practice of all partners going forward – reducing governance and bureaucracy.

Barriers to delivery (iv.)

- The broad focus and scope of ambition of the LHB impacts upon the feasibility and momentum of delivery. Highlighted the need to bring together smaller delivery focused groups to drive forward agreed priority areas of work. Noted the importance of political will and support.
- The need to secure dedicated resources to support the developmental work required to take forward this priority and the associated programme of work and collaborative approach.
- The priorities for delivery need to be defined, with a clear methodology and approach developed. Need for a collaborative, agile and resourced approach with continued commitment, leadership and energy from CPP partners.

Opportunities/ linkages (v.vi.)

- Great results were delivered collaboratively by the VCSE and government as part of the Covid pandemic, this learning needs to be captured.
- Organisational corporate/ business plans should be aligned with the priorities of the Belfast Agenda to create accountability.

Group 3 - Children and Young People

• Current Priority Areas (i.ii)

 The group agreed on the priority identified. Highlighted the importance of enabling the voice of children and young people to inform the focus of this work going forward - understanding their needs and ensuring inclusivity.

What's going well/ having an impact (iii.)

• The group noted the positive work being carried out by the Belfast Area Outcomes Group (BAOG) at a local level and the work of the family support hubs.

Barriers to delivery (iv.)

Challenges identified in how partners work and do business together and the need to avoid duplication, improve integration, alignment and collaboration. There is a need for a flexible approach to collaboration with the focus and alignment of resources taking account of local intelligence and data on need. Ability and willingness of partners to explore opportunities around joint budgeting/ resourcing to bring forward demonstrator and/ or enabling initiatives/ programmes to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Opportunities (v.)

- Ability to access and utilise the skills and experiences of partners to consider and develop innovative and agile approaches to this priority area. The BAOG is a core forum to further strengthen the necessary relationships and support delivery.
- Belfast Agenda draft priority framework currently being consulted upon has identified Children and Young People as a cross-cutting priority for community planning and must be considered in this context (e.g. linkages and opportunities presented across all the Belfast Agenda Boards).

Linkages (vi.)

- Important that we consider wider family circumstances.
- Important that we recognise the range of strategies and plans which already exist and seek to align and join-up as appropriate.
- Ensuring an inclusive approach is taken and making sure that the voices of C&YP with disabilities are heard i.e. access to services and activities.

4 Collaborative Delivery (6 - 18months)

4.1 Action Planning and Delivery – group discussion

Anne McMurray introduced the second group discussion, with reference to success criteria for effective partnership working and the underpinning principles of community planning in terms of e.g. collaborative gain, outcome focused.

A short presentation was given outlining the current LHB priorities and associated actions underway or emerging. Partners examined if any gaps or additional opportunities which should be considered from a delivery perspective over the next 6-18months. Breakout group discussion ensued covering the following areas:

- i. Are the current actions right for the LHB to focus on over the next 6-18months?
- ii. Are there any additional 'here and now issues' that require collaborative action including any low cost/ no cost actions?
- iii. Agree the lead partner (convenor) and who else needs to be involved?
- iv. Identify key enablers to support implementation.
- v. Consider and identify key milestones.

4.2 Action Planning and Delivery – summary of group feedback

The section provides a summary of partner feedback, which will help inform the development of a collaborative action plan for the Board over the next 6 – 18months.

Group 1: Health and Housing

- The framing of actions needs to be simplified and specific. Further work required among the key delivery agents/ partners linked to health and housing. The NIHE agreed to take the lead for the housing actions.
- A **low-cost action** was identified in relation to the potential to join up the planning approach, alignment of organisations objectives and timelines.
- NIHE highlighted that the current housing actions put forward need to be considered in the context of the Belfast Agenda ambitions around population growth and associated housing availability and supply challenges.
- Agreed that further work required to define the focus, ambition and unpack any actions.
 Proposed that LHB focus for action should linked to social challenges around housing and poverty (and not just focus on addressing fuel poverty).
- Important to recognise the linkages and synergies with the focus and potential work of other Belfast Agenda Boards, including the Resilience and Sustainability Board (e.g. energy and sustainability) and the City Development Board (e.g. unlocking investment and land for mixed tenure housing development). Need to ensure alignment and clarity of focus across the Belfast Agenda Boards and avoid any risk of duplication.
- Opportunity to connect this work to the Wider University and Lower Ormeau intervention initiative and the Good Relations priority.
- The group highlighted the potential benefits of applying a structured OBA approach to assessing the priorities and co-designing the supporting action plan(s), outcomes framework and securing commitment of partners, Important that we focus on the right indicators e.g. areas where there is a widening of the health inequality gap/ negative data trends around obesity, alcohol, drugs, mood and anxiety.
- Key enablers identified by the group included engaging with and mobilising local communities and community assets as well as ensuring better alignment and collaboration across strategic/regional, city and local levels

Group 2 - Neighbourhood Regeneration

- The group agreed the actions identified and that area planning should be considered as the overarching action with the other actions being set within this context (i.e. Multiagency support hub (MASH) and Wider University and Lower Ormeau (WULO) intervention programme).
- Important that we bring forward at pace tangible initiatives under this priority which demonstrates positive change and the level of commitment across partners e.g. WULO intervention.
- The group highlighted the need for the language used to frame the actions (e.g. MASH
 Multi Agency Support Hub) to be clear and understandable in terms of what we are trying to achieve. The methodologies used also need to be participative and inclusive.
- Important that we identify those initiatives and interventions which have been successful and consider how we potentially scale-up or share learning through community planning.

Discussion and agreement on **convening leads** for the current actions identified i.e.
 MASH – PSNI, Area Planning – BCC and the WULO intervention requiring further consideration.

Key enablers identified included the need for serious investment and continued commitment of partners, ensuring the right delivery partners and stakeholders are brought together through focused delivery sub-groups.

Group 3 - Children & Young People

- The group agreed the actions identified with the inclusion of an additional action to be brought forward in relation to how we ensure the inclusive voice of children and young people in our future plans and strategies
- The lead partner identified for taking this area forward is the Belfast Area Outcomes Group (BAOG). Agreed that further consideration be given to possible extension of current membership of BAOG and any associated delivery sub-group established (e.g. ensuring linkages to the Colin Area; BMET and libraries).
- Noted that further work is underway through BAOG to co-design the programme of work and defining the potential resources and skills required to support delivery.
- Highlighted the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on C&YP and their families and the need to give focus and create momentum to this work.
- Key enablers identified included the clear commitment and energy from partners and recognition that a collaborative and whole system approach will deliver enhanced outcomes. Highlighted the need to develop and assess evidence/ data and associated insights to inform approach(es).
- o In terms of **milestones** the project group needs to review representation and develop the evidence base to inform approach and delivery.
- Other important linkages highlighted for consideration, which would also contribute to improving the quality of life for C&YP, included availability and accessibility to local physical assets and facilities, youth provision and quality of housing.

5 Summary Comments and Next Steps

Anne McMurray provided summary comments as outlined below:

- Assurance and endorsement that the current focus and priorities of the Living Here Board (LHB) are still relevant, but some further work required on augmenting (defining) and framing the specific action plan(s).
- Strong consensus and mandate from LHB session to get on with things and build momentum. Further consideration to be given to how the LHB organises itself from a delivery perspective and the collaborative approaches to be adopted.
- The ambition and priority focus of the LHB needs to be translated into practical and measurable action plans.

lain Deboys thanked all partners for their involvement and input into the workshop, shaping the future focus of the LHB and continued commitment and ownership of delivery. Highlighted the opportunity presented to further build relationships and to adopt a

collaborative and co-design approach to planning – suggesting that this should be a feature of the LHB going forward.

Next Steps

The following next steps had been outlined:

- (1) Short workshop report (draft) will be prepared and circulated for consideration of partners. This will summarise the key discussions, feedback and actions emerging.
- (2) Follow-up engagement with specific partners/ smaller groups to further develop unpack specific priority areas and help define the supporting action plan(s).
- (3) Submit a practical action plan for the next 6 18months to future meeting of the LHB.
- (4) Ensure relevant comments and input emerging from the LHB workshop is fed into and considered as part of the wider Belfast Agenda refresh currently underway.

Appendix 1: Workshop Attendees

Facilitator: Anne McMurray

In attendance: Ian Deboys (HSCB & Co-Chair), Fiona Meenan (BHSC Trust), Andrew Steenson (PHA), Kevin Bailey (West Belfast Partnership), Jason White (SEHSC Trust), Fiona McGrath (NIHE), Briege Arthurs (Forward South), Aengus Hannaway (NIHE), Seamus McAleavey (NICVA), Rosemary Thompson (PSNI), Natasha Brennan (LORAG), Sorcha Hassay (DfC), Carol Diffin (BHSCT & Chair of BAOG), Nicola Verner (Greater Shankill Partnership), Michele Bryan (Eastside Partnership), Aileen Cummins (QUB), Gerry Largey (BHSC Trust), Johns Unsworth (Education Authority), Adrienne Adair (Libraries NI), Isaac May (BMet).

BCC Attendees: John Tully, Kevin Heaney, Denise Smith, Jamie Uprichard, Brian Carr, Karen Anderson-Gillespie, Cate Taggart, Stevie Lavery, Nicola Lane.

Apologies: Ryan Black (BCC & Co-Chair), Alistair Stewart (QUB), Charlene Stoops (BHSCT), Bryan Nelson (BHSCT), David Tumilty (PHA), Rafaella Folli (UU), Duncan Morrow (UU), John News (Sports NI), Alison Allen (BCC),

Appendix 2: Workshop Format

Item	What	Who	When
1.	Welcome and Introduction	Iain Deboys	11.30-11.35
2.	Purpose and Structure of the workshop	Anne McMurray	11.35-11.40
3.	Setting the Context	John Tully	11.40-11.45
4.	Session 1: Priorities and collective focus OPEN DISCUSSION - Belfast Agenda Refresh - Priority Themes i. Do these have face validity - Are these the right things to focus on over the next 4 years to make a difference? Would you change any of them? Is there anything missing. ii. Can you see where the work of the LHB fits? Anything missing?	Anne McMurray / ALL	11.45-12.00
	 i. Are the current priorities the right ones to focus on for 6–18 months? ii. Are there any additional priorities that need focus? Understanding the LHB priority themes e.g. iii. What's currently going well/ what's having an impact? iv. What's proving difficult/ barriers preventing delivery? v. What opportunities may exist? vi. What are the linkages to the emerging cross-cutting themes? 		12.00-12.25
	GROUP FEEDBACK (Session 1)		12.25-12.35
5.	Session 2: Collaborative delivery (6-18mths) GROUP DISCUSSION: - Action planning and delivery i. Identify the right actions to focus on over next 6-18months ii. Consider best lead (convenor)& who needs to be involved iii. Identify key enablers to support implementation iv. Consider and identify key milestones (if possible)	Anne McMurray / ALL	12.35-1.00
	GROUP FEEDBACK (Session 2)		1.00-1.20
6.	Summary comments and next steps	Anne McMurray	1.20-1.25
7.	Close	lain Deboys	1.25-1.30
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The Belfast Agenda

Living Here Board

Welcome

Ryan Black

Co-Chair Living Here Board



AGENDA

Page 48

- 1. Workshop draft summary report and next steps
- 2. Belfast City Covid Research Report
- 3. Addressing health inequalities
 - i. Complex Lives Whole System Model
 - Belfast Warm and Well
- 4. Area Planning and Delivery
 - i. Wider University & Lower Ormeau (CCTV proposal)
- Department of Health Integrated Care System (ICS) NI Draft framework

Belfas



The Belfast Agenda

Living Here Board

Workshop Summary Report and Next Steps

lain Deboys

Co-Chair Living Here Board





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Belfast City Covid Research Report

Alison Allen

Neighbourhood Services Manager, BCC



What the research was about?

Belfast's immediate response to the pandemic through the lens of good relations, a city in transition and normalising from conflict

How investment in Good Relations has helped to build the city's resilience and strengthened relationships between and within communities

The effect this has had on meeting the needs of vulnerable people and communities

The lessons learned and whether a focus on the "common good" helped the COVID response and reset good relations across the city

Has the pandemic helped to create the conditions for increased cooperation between and within communities across the city

Has this cooperation led to greater collaboration on an intra and inter community basis



The COVID-19 response

Local communities and CVS sector, community leaders first out of the blocks, supported by strong on the ground presence of the statutory sector

Not by accident, but through investment in the strength of community infrastructure in Belfast over years

Specific investment in single identity communities, youth based activities, women, cross community groups. Build relationships and remain connected

Benefits of investment in social capital as it connects government with people and with their lived experiences. This benefits government

The effect this has had on meeting the needs of vulnerable people and communities through valuable local knowledge



Lessons Learned

Good relations is core part of Belfast Agenda and delivering inclusive growth and leaving no one behind Social capital generated through pandemic response creates links and bonds which is essential in addressing good relations issues

Strong leadership across all sectors will benefit city now and in future

Focus on relationships as important part of any working in partnership

New ways of working, agility and co-design with communities

There are gaps in infrastructure which need focussed work





Next Steps

Focus efforts on supporting strong community infrastructure in Belfast to support recovery

Ask of Partners - Support Council Capacity Building Pilots

Continue to use innovative and co-designed ways of working with communities

Ask of Partners – Support Area Planning and Working approach

Build on the knowledge and skills of all partners and ensure communities play key role

Ask of Partners – Support codesign and genuine community participation

Focus on maximising benefits from current and future investments with these lenses

Ask of Partners - Early discussions and collaboration to inform investment decisions

Ensure promoting good relations and resilience runs through all that we do
Ask of Partners – utilise Council (and other partner expertise) in good relations





The Belfast Agenda

Living Here Board

Complex Lives Update

Chris Marsh

Facilitator/ Advisor



Objectives

Page 56

 To provide an overview of the Complex Lives Whole System Model and an update on implementation.

To get your perspective, ideas and support for next steps.





Background to the development

Response to a growing challenge of people locked in a vicious cycle.

• Previous studies, reviews made the case for a collaborative and whole system approach.

 Early example of a reform needing all of us to work together – everybody's business.

Basis of a Whole System Approach

System Leadership

Frontline Delivery

System Enablers

- Collaboration, Leadership & Governance
 - Joint Investment

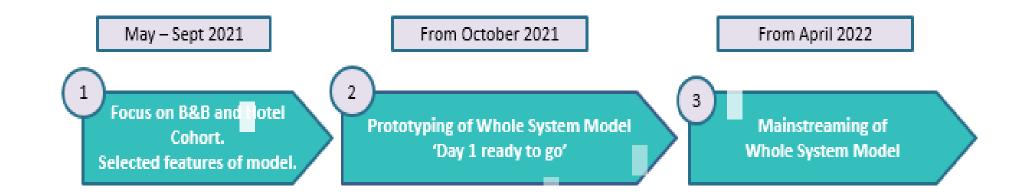
- Joint Outreach & Intensive Support Team
 - Prevention & Demand Management
 - Accommodation & Wraparound Support
 - Services & Support Landscape

- Case Management System
- Workforce Development
- Outcomes Impact and Learning
 - Communications





Development Path





Progress

- Multi Agency Steering Group gripping and driving the work.
- Work progressing well with 2 initial cohorts of 10 people in B&B's and Hotel some notable cases where the new approach has made a breakthrough.
- Joint Investment mapping under way first cut due 14 Sept.
- Communication and engagement underway across the system including plans for service user voice.
- Preparing now for Prototyping phase broadening scope of the model.
- Includes outline business case for relational key workers (navigators/intensive support workers.
- Alignment with Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH) under way principles clear and agreed, work to do.





Key issues ahead

- Joint resourcing navigator/intensive support work.
- Development work to prepare for prototyping bringing partners skills and ideas to bear.
- Accommodation availability is tight scaling is a challenge for all.
- Need for prevention focus work to stem the flow of demand.
- Communications and engagement will be key how can you help?
- Community support and understanding for this work is crucial to resettlement.
- Other areas of delivery that could benefit from a whole system reform approach?



Any questions, perspectives, ideas?



Item 4(ii)

Page 63



The Belfast Agenda

Living Here Board

Belfast Warm & Well

lain Deboys

Assistant Director for Contracting and ECRs and Commissioning Lead, Belfast



Living Here Board

Wider University & Lower Ormeau (CCTV)

Gavin Kirkpatrick PSNI



Page 64



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ICS NI draft Framework

Charlene Stoops

Director of Performance, Planning and Informatics, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust



Proposed new model of planning and managing services through an Integrated Care System

Future Planning Model - Targeted Stakeholder Consultation Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk)

Consultation from 19 July 2021 until 17 September 2021

Charlene Stoops
Director of Performance, Planning & Informatics, BHSCT – 2nd Sept 21







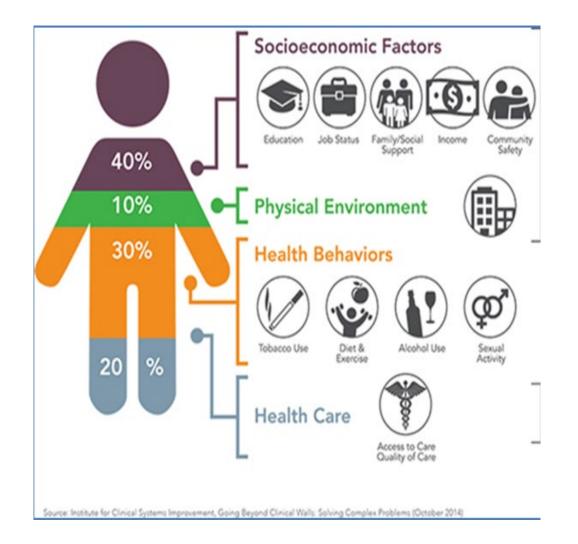




Integrated Care System

"A collaborative partnership between organisations and individuals with a responsibility for planning, managing, and delivering care, services and interventions to meet the health and wellbeing needs of the local population and which, through taking collective action, deliver improved outcomes for individuals and communities and reduce health inequalities."

Social determinants of health



Direction of travel







Current commissioning process

© irection set by 8 Minister for Health

Commissioning Plan – HSCB and PHA HSCB & service providers develop business cases to detail how services will be commissioned

LCGs

support planning & commissioning function by leading on needs assessment activities, providing local health intelligence

Oversee day to day transactional activities with their respective HSC Trusts

Ensure involvement of independent contractors, particularly GPs in commissioning of local services

Currently supported by ICPs in service co-ordination and collaboration in the co-design of newly commissioned services

Timely change to approach in planning

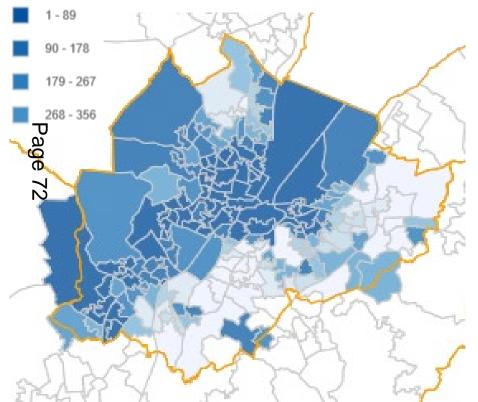
- Review of Commissioning (2015) current system overly bureaucratic and lacking in clarity of accountability of decision making
- Closure of HSCB is 1st step in a longer-term transformation LCGs will cease
- It will remove the statutory provisions underpinning the commissioning of HSC services, importantly:
 - through requirement for an annual Commissioning Plan; and
 - the LCGs as a committee of the HSCB.
- An alternative approach is required post-closure to replace these structures and processes.
- Importance of ensuring to continue to plan and manage services informed by local input and intelligence is embedded in the ICS approach.
- Build on existing models/exemplar Northern Prototype, Western Pathfinder, Belfast (Belfast Trust/GP Forum; Community Planning/Caring & Compassionate City work; Area Partnership Boards/Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships/Area Working Groups; C & V sector; Belfast Healthy Cities; Primary Care MDT's)
- Learning from COVID
- Transformation agenda Elective Daycase Centres, Encompass
- Draft Programme for Government

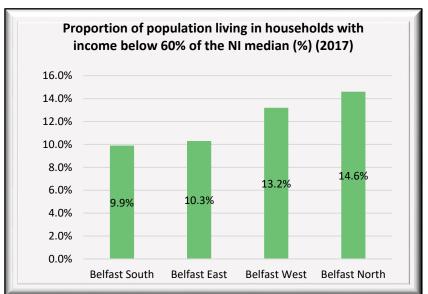
Belfast - Catalyst for Change

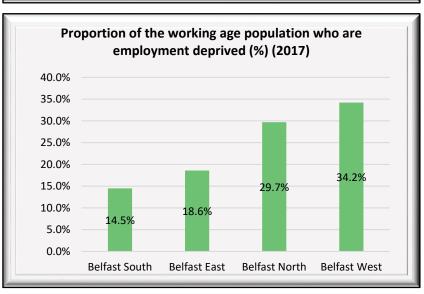
- No change in life expectancy & widening of health inequalities (5+ years)
- Rich mix of resources and strong community assets (e.g. 160+ Partnerships /1600+ Voluntary & Community Sector organisations), however the absence of a joined up approach means we have a:
 - Disjoint between what is happening at a strategic and local level
 - Lack of clarity in roles / duplication in effort & energy
 - Multiple priorities and little evaluation/evidence of outcomes, including whether services are being targeted to those who need them most
 - Overly complex systems and processes
- Opportunity presented by community planning

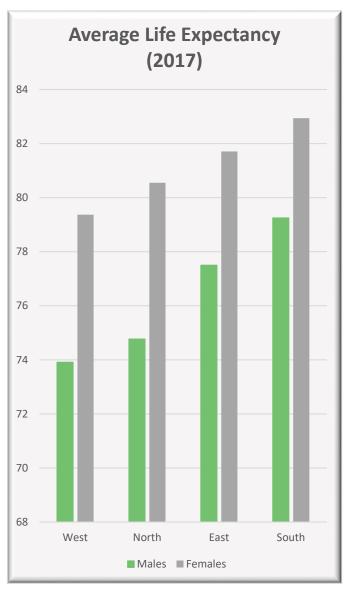
Health Inequalities in Belfast

Heath Deprivation and Disability (2017) (Darker shades = higher deprivation)









For the Population of Belfast



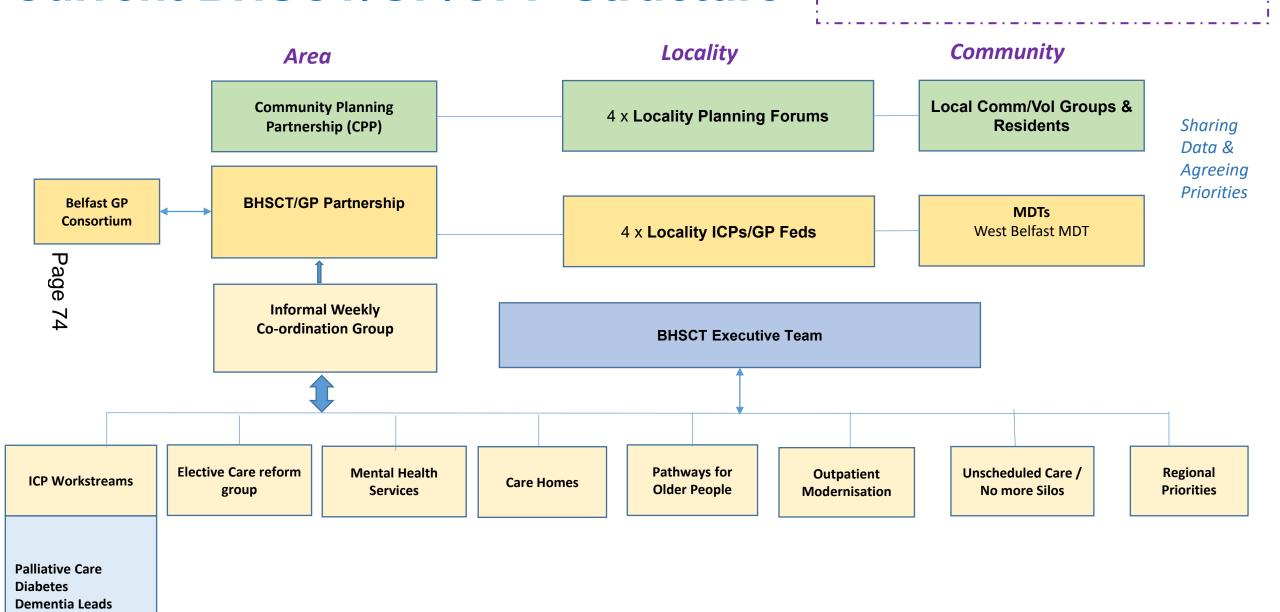
- Improve health and wellbeing
- Reduce health inequalities

Critical Success Factors:

- Right people in the room broader than HSC
- Agree shared vision, priorities & measures of success - Making Life Better / Community Planning
- Population health data mapping alongside services/assets and health inequalities
- Learning from others / best practice Wigan,
 Greater Manchester, Leeds, Newport
- Place-based approach to best meet local need 4 geographical areas
- Better alignment of energy, efforts and resources stitch & connect services to build on rich mix of resources and strong community assets
- Build stronger communities

Current BHSCT/GP/CPP Structure

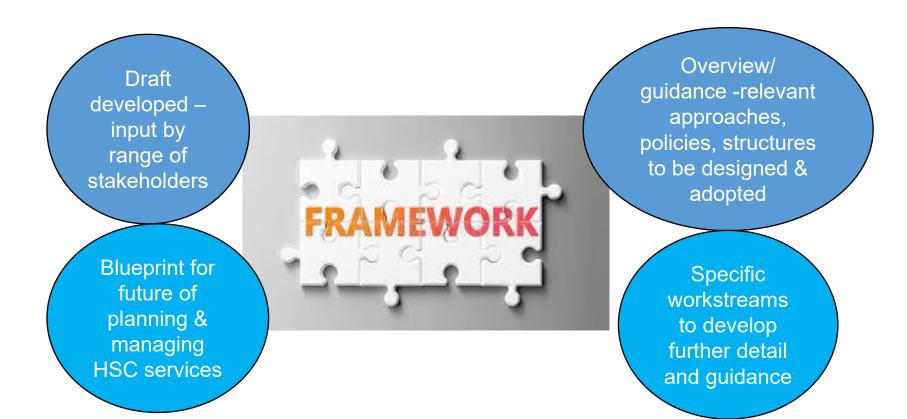
NB. Existing lines of Accountability are still in place for BHSCT and GPs



Draft ICS Framework

Minister granted approval for programme of work to develop an Integrated Care System (ICS) model in NI which:

- Adheres to principles of local level decision making
- Delegation of decision-making and funding; with exception of specialised services to be planned, managed and delivered regionally;
- Supported by an outcomes based approach underpinned by accountability.



Framework Principles and Values

Ensuring person is at centre of model, with aim of achieving improved outcomes for individuals and communities

Foster a culture of openness, transparency and trust between partners and local populations

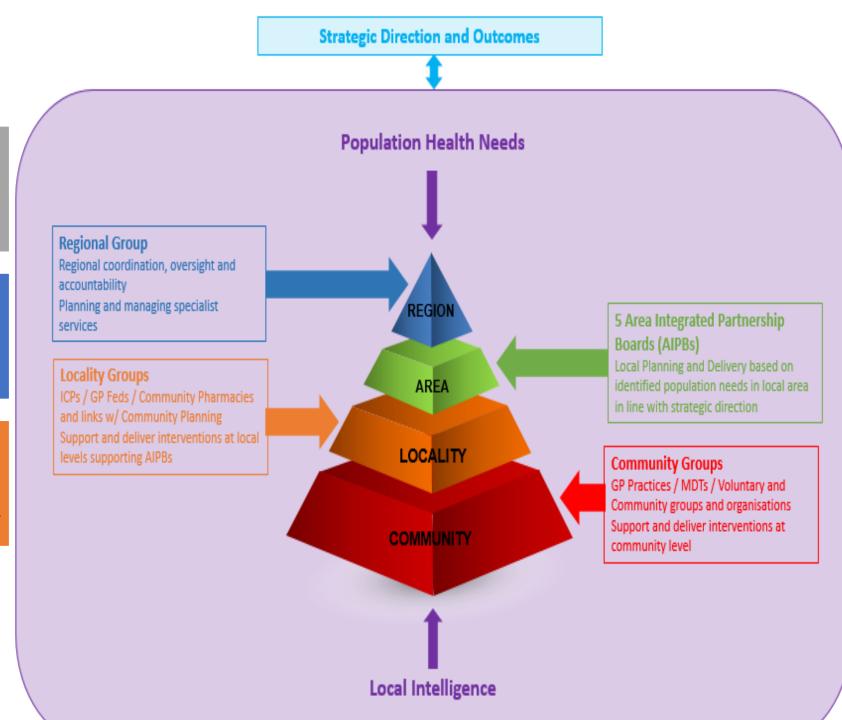
Analyzing and sharing poperation level data to inform decision making;

Work collectively to remove or avoid duplication, making efficient use of resources and deliver value for money

Demonstrating shared leadership to overcome boundaries:

Adhere to principles of parity and inclusion between partners with clear and transparent ways of working together

Identify /promote best practice & learning between partners



Proposed Membership – Area Integrated Partnership



Phased approach to complex task

Phase 1 – Development and implementation of an ICS model across all regions of NI operating within extant funding and accountability models.

Phase 2 – Based on learning from Phase 1 – develop final ICS model for NI for approval; this phase will include consultation on the final model and consideration of any necessary legislative requirements. s

Phase 3 – Implementation of final agreed ICS model across region with development of associated funding models and governance frameworks.

Page 78

1) Produce a draft framework to support the establishment of an ICS model across NI

2)Establish an ICS in each HSC Trust geographical area

3) Develop a new process for setting strategic priorities and outcomes

Feedback session

This is DOH led consultation and we would encourage you to respond directly to the document.

Belfast Trust is also keen to have a response which is reflective of all its stakeholders

So keen to hear your initial thoughts?
Do you think this model will work?
What do you think would be the benefits, constraints, opportunities or threats?
Are there gaps?
Do you have questions?



The Belfast Agenda

Living Here Board

Ryan Black

Co-Chair Living Here Board







NOTE OF BOARD MEETING

Date: Monday 13 September 2021,11am -1pm **Venue:** via MS TEAMS

Attendance:

Attenuance.	
Belfast City Council	Ryan Black (Co-Chair)
BHSCB	lain Deboys (Co-Chair)
LORAG (VSCE Panel)	Natasha Brennan
Red Cross (VSCE Panel)	Paula Powell
BAOG	Carol Diffin
Forward South Partnership	Catherine Downey
Forward South Partnership	Helen Crickard
Greater Shankill Partnership	Nicola Verner
Eastside Partnership	Maggie Andrews
PSNI	Rosie Thompson
PSNI	Gerard Pollock
PSNI	Allister Hagan
Ulster University	Duncan Morrow
NICVA	Seamus McAleavey
BHSC Trust	Charlene Stoops
NIHE	Fiona McGrath
QUB	Alistair Stewart
Complex lives facilitator	Christopher Marsh
DfC	Sorcha Hassay

Belfast City Council	Kevin Heaney
Belfast City Council	Alison Allen
Belfast City Council	Naomi Doak
Belfast City Council	Karen Anderson-
	Gillespie
Belfast City Council	Brian Carr
Belfast City Council	Jim Morgan
Belfast City Council	Jamie Uprichard
Belfast City Council	Denise Smith
Belfast City Council	Stephen Leonard

Apologies	
BHSC Trust	Bryan Nelson
Sport NI	Angharad Bunt
Forward South	Briege Arthurs
Eastside Partnership	Michele Bryans
Education Authority	John Unsworth
QUB	David Jones
PHA	David Tumilty
Sport NI	John News
PSNI	Brendan Green
Belfast City Council	Nicola Lane
Belfast City Council	Cate Taggart

Item	Discussion	Action & Lead(s)
1.	Introduction – Welcome & Apologies	
	Ryan Black opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Apologies were noted as per above.	Note
2.	Workshop draft summary report and next steps	
2.1	Ryan Black and Iain Deboys thanked partners for their participation and contribution to the workshop on the 7 July 2021. It provided an opportunity to 'take stock' and reaffirm the short and medium-term priorities of the Living Here Board (LHB) within the context of the overall refresh of the Belfast Agenda.	Note
2.2	 Kevin Heaney provided an overview of the next steps: Currently working with small project groups around the priorities – to further define and refine the supporting action plans. 	

	T	1
	Intention is to publish the action plans along with the new Belfast Agenda.	
	 There will be further engagement and co-designing the delivery action plans in late Oct / early Nov; noting the important role of the LHB in helping shape this work. 	
	The new refreshed Belfast Agenda and supporting action plans will be published in March 2022.	
	Board members agreed the draft summary report and noted next steps.	Note
3.	Belfast City Covid Research Report	
3.1	Ryan Black introduced the Belfast City Covid Research Report as an important piece of research, providing information/ evidence and lessons learned from the collective city response to Covid. The report highlighted the important role and successes of the VCSE sector in response to the pandemic and supporting vulnerable people in the community. Highlighted that the investment in building VCSE infrastructure in the city in advance of Covid-19, created strong foundations enabling the sector to mobilise.	Note
3.2	Alison Allen presented an overview of the research, key findings and lessons learned from the report. Key points covered within the presentation included:	
	• The assessment was undertaken through a good relations lens, within the Belfast context and emphasised the importance of the 3 rd sector.	
	 The research highlighted how identifying and bringing focus to a 'common good' can help resolve transition legacy issues, bringing communities together and strengthening collaboration. 	
	 The community sector was agile and resilient and the strength of the sector in Belfast was demonstrated during the pandemic. Highlighted the variations and gaps in capacity which exist in some parts of the city, and the need for focused and sustained support. 	
	• The importance of building social capital, securing strong leadership, being agile and adopting a co-design approach with communities were key learning from the response to Covid-19.	
3.3	In terms of next steps, the ask of partners was to:	All
	 i. Support council community capacity building pilots. ii. Continue to use innovative co-designed solutions - support area planning. iii. Focus on maximising benefits from current and future investments. iv. Promote good relations and resilience and ensure they are considered as part of everything that we do. 	
3.4	During discussion, the following points were raised:	Note
	 Ryan Black – Commended the report and highlighted that the lessons emerging will be factored into the approach to area working which will now be taken forward at pace. Important that we seek to sustain and build upon the successes and deliver outcomes for communities across the city. Outlined the need to adopt a collaborative, co-designed and evidence-based approach, harness this work and include it as a regular feature on the Living Here Board agenda moving forward. Seamus McAleavy – Welcomed the report and highlighted the benefit of investing 	
	in community infrastructure in positioning the sector to effectively respond. Highlighted the 'Manifesto for Change' work and the ongoing engagement with the DfC which seeks to avoid the risk of reverting back to old ways of working pre-	

Covid. There is an opportunity to influence wider regional and NI Executive discussions and keep focus and momentum to secure long-term benefits from this work. Duncan Morrow – Welcomed the focus and reaffirmed the need to mainstream Good Relations. Recommended that consideration is given to how the report and associated findings are shared across the city (including traditionally wealthier parts of the city) as well as assessing what structural changes/ changes in practice may be required going forward. The focus on the social investment approach was mentioned and how it builds important foundations. Alison Allen – Referred to ongoing discussions with central government colleagues about how we maintain elements of the agile/ flexible approach applied during Covid including greater flexibility with funding. **ACTION** – Partners noted the findings of the research report and proposed next steps Αll including the linkage to future planning of the Living Here Board and influencing regional and city approaches. 4. **Addressing Health Inequalities** 4.1 (i) Belfast Complex Lives Whole System Model Chris Marsh provided a practical overview of the ongoing work associated with the Note development and delivery of the complex lives whole system model. Key points covered within the presentation included: Highlighted the scope of the approach - focus on collective action and transforming processes and practices to support vulnerable people in a more holistic and integrated way. This is a practical approach to mobilising a new model and approach which could be applied elsewhere. The Steering Group are currently working on preparations required for the prototyping Day 1 readiness (October 2021) and have also developed a route map and action plan required for the transition phase from October 21 – March 22, and full implementation from April 22 onwards. The programme action plan focuses on 3 key themes including system leadership, frontline delivery, and system enablers. Currently working on a business case for joint resources to establish a dedicated support team, including at navigator role, to help drive the programme of work forward. **ACTIONS** – Partners are asked to: i. Note the progress made in designing, testing, and mobilising the whole system ΑII model. ii. Provide support and strengthen connections as we move into next phase and full model prototyping. iii. Help raise awareness and understanding of this work across all stakeholders including service users. 4.2 (ii) Belfast Warm & Well Project Note lain Deboys referred to the paper circulated in advance of the meeting and provided an update on the Belfast Warm & Well project. Highlighted the synergies with the Whole System approach adopted to develop the Belfast Complex Lives Model.

	 Highlighted the limitations around the year 2 evaluation process and the fact that face to face engagement with people directly supported by the initiative has been difficult due to Covid. 	
	• Explained that the number of organisations now referring vulnerable individuals into the single point of contact has expanded to 45. Encouraged all partners to utilise the support available.	All
	 Need to consider communications and awareness within organisations of who can benefit from the scheme, to connect with those most in need (e.g. ethnic minority groups). 	
	ACTION: Partners are asked to note the progress and proposed actions planned for winter 2021/22 and proactively seek to raise awareness and encourage frontline staff to support the scheme.	All
5.	Area Planning & Delivery	
5.1	Wider University & Lower Ormeau (WU&LO) (CCTV proposal)	
	Ryan Black referred to the paper that was circulated in advance of the Board meeting, outlining the context and linkage to an emerging wider intervention proposal for WU&LO. The WU&LO proposal has been agreed in principle by the Strategic Partnership Group (SPG) recently established by the Minister for Communities to ensure that government depts are working to secure finance for the wider proposal and there is a degree of urgency to mobilise this work on the ground. The intention would be for the initiative to be linked to the LHB in terms of reporting progress or exploring collaborative opportunities and reference will be made to the SPG for policy/ legislative considerations.	Note
	As part of the initial considerations of the inter-agency group a proposal has been brought forward in regards to the possible introduction of CCTV , as one of a package of interventions that could be taken forward to address issues of community concern i.e. crime and ASB.	
	Alistair Higgins provided an update on the proposal to install CCTV cameras within the Holyland area, including associated benefits, resources and funding considerations. Key points covered, included:	
	 Highlighted recent research undertaken which reported the positive impacts of CCTV in deterring ASB and crime in a locality. 	
	• Based on the evidence, research across 41 studies on the effectiveness of CCTV, can result in a 16% – 35% reduction in crime.	
	• The number of HMOs and incidents of ASB and crime have increased in the area.	
	 Crime rates in the area has been captured and analysed from 2018-2021 which has helped identify reporting hotspots. Five potential high-impact CCTV locations have been identified in these hotspots, which have previous hard infrastructure and agreements in place for CCTV. 	
	• In terms of costs, a total of £78,500 is required to install the new equipment and the annual recurring cost is £6,750.	Note
	During discussion, the following points were raised:	
	 Helen Crickard – enquired if local residents have been consulted on the proposed introduction of CCTV and is there infrastructure and resources available to monitor the CCTV? 	

	 Natasha Brennan – Noted the potential benefits of this proposal, however highlighted issues experienced previously with CCTV in 2016, which were reported to Council (e.g. quality of images, live monitoring etc). Referred to the increase in car related crime in the area, that needs dealt with. Alistair Higgins – Confirmed that PSNI will monitor the CCTV as part of wider 	
	network via Musgrave Street, which will enable real-time and a vigilant approach in the area and instil confidence in residents.	PSNI
	 Helen Crickard – Sought clarification on what level of engagement has taken place with residents and businesses in the area. Suggested that CCTV will not fix all the problems and was keen to know what other interventions are being considered to tackle issues in the area. It is important that a package of solutions and interventions are brought forward given the complexities in the area. Alistair Higgins confirms the intention to consult further with residents, which is important and highlighted that early indications from initial community engagement has been positive. 	
	 Gerard Pollock – Thanked Ryan and Alistair for bringing the proposal forward and alluded to some positive examples of CCTV working in the city centre and interfaces and the ability to get early warning signs around ASB, to enable appropriate measures to be put in place. This is a quick win proposal, which would provide reassurance and put in place practical measures to address the concerns of residents. 	
	 Ryan Black – This is an initial proposal which still needs further consideration, development and testing with key partners including exploring funding options. 	
	 Helen Crickard – confirmed Forward South are keen to be involved in this going forward. 	PSNI
	ACTION – A small task and finish group of core partners to be established, led by the PSNI, to further develop and refine the proposal including exploring funding opportunities and report back to the Living Here Board.	PSNI
6.	Department of Health – Integrated Care System (ICS) NI Draft Framework	
6.1	Charlene Stoops provided an overview of the Department of Health's consultation into a proposed new model of planning and managing services through an ICS. Key points covered within the presentation included:	Note
	 The approach is defined as "A collaborative partnership between organisations and individuals with a responsibility for planning, managing, and delivering care, services and interventions to meet the health and wellbeing needs of the local population and which, through taking collective action, deliver improved outcomes for individuals and communities and reduce health inequalities." 	
	 The challenges facing the health and social care sector were outlined, as were the wider social determinants of health, including socioeconomic factors, physical environment, heath behaviours, and health care. 	
	 The current commissioning system had been found to be overly bureaucratic and lacking clear accountability for decision making. Highlighted the opportunity presented by the scheduled closure of the Health and Social Care Board and associated Local Commissioning Group's, and ambition to create strengthened local delivery structures. 	
	 The Health Minister approved a programme of work to develop a new ICS model in NI which would adhere to the principles of delegated local level decision- making and funding (with the exception of specialised services to be planned, 	

8.	A.O.B	
	• 13 June 2022 – 11am – 1pm	
	• 11 April 2022 – 11am – 1pm	
	• 24 January 2022 – 11am – 1pm	
	• 8 November 2021 - 11am – 1pm	
7.1	members to hold these dates in their diaries until formal invites are released.	NOTE
7.1	Ryan Black outlined the schedule of forthcoming Board meetings and asked board	Note
7.	Schedule of future Board Meetings	
	VCSE Panel) to secure wider representation and input.	5.1
	well as highlighting need to explore how we best utilise existing structures (e.g.	СРР
	 Paula Powell – Highlights the challenge of securing 1x rep from the VCSE sector to attend the AIPB going forward. Further support to this was raised in the chat as 	
	determinants of health through the new ICS model.	
	partners to augment roles and relationships, to codesign solutions to the wider	All
	members of the Living Here Board to proactively work together with health	
	Charlene Stoops – Reiterated that there is a big opportunity for the CPP and	
	workshop with the right partners to consider how we bring this together and avoid duplication over the next few months.	lain Deboys
	lain agreed to work with Kevin Heaney and Charlene Stoops to convene a	
	difference forums. Highlighted the opportunity to better align and integrate across outcomes, but we need to develop a systematic way of doing this. ACTION:	- Ca. O. D
	lain Deboys – Need to consider how we avoid having the same conversations at difference for the same of the same to be the same of the same to be the same of the same to be the same of the	Stoops/ Carol Diffin
	Stoops agreed to pick this up at trust executive session around this.	Charlene
	• Carol Diffin – Need to consider how this new model is connected to children, young people and families through the Belfast Area Outcomes Group. Charlene	
	 Discussion points: Carol Diffin – Need to consider how this new model is connected to children, 	
	Discussion points	
	and would be subject to review and refinement going forward.	
	anticipated that the new ICS model would be implemented by March/April 2022	
	 users and community and voluntary sector representatives. Confirmed that following the consultation period currently underway, it 	
	include e.g. Trusts, GPs, the Public Health Agency, Community Planning, service	
	 It is proposed that Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs) are formed with representation beyond the Health and Social Care sector. Membership would 	
	proposed 4-tiered model, was presented. It is proposed that Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIRBs) are formed with	
	The principles and values which underpin the emerging framework, as well as the	
	local intelligence.	
	managed and delivered regionally). The model also focusses on an outcome- based approach which adopts a population health needs approach informed by	



Belfast City

The Covid Response in Lockdown One – making sure no-one was left behind

Draft Version 4

7.4.2021

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Executive Summary	5
The Context	13
The Role of Different Actors	16
The Covid Response	19
Why is Good Relations everyone business?	24
Theme 1: Strong, Positive and Transformative Civic Leadership - Inclusive Governance with locommunity change makers	
Theme 2: Shared & Connected Spaces - a smart, connected city driven by inclusive & transformative place making	28
Theme 3: Shared Services - focusing on prevention, co-design, co-creation, & social innovation	n32
Theme 4: Structured collaboration, partnerships & resourcing	37
Theme 5: An intercultural city and respectful cultural expression within the rule of law	41
Conclusion - Leaving No-one behind	43
The next steps	46
Contributors	49

Introduction

COVID-19 has impacted and changed people's lives significantly since March 2020. It has been particularly severe on those in the most disadvantaged areas of our city. Those who were shielding, and other vulnerable residents, faced many challenging financial issues including fuel and food poverty. Many other challenges were also faced with isolation, loneliness and mental health and well-being concerns brought to the fore. Covid 19 has impacted upon and changed people's lives in Belfast significantly since March 2020. As of April 1st 2021, it has taken the lives of 2,905 people in Northern Ireland, of which 561 lived in Belfast.

The world reacted with unprecedented measures to curb the pandemic. Overnight, new phrases in everyday language became commonplace in homes around the World: "Lockdown; social distancing; shielding; daily cases; confirmed clusters; testing and death rates".

The media had everyone at "attention". The focus of the world was on Italy with soaring infection rates and deaths.

With pictures broadcast around the world, fear grew within communities; information changed daily, and an uncertain future was becoming a reality.

In March 2020, people's lives changed significantly. This was what we now know as "lockdown one".

At this time, our Belfast communities were suddenly and unexpectedly fighting against an invisible yet deadly enemy in an effort to protect their families, friends and neighbours. Many people felt vulnerable, were self-isolating for weeks, and many others lost jobs or were furloughed. Community services and activities ceased. Schools closed. Financial hardship was experienced by countless households and families. Many people working on the front line didn't know the impact of the pandemic on their own health and wellbeing yet worked tirelessly for others.

Communities on the ground across the city and Belfast City Council swiftly responded. Phase one of the response ensued.

This paper explores Belfast's immediate response to the pandemic **through the lens of good relations**, a city in transition and normalising from conflict. It looks at how investment in **Good Relations and Peace building** has helped to build the city's resilience and strengthened **relationships between and within communities**. It looks at the effect this has had on meeting the needs of vulnerable people and communities. It examines **lessons learned** and whether a focus on the **common good** helped improve the Covid response and re-set Good Relations across the city. It also asks if the COVID-19 pandemic actually helped to create the **conditions for increased cooperation** between and within communities across the city, leading to greater collaboration on an intra and inter community basis.

As stated in **Belfast City Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy**, it is in no one's interest to leave people behind. With so many communities in Belfast still experiencing poverty and deprivation and some still experiencing the effects of the conflict, compounded by fears among some around their cultural identity, the pandemic created an **emergency response unlike no other.**

Analysing the response to Covid through a "good relations lens" can help evaluate the **value of investment in community relationships** on a journey to normality. Peace and Good Relations in the City are currently supported by a focus on social inclusion, combating poverty and increasing labour mobility. An integrated, shared, reconciled and intercultural Belfast and an interdependent, just, equitable, open and diverse society are based on the way citizens create and sustain relationships.

Belfast is a **City of resilience** - one of 100 worldwide cities of resilience. Its framework describes the capacity of cities to function, so that the people living and working in cities – particularly the poor and vulnerable – survive and thrive no matter what stresses or shocks they encounter. The framework for Belfast provides practical ways of ensuring that the Belfast Agenda and the Local Development Plan can better withstand the unexpected. **This pandemic was unexpected**, but while strategies talk about the importance of leadership, integrated development and new ways of thinking, planning and collaborating across sectors, an examination of how the COVID-19 Pandemic was addressed across the city will help understand whether **strategies and actions** are making a difference and **whether building "good relations" has contributed to this resilience.**

In 2019 a new **Good Relations Strategy** for the City was launched; the vision of which was "A Shared City - a city re-imagined, connected and resurgent delivering inclusive growth that leaves no-one behind". This shared city vision is a long-term one which fully complements the Belfast Agenda. It requires Council, elected members, other government agencies, the private sector and local people to work together, collaborate and make it happen.

In this report and through the themes of the Good Relations Strategy, we will examine how the intention of this strategy was borne out **during the emergency response to the pandemic and** understand how the learning can contribute towards recovery in the longer term.

The themes of the Council's Good Relations Strategy are as follows:

- Theme 1: Strong, Positive and Transformative Civic Leadership Inclusive Governance with local community change makers
- Theme 2: Shared & Connected Spaces a smart, connected city driven by inclusive & transformative place making
- Theme 3: Shared Services focusing on prevention, co-design, co-creation, & social innovation
- Theme 4: Structured collaboration, partnerships & resourcing
- Theme 5: Respectful cultural expression within the rule of law

Executive Summary

Local community organisations, social enterprises and voluntary sector organisations alongside their numerous volunteers have been an integral part of Belfast's response to the pandemic. This has been supported by strong leadership from the sector linked to robust leadership and support from local and central government. During the pandemic, while much of society and the business sector were asked to close down, the community and voluntary sector in Belfast was never busier. It was involved in the delivery of essential services across the City. The shock of the pandemic to the City, precipitated an immediate and agile response from the community and voluntary sector. They were the first out of the blocks within local communities, immediately mobilising their human resources and using their tacit knowledge of their communities to plan and deliver services to those most in need and to the most vulnerable, in local areas.

The pandemic and the sector's reaction to it drove a significant amount of creativity and innovation to the delivery of local services. It demonstrated the ability of the sector to work hand in glove with central and local government in planning and managing the effects of the pandemic. It demonstrated an acute awareness of local people's needs and the importance of decisive decision making. It demonstrated how connected local community leaders and their staff and volunteers were to those who live within their communities.

Local became the new global. The lockdown and context in which services could be delivered enabled communities to pause and take a look at what was happening with their neighbours. It brought the importance of a sense of place and belonging into focus. It enabled local communities to stop and understand the local environments and neighbourhoods within which they lived.

However, the strength of the community and voluntary sector infrastructure in Belfast which has enabled this innovative practice during the pandemic to flourish, did not happen by accident. Over the last number of decades there has been a strong recognition of, and commitment to the importance of investing in the City's community infrastructure - by both central and local government, by EU PEACE funding, International Funds and by numerous trusts and philanthropic organisations. This has included investment in single identity community development work with a focus on building the confidence and resilience of local communities through to sector specific investment in women or youth-based activities; right through to cross community development, with a focus on building sustainable, meaningful and purposeful cross-community relationships. While there are still some areas and groups that require support, this has resulted broadly in a sector that is well connected within its own community as well as outside of its own boundaries with its neighbours and indeed beyond.

This investment has resulted in the development of social capital. Social capital refers to the links and bonds formed through friendships and acquaintances. There are three different types of social capital – bonding, bridging and linking. Social capital helps communities to flourish.

Bonding social capital describes the connections between similar groups of people that share the same or similar characteristics. This might be age, hobbies, relationships, sports teams, family members, close friends and neighbours. It exists between 'people like us' and who typically have strong close relationships. It is through these connections that people are willing to help each other out and gain 'social capital'. We are more likely to help someone and go out of our way for someone with whom we have a bond as opposed to someone we know nothing about.

Bridging social capital differs from bonding given that the ties are not so strong. Instead, the links come from weaker connections such as friends of friends, or colleagues and associates. The

connection is 'bridged' through one person being introduced to another through an intermediary. That intermediary is effectively 'the bridge' that brings the two parties together. There is greater diversity in this type of social capital. Bridging social capital is developed horizontally between people from similar socio-economic groups.

Linking social capital is an extension of bridging. Linking occurs vertically between socioeconomic groups. Those who are in similar socio-economic groups are often referred to as a 'community'. It is outside of those communities that linking takes place. Linking social capital has many indirect community benefits such as connecting government with the people with the lived experiences of the policies that government may develop.

Through the Pandemic, the Communities in Belfast have demonstrated all three types of social capital, to differing degrees. From the interviews carried out as part of this piece of research it would seem that many parts of Belfast display **strong bonding social capital**, community ties and friendships within local neighbourhoods, estates and areas. This kinship ensures people look out for one another; people, in the main know their neighbours and interact with them. There is a strong sense of place with many people having a deep tie to where they were born or grew up.

Belfast is a city that is still very segregated, where 90+ physical barriers still exist and where many of the city's residents live in segregated areas. Over the years of the conflict the people of Belfast built up a strong resilience to the many shocks and ongoing stressors they experienced during the "troubles" with a fervent will and desire to keep going and help and support those most in need. This ability to "get back up again" was vividly demonstrated at the start of the pandemic where many within the community and voluntary sector were "the first out of the blocks" in terms of helping people. These communities demonstrated a forensic knowledge of the needs of individuals within their communities which assisted in an ability to "hit the ground running" and access those people in most need quickly and effectively.

Bridging social capital is also apparent in Belfast but slightly less so than bonding social capital. In many parts of Belfast, this has been supported through the likes of the Council's and other good relations programmes, the various EU PEACE programmes and through community development activities which has brought people together to discuss and network on issues of common concern e.g., peace building, social justice or poverty related issues. This has resulted in strong relationships across communities of slightly different religious or community backgrounds but in many cases similar social economic backgrounds.

Linking social capital has also been apparent across Belfast through for instance Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, Shared City Partnership, the former Peace Partnerships, District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, Children And Young People's Strategic Partnerships, the Young People's Forum and many more. This has helped communities link with people in government departments to discuss policy issues that are relevant to their local neighbourhoods. These partnerships have influenced their lived experiences and enabled the development of policies and programmes on the ground. It is the investment in these types of partnerships over the last 20+ years that has helped Belfast to move from a city affected by the conflict to a city healing from the conflict and building relationships for the **common good of all**.

However, as the good relations strategy says, "while a lot has been achieved, there is still more to do".

A whole system approach which brings all sectors together to deliver a better society – central and local government, the community and voluntary sector and private businesses - requires everyone to understand and respect each other. This is what has been evident through the pandemic. **What**

united people was the common invisible enemy, something that affected everyone in the same way but about which no one had control. COVID-19 ignored and continues to ignore the traditional community boundaries that for many years have caused division within the City. Some of the 90+ physical barriers have been metaphorically broken through by this virus. The same types of issues and hardship are seen on both sides of these 90+ physical barriers with family heartbreak being reaped upon families of all religions, race, ethnicity, gender, age and class. Communities understand each other and are both fighting against this invisible yet deadly enemy in an effort to protect their families. Many people have been left isolated, many face financial hardship, many have had to self-isolate for days and weeks, while many others have lost jobs or been furloughed for months. Many have had to go to work in low paid, low skilled jobs while others in the city are helping fight the virus in our hospitals.

Volunteers have been the backbone of all supports offered by the community and voluntary sectors, without whom less would have been achieved. These are the unsung heroes that also need recognition and ongoing support.

Some of the **learning from a good relations perspective** is included below to provide insight as to what this document explored.

Leadership

- The same unity of purpose which has driven decision making during the crisis, could be harnessed to drive future co-design, co-production and collaborative decision making moving forward. New Decade, New Approach embraces the concept of co-design and co-production
- The pandemic has demonstrated the importance of leaders thinking strategically and embracing the concept of longer-term resilience planning in partnership with communities
- Implementation during the emergency response can and should build understanding of how learning can contribute towards recovery and improved service delivery for those most vulnerable in society in the longer term
- Connecting residents and participative democracy to representative democracy and elected members is vital in time of a crisis
- The community voluntary sector has stepped up into a new space within a more whole system
 and holistic approach and have demonstrated their crucial role in making things happen on the
 ground. They have also recognised more clearly the role of government and more trust and
 respect has been created
- Statutory bodies have recognised the crucial role of the CVS and once again more trust and respect has been created across sectors

Information sharing and communication

- A coordinated approach to data and information sharing is of paramount importance
- Community and voluntary sector infrastructure is a core ingredient to improved service delivery. Recognising and supporting this crucial third leg in the stool (public, private and community) is crucial to improved service delivery in a divided society.
- Creating clear messages from all agencies around need and eligibility can help to ensure a reduction in the duplication of effort that occurred across some elements of the programme delivery during the pandemic
- It is important in a crisis like this that need is not replaced with dependency developing mechanisms to help people to move towards a more sustainable lifestyle is important

- From a central government learning perspective, better data co-ordination and avoiding duplication in one central point can significantly assist with service planning - greater investment in data streams and dashboards to help make evidence-based decisions easier can help service planning. Some services for those in crisis such as Advice NI, the Health Trust, BCC and Good Morning Services along with some community groups had all established helplines before the other crisis support services were established.
- When working at an area-based level, other thematic needs such as for minority communities for S75 groups also need to be factored in
- The challenge for many staff, residents and volunteers was inequality of access to digital connections, devices and reliability
- While GDPR protects the most vulnerable, it should also protect staff and volunteers weekend
 work and a lack of work or volunteer based mobiles meant that many were sharing personal
 mobiles during these times of need

Relationships are important

- Relationships are strengthened when there are frequent meetings and a common goal
- With less emphasis on what divides people but rather what they share in common, more can be done to improve the lives of everyone
- The investment in programmes, activities and capacity builds trust, changes mindsets, builds relationships and strengthens social and human capital in local areas
- Innovation in community activities creates new skills which are transferable to the creation of other opportunities

Infrastructure

- The pandemic demonstrated the importance of a strong community infrastructure from grass roots to government and including the elected members and private sector and a system that is connected, collaborative, co-ordinated and enabled through relationships and good communications - there are still some areas where investment in capacity is required to continue to grow resilience in all parts of Belfast
- Strategic partners at grass roots level enable connectedness between community, funders and providers of services. When linked to Area-Based Integration Teams from Council an enhanced co-ordinated and collaborative way of working became a game charger for many organisations

Gaps in the infrastructure

- Gaps in infrastructure need to be addressed. Areas like Dunmurry and Suffolk and areas in the
 Outer East were identified as areas where greater investment is required in order to build
 resilience for any shocks or ongoing stressors. Some of these areas are new to Belfast which
 perhaps shows the effects of different legacy council led investment strategies in community
 infrastructure and the strength of this investment in the Belfast area
- Some areas across Belfast are fractured because of legacy and geography, but co-ordinated responses through area working teams and leadership at local level is improving relationships in such areas
- Sometimes service user voices were not heard in the crisis because the focus moved from the immediate response to other needs, demonstrating a need to continue a proactive approach in engaging with local communities and those in most need

- Affluent areas presented gaps because of a lack of community organisations and was often characterised through larger homes, elderly people, fuel cost issues, and isolated individuals not being able to easily access food and medicine due to shielding
- Minority grouping, new communities and transient communities have different levels of confidence, trust and ability to communicate and connect locally where they live. Dedicated help services, translation and signposting support is needed to ensure they are not left behind
- Reaching out beyond Council boundaries or beyond the geographical or sectoral remit of
 organisations' constitutions has highlighted the limits of what, where and how organisations can
 operate and increased the need to signpost where possible to others who are able to facilitate in
 such areas in times of crisis. Where gaps exist, then these may need to be supported.

Networking

- Despite there being many communities who were well connected, there were still many more
 who needed to connect better; some communities still don't have the confidence to share
 because trust in others is not there and capacity is not as strong
- Collaboration and co-ordination between organisations in a crisis are strengthened when all stakeholders are linked and part of an interdependent ecosystem
- During times of shock those who are most vulnerable are sometimes more visible and are no longer "easy to overlook". It is important now to reach out and build trust with these communities and enable new relationships, competencies and confidence to develop to build the capacity of communities most in need

Co-design, innovation, transformative services

- Co-design takes time but during the stage of recovery this needs to be speedier, learning the lessons from this initial reaction stage
- Many positive changes have resulted from the crises in terms of awareness of the social needs, housing needs and income deprivation issues faced by many in Belfast. There is now a need to examine ways to sustain the changes made during the crisis, looking at the positives of transforming public services and meeting people's needs in a sustainable way which builds the resilience of individuals, families and communities
- We need to capture the learning and share it
- Being able to react to issues as they arise is important. There is now a need to continue to build proactively for the future

Ways of working – area-based approaches

- Area based teams were effective and beneficial. Thematic work needs to be knitted within this right across the City with linked networks and signposting thus avoiding duplication
- Moving from a reactionary approach in a crisis to a more proactive, agile, co-designed and blended style of working during the recovery phase needs further consideration; one that sustainably addresses the needs of the most vulnerable and builds on the assets of local communities with a focus on getting the best out of all staff and communities
- A greater blend of working in the future for staff in the office, at home and on the ground within communities, which saves time travelling, uses appropriate technology to support this and with a focus on net zero carbon targets could deliver more benefits
- The need to avoid duplicating work due to the size of the Council area is not always possible, but data and integrated communications has facilitated progress in many areas

- Staff across all sectors and elected members need time to reflect on the lessons learnt from this
 initial shock to the city and the changing work patterns that have ensued. Investment in the
 personal development of staff is important and can help sustain positive ways of working which
 have been learnt from user experience and cross sectoral co-design practice supported by good
 information sharing and data manipulation
- Training for staff and community leaders around personal resilience is also needed moving from
 crises management to sustainable living through diet, nutrition, health and wellbeing, exercise,
 mental health etc.

Focus on poverty

• One of the major challenges with this crisis is that some further stresses are still likely to become a reality. Many people are still furloughed including many staff from the community and voluntary, private and statutory sectors. These people may not have been part of the "new way of working" so may be coming back to a very different working environment and will need time and support to adjust quickly. Allied to this is the likely rise in unemployment especially among young people. This more worrying issues associated with lost jobs could include further child poverty, fuel poverty and financial inclusion issues for many households across Belfast. Resilience building around employability will need to be a core focus moving forward.

Section 75 - Vulnerable groups

- Anti-social behaviour in the city for vulnerable people became an issue when the city was quieter.
 From the shadows, the vulnerability of those on the streets, especially those who are homeless, was more exposed
- Schools reported greater numbers of pupils with mental health issues in 2020, some directly related to lockdown and increasing levels of poverty and the impact of this on young people and their families
- In primary schools concerns for development of early language and reading skills, including the
 children's phonological awareness and application of phonics was frequently referenced. In
 addition, the development of mathematical concepts, gross and fine motor skills along with a
 home schooling environment affecting work/home life balance, negatively impacted on their
 emotional health and wellbeing¹
- Many people of all ages have lost confidence because of the restrictions and getting out again has
 created anxiety and depression, impacting widely on their health and mental well-being

The crisis has encouraged Good Relations

- A focus on the common good for all has helped to improve the Covid response and fast-forwarded Good Relations across the city
- The COVID-19 pandemic helped to create the conditions for increased cooperation between and within communities across the city leading to greater collaboration between and within communities
- Tension monitoring demonstrated the levels of tension clearly dropped during the lockdown
- Reported Sectarian and racism incidents were down over the first lockdown, because less people were outdoors
- Investment in Good Relations builds relationships, strength and resilience at all levels of the city enabling communities to get to know one another and live more cohesively together

-

¹ https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-56595413

Leaving no one behind

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on the most disadvantaged groups in our city. It has shone a light on those social issues that already existed prior to the pandemic; issues such as food and fuel poverty, isolation among the elderly, education, social exclusion, domestic violence, mental health, alcohol and drug misuse. Many of these issues have worsened over the last year. There have been both economic and social consequences created through the crisis. Any plan of recovery must address these systemic issues if we are to ensure that no-one is left behind.

- Resuming regular essential services for the elderly, the poorest and those with a disability
- Supporting women and children who have been in 'lockdown' in an environment of abuse
- Supporting migrants, refugees and minority ethnic communities suffering significant financial, food, fuel, migration issues and digital poverty
- Supporting young people with poor or limited access to digital devices, broadband, quality Wi-Fi, lack of printers; addressing the growing educational disadvantage as a result of lockdown home schooling
- Supporting those with drug and alcohol addictions in home and lockdown environments
- Supporting carers in their home who require respite from the demands and were unable to access support
- Prioritising life threating diagnosis and timely treatments in the health service
- Supporting so many people suffering from mental ill health and well-being
- Developing solutions for first time people experiencing poverty as a result of furlough of those who have missed out because of the pandemic

While solutions exist, issues are often complex; transcending legacy relationships, systems, available resources and leadership. However, the real challenge now is in how we support people to rebuild their lives, communities and our city.

Good Relations is a prerequisite to helping people access opportunities and enable citizens to fulfil their potential. Getting out of poverty through investment in skills, feeling safe to connect and travel across the city, visiting shared spaces and providing and engaging in shared services are a part of enabling individual, families and communities to a build positive future for our city. Where there are "good relations", there is trust and people feel safe.

The next steps

Lessons from the first lockdown demonstrates the importance of continued investment in community infrastructure to supporting the recovery. There is never a time for complacency. We are often affected by outside influences like Brexit and the fallout from political differences in which the most vulnerable in our city often lose out.

The gains made during the Covid response cannot be allowed to disappear and move back into a business-as-usual scenario. A whole systems approach means including all sectors in the conversation and investing in how the city can start to retain and create good well-paid jobs that help people out of poverty and onto a more sustainable household footing.

Building the capacity of the community and working with the sector and other partners to create a new community support framework based on the new agile working methods that have emerged as a result to the pandemic response, should be pursued.

There is a strong drive for the city to examine the concept of community wealth building. Above all citizens need to be placed first in terms of the recovery making sure that this is where priorities lie.

A **transformation journey has started** – there is now a new connectedness within local areas, between local areas and between local areas and the statutory and private sectors. It is now time to continue to grow capacity and bring partners and collaborators together.

Recovery plans should seek to maximise and harness benefits from new strategic investments, emerging developments and funding opportunities. Immediate, medium and long-term opportunities exist to create and shape economic opportunities. A recovery framework which is mindful of minimising the human cost, providing relief to communities and delivering essential day-to-day services should be the focus. At the time of writing a six-pillar recovery plan was being drafted. Its focus was on helping to support communities and the economy to recover by building on our strengths and assets as a city and a wider city region.

The pandemic will most likely further intensify existing inequalities and create significant economic and social challenges for our communities in coming years. The impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities, mental health and wellbeing, social isolation and vulnerability and financial worries including income, food and fuel poverty are all too obvious. Council will need to work with government to scale up projects to help address these issues. Leadership at all levels is vital and decision makers will need to engage with communities, evolve and deliver, ensuring a thread of good relations runs through everyone's business. The good relations commitments within Together, Building a United Community are outlined against four key strategic priorities. Each of these key priorities must continue to be supported by the shared aims:

- Our Children and Young People: to continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people
 and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations.
- Our Shared Community: to create a community where division does not restrict the life opportunities of individuals and where all areas are open and accessible to everyone.
- Our Safe Community: to create a community where everyone feels safe in moving around and where life choices are not inhibited by fears around safety.
- Our Cultural Expression: to create a community, which promotes mutual respect and understanding, is strengthened by its diversity and where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced.

We should remain committed, steadfast and focussed on these.

The journey ahead will not be easy, but the infrastructure in communities, the relationships across the city, the focus on the common good which exists across the community and the spirit of hope which focuses on a prosperous future for all, demonstrates that as a city emerging from conflict, we have more in common than divides us. With one of the youngest populations in Europe, **Belfast has youth, innovation and the creatively to drive it forward positively, leaving no one behind**.

The Context

The Belfast Agenda, the Community Plan for Belfast, was created by a strong partnership led by Belfast City Council. It identifies the work that all stakeholders focus on to unleash the energy and ability that exists in Belfast's people and communities.

The Vision for Belfast in 2035 as outlined in the Belfast Agenda is:

"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 energizing a dynamic and prosperous city region. A magnet for talent and business and admired around the world. A city people dream to visit".

The Belfast Agenda outlines five outcomes..... by 2035 Belfast will be a city:

- where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy;
- that is a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all;
- where everyone fulfils their potential;
- where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing; and
- that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable

Leaving no-one behind

One of the outcomes of the Belfast Agenda is that Belfast is a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive city for all. By 2035, Belfast will be a place where everyone will continue to feel welcome and safe and will be treated fairly with equality and respect in a shared city that values diversity and encourages civic participation.

Belfast's Good Relations Strategy provides a long-term vision, values and outcomes for good relations in Belfast. The council's Shared City Partnership facilitates an integrated approach to the promotion of good relations in the city, delivering the outcomes of the Belfast Agenda, resulting in effective urban development and management and more cohesive communities. The vision of the Good Relations Strategy is of shared city: "a city re-imagined, connected and resurgent delivering inclusive growth that leaves no-one behind".

The Good Relations Strategy seeks to create a vision for the city in which everyone can benefit from good relations being apparent, front and centre. The Strategy believes that making progress on improving good relations will be for **the common good** of all within society, creating the conditions for increased cooperation between and within communities across the city.

In a city seeking to improve good relations, the concept of the common good challenges everyone to view themselves as members of one community, respecting and valuing the identity, culture and traditions of others within the community, for the common good of everyone. Citizenship, collective action and active participation in the planning of the city and the development of public services can achieve a more inclusive society with a focus on the common good for all. The Good Relations Strategy aims to prioritise building the capacity of individuals and communities to engage in the creation of a more inclusive society as well as helping people to think about their own roles and responsibilities in this task.

Within the Good Relation's Strategy, the council aims to set the standard for the emergence of a better future for communities across the city and develop a new enabling environment which supports

empathy and respect. This will be for the common good of everyone within society in the knowledge that good relations is indeed everyone's business.

Belfast's Resilient City Strategy states that the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in 1998 was a milestone in the city's history. Since then, the creation of new institutions, implementation of key aspects of the peace agreement and dramatic reductions in conflict related violence in the city have created the conditions for a more resilient Belfast. However, it states that the legacy of conflict has manifested itself in division, which continues to directly impact on the city and to undermine its urban resilience. Some examples of this include:

- Division between communities remains prevalent with low levels of trust and high levels of residential, educational, physical and social segregation in many areas;
- Belfast contains the highest number of interface areas in the region where segregation remains high. Inter-community tensions are reducing but continuing. There are estimated to be around 97 security barriers and forms of defensive architecture across residential areas in Belfast;
- Many people within our society still think of Belfast in binary terms of a society made up of two
 communities; Catholic and Protestant. In many ways this binary view and its influence on public
 service decision making has accentuated division in our society by duplicating services and
 hampering the connectivity between people and communities; and
- Physical and psychological barriers between communities make travel around parts of the city difficult. This has resulted in people avoiding certain areas perceived to be unsafe.

Many individuals in the consultation about Belfast City's Resilient Strategy contended that until Belfast was truly a connected city, it would continue to be vulnerable to many risks.

The Resilience Strategy notes that several studies exist that demonstrate that conflict in cities significantly lowers their overall resilience to key risks. The existence of conflict or the threat of conflict exacerbates shocks and stresses, often making them more complex or expensive to solve. It also mentions the following regarding the importance of building resilience within a city.

- If the residents of Belfast continue to think, travel and live in a binary way the city's ability to respond to significant risks is weakened considerably;
- The provision of parallel services adds to the cost of public services, reducing capacity in the system to respond to unexpected shocks;
- Crisis management tends to be less effective when systems are disjointed or separate. Resilience
 requires integrated systems and cities, where a single decision is rolled out universally and
 speedily;
- When cities are well networked, capacity can be shared sometimes human capacity. This is made
 more difficult and sometimes more expensive in cities where residential segregation is prevalent;
- Lack of trust between communities, particularly those living in close proximity, means they are less likely to support each other this adds to a city's vulnerability in times of crisis.

So, how then have communities in Belfast reacted or dealt with this new invisible enemy that raced into the city in the Spring of 2020? Were the communities of Belfast prepared for this onslaught or in fact had the investment in good relations and peace building over the last 20 plus years built a foundation for a more resilient reaction to the pandemic than perhaps may have been expected?

The Good Relations strategy identifies the need to avoid binary decision-making which compounds division. This means shifting the dialogue to delivering on the Belfast Agenda in a way that involves people in an innovative city conversation on how services are delivered in a way that can foster sharing and build good relations. Has the pandemic demonstrated even more clearly the importance of this?

This current policy context within Belfast City Council creates the baseline for how services are delivered within our City. These questions above, and more, were explored as part of this report and helped guide an assessment on how far Belfast has actually come over the last number of years.

The Role of Different Actors

The initial response period from March to September 2020 is the subject of this report. In the report, we aim to chart some of the stories of the responses to the pandemic from a good relations perspective, the role of each of the players and the impact of their collective and collaborative action.





In March when the lockdown came, community groups responded quickly to support their local residents. Communities moved swiftly and met to discuss the challenges and resources which might be required. This included local politicians, church, sporting, community groups and volunteers. In some areas, helplines were already being set up and social media helped mobilise information sharing with immediate response to the lockdown. It appeared as if Belfast City Council buildings had shut and sent everyone home. However, the Council's staff were adapting and working efficiently in the background, many from home. Council established a **Community Response Hub** and four new Area Teams to coordinate the response work in partnership with local Community and Voluntary sector organisations alongside statutory partners. The hub serviced all of the city's geography as a customer helpline, remote contact centre and distribution hub.

A **Helpline** which involved Belfast City Council departments and partner agencies, including Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) and other key statutory and community and voluntary organisations, was established and worked together to provide services. The helpline's new area staff teams were flexible and responsive and included a mix of city and neighbourhood staff with invaluable local knowledge and contacts who quickly linked to other strategic and community partners who were

able to co-ordinate a range of groups. Almost overnight, a new way of working emerged. It was agile, connected and co-ordinated with a "can do" attitude to problem solving and decision making with a focus on meeting the needs of people and communities across the city.

The helpline sought to support those who were 'shielding' as well as other vulnerable residents. The helpline provided thematic funding to a range of community organisations across the City to support the delivery of essential services at the local level. These services included a localised coordinated response to support people who required food, medication, emotional support and advice. This support was funded by the Council and the Department for Communities.

Local communities were empowered and able to naturally connect, problem solve and innovate; taking appropriate measures to address any risks. A significant amount of community volunteers were mobilised as a result of the initiative. Alongside the Council helpline, communities also established localised community helplines, all of which collectively handled more than 14,000 calls.



Over a 16-week period the community hub was responsible for:

- delivery of 107,407 food parcels and hot food, 50,522 as part of the Department for Communities led scheme and 56,784 through local community providers;
- 9,320 deliveries or prescription pick-ups on behalf of residents;
- handling 9,770 calls from residents across the city.

The Council-run hub also distributed £1.6 million of emergency funding, supported by the Department for Communities to over 130 community and voluntary groups, enabling them to provide urgent support within their local areas.

The strength of infrastructure and relationships across the city were demonstrated in the multiple layers of co-ordinated and collaborative actions on the ground and the speed of response when the crisis was first announced. A proactive approach of action at all levels



was apparent within hours of Government statements.

Sharing data carefully while adhering to GDPR guidelines allowed all players to maximise their human, financial and logistics resources to reach out and connect with the most vulnerable and shielding residents. It also helped to calm the anxious and reassure those who felt lonely or isolated.

Belfast City Council was able to appoint **nine community strategic delivery partners**. These were mostly organisations with whom the council had existing established relationships and all of whom had well-developed and coordinated local networks in each area of the city. The partners were connected with their local community groups, many of whom were already mobile on the local doorsteps of those in need. Additional volunteers joined in to provide support and to ensure that the needs of all residents were met on their doorstep and in their homes.

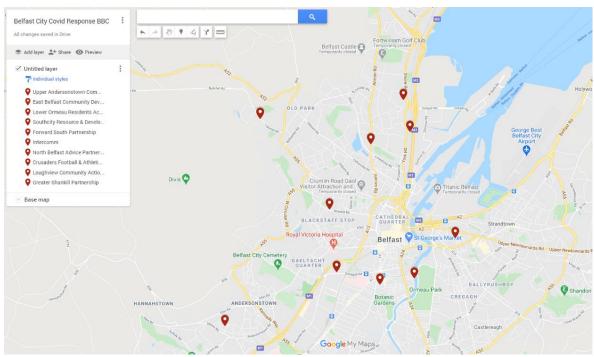


Image: Google Maps Image: Mapping the Strategic Partners across Belfast City Council area

The Covid Response

The timeline for the response is outlined below and demonstrates the fast pace of the virus as it invisibly raged into communities and the responses of various actors along the way.

Figure 2: Belfast City Council COVID-19 Timeline



The response to the pandemic was multi sectoral – community, voluntary sector, volunteers, council, other government bodies working together within and across the city. This report shines a light on

their stories through different case studies that demonstrate how the city has reacted to the pandemic from different perspectives.

The response from a one of the nine Community Strategic Delivery Partners

The community's reaction – a story from one of the nine community Strategic Delivery Partners

"Strong community infrastructure and supportive social networks helped our community to provide the support that was needed and acknowledge the importance of people's resilience during this emergency".

"A real positive to come out of this experience is that it has brought the community even closer. We have developed a stronger community team of residents and volunteers, which is truly invaluable".

- We have made new connections and built a strong resilient network of people
- We set up a telephone network to offer support and a listening ear to the befriended, a network that would offer comfort and support during confusing or distressing times
- We received calls from residents and provided a variety of services, including the delivery of 1000's of food parcels to the community and the collection of 100's of prescriptions.
- We spent a lot of time on, 'walk-arounds,' to make sure that all the residents in the area were coping well, and to check if they had any housing or universal credit issues, but also, just for a quick chat, which the residents loved
- We did people's shopping, collected prescriptions, waited in queues at the shops and chemist.
- We gave comfort food to our local pensioners, added flowers in our resilient packs and little notes to let our community know that they were not alone.
- We sourced the purchase of the bulk food from the supplier to allow the 30 groups involved in the network to have access to food for their areas
- We spent countless hours delivering hundreds of food parcels over the 15 weeks, but also a friendly face.
- The little chats and time spent together helped to generate a real sense of community spirit and inspired many residents to get involved and offer their time and support too.
- We could not have delivered so many of these parcels without the support of local businesses.
- Doorstep deliveries to people who needed help. We delivered thousands of information leaflets
- Private home layout reconfiguration, or in simple terms, we were furniture removers.
- We sourced and delivered PPE to numerous health care providers
- Churches and volunteers prepared and delivered food parcels to our older/ vulnerable/ self-isolating residents
- We were able to provide a variety of packs containing food and fruit, as well as toiletries and cleaning products
- We provided resilience packs and VE Day packs, which the kids really enjoyed
- We played street bingo and everyone sat in their own garden and enjoyed a bit of fun.
- We undertook one-to-one work with young people and some of our counselling sessions continued online
- We co-ordinated groups to sew cotton face masks to share with the community
- A team of volunteers secured property for victims of domestic violence, and provided and installed recycled furniture for families in need
- Family learning packs for both pre-school and primary school children were distributed, containing a wide variety of resources to support home learning and fun, family activities & helped children with home schooling via zoom
- We delivered many zoom activities with our two-year-olds, which were always noisy and lots of fun!
- We maintained the meals on wheels service through 100 days of lockdown
- We phoned people in the community and those with deeper issues, our counsellors offered phone calls
- We offered a telephone befriending service to address the impact of loneliness on older people
- We provided an extensive telephone check-in service, production of a newspaper for older people (to reach those who aren't online), and various online activities



The response from Belfast City Council Staff

Belfast City Council was a key player in the response to the pandemic in Belfast, having set up the Community Response Hub. Its staff were often the golden thread which linked communities to vital and responsive help, resources and support.

Belfast City Council staff reaction

Belfast City Council is large organisation with many people serving the community through its various departments, facilities and services. When lockdown came most services were shut down, facilities closed and staff sent home. Many were redeployed to manage the crisis. This meant working remotely, with challenges of digital connectivity and access to mobile devices. Staff needed to quickly adjust to new ways of working in virtual spaces, with new software and new systems rolled out for the community response hub. Home became the office — without other staff beside you. Home also meant families occupying the same spaces, and schooling, child care and domestic duties all existed in a new "working" environment. Adapting, learning, and coping in a crisis situation where needs were immediate for many set challenges for staff. Many vulnerable staff members were able to continue to work from home effectively without concerns; many worked relentlessly, while at the same time missing that crucial social and professional interaction available in office environments. A balance was lost for many between work and the home environment, as they were on constant call to respond. Other staff were out on the frontline leading, co-ordinating and delivering to the city residents on the ground. They too had concerns about their own protection, not knowing where or how the virus was spreading as advice changed on risks from the PHA almost daily in the early part of the lockdown.

There was however an overwhelming agreement from the CVS sector that the Council staff were often **the golden thread** which linked communities to vital and responsive help, resources and support. Community relations staff were often the "go to" people for connections in the community ensuring no one was left out or behind. While there were pockets in the city which did not have the same community capacity and connectedness, they were quickly identified through the Response Hub Call Centre and community workers in neighbourhood areas.

Not just a job....

Information sharing, co-ordination and collaboration among BCC staff was excellent because of a common goal and a duty of care for all residents of Belfast. New agile and innovative solutions were created reducing bureaucracy. While there was increasing fatigue towards the end of Lockdown One as services resumed, there has been a fast-forward button pushed which has created a new energy and focus for many. There is however concern for those staff members who were not involved and may have been furloughed. They will need to be brought up to speed with this new agile way of working once back at work in order to ensure that a whole system approach is maintained.

The response from within the community

While community and voluntary sector groups worked at speed to react to the community need on the ground. Local residents and volunteers also responded in a manner demonstrating the depth of community spirit and common good across the city. Thousands of residents and volunteers have contributed to helping their communities get through the crisis.

Healthy Living Centre – Care worker

On Tuesday 12 May 2020, International Nurses Day, Shaftesbury Healthy Living Centre as part of the Healthy living Alliance took part in a regional celebration of care workers! In partnership with BHSCT we delivered over 100 Florence cakes to 24 care homes across South Belfast for all the fantastic care workers, nurses and staff looking after the most vulnerable in our community during this pandemic.

Selfless individuals...

Riah, a young autistic girl from East Belfast, dedicated herself to baking scones for vulnerable people during lockdown. Riah wanted to help the elderly who could not get to the shops, so she spent on average six hours a day baking in the kitchen with her mum.

This resulted in about 1,500 scones a week. The scones were given out to food banks in Belvoir, Cregagh, Clonduff, Taughmonagh and the Connswater area across the community in the food parcels.

Lord Mayor of Belfast, Frank McCoubrey, presented Riah with a special medallion for her amazing work.



Young foreign students

Queen's PhD student Nermin Al Sharman from Jordan volunteered as a translator during the pandemic, helping the Arabic speaking community in Belfast. As soon as the lockdown began, Nermin, 27, knew that her skills as a translator put her in a unique position to help the community.

"I reached out to some of the locals in Belfast to offer my help," she says. "Originally, I wanted to volunteer as an on-call interpreter to help healthcare providers and patients in hospitals or health centres. Unfortunately, as I'm not a medical or nursing student and I'm not a pharmacist, I couldn't help alongside the healthcare providers. However, as a translator I can still help and make a difference by translating material related to the pandemic," she says. Nermin also discovered she wasn't alone in wanting to help. "Other people wanted to help as well, so a COVID-19 pandemic community response WhatsApp group and Facebook page covering Belfast/Greater Belfast was created. Knowing that I'm bilingual and that I'm a translator, one of the WhatsApp group members told me that they might need my help translating from English to Arabic and that's how I got involved."

Building our resilient communities

A number of interesting revelations have come to light as a result of this work. These include:

- the stark reality of the vulnerability of many of the residents of Belfast, where up to 50% of the population live in disadvantaged areas
- The positive impact of the work of the community and voluntary sector in the delivery of the localised response across all parts of the City - the human and social capital (volunteering) that exists and the neighbourliness demonstrated across the city and across communities - based, in many respects on the investment in the CVS infrastructure in areas, which for years, suffered as a result of the conflict
- The connectedness of the CVS with their local communities and the robustness of the community infrastructure across the city
- The strong "on the ground" presence of the statutory sector and their networks of CVS contacts and the linking social capital that exists between it and the community and voluntary sector
- The importance of the community and voluntary sector to accessing hard to reach vulnerable residents at a time of crisis and leaving no one behind, reflecting the ethos within the Belfast Agenda
- The effectiveness of the partnership between the council, the CVS and other statutory bodies, reflecting the collaborate gain that can be achieved through working together an important ingredient in the Belfast Agenda
- The good relations outcomes reports of communities traversing across interface areas and peace lines to support their neighbours, in many parts of the City, demonstrating that good relations is everyone's business as outlined in the Council GR strategy
- The focus on and the ability to "leave no-one behind" of the entire initiative, demonstrating the significant resilience of the city in a time of crises

These next five chapters aim to demonstrate how dealing with the pandemic has helped to deliver on the five priorities within the good relations strategy for our city and why good relations will continue to be important in the recovery agenda moving forward

Why is Good Relations everyone business?

Good relations is a core ingredient in the vision and outcomes of the Belfast Agenda and essential to supporting its top priority of "delivering inclusive growth and leaving no one behind." It is also a critical component needed to achieve the vision of the Belfast Local Development Plan, which is that "In 2035, Belfast will be a globally successful and smart regional city that is environmentally resilient with a vibrant economic and social heart." This Strategy aims to position Belfast to be ready for the challenges of a changing world and to engage positively in facing these challenges head on. Many people in the city still think in binary terms, of communities, defined by two religions; protestant and catholic. The binary divide has in many ways created a public service delivery model that has serviced division in the past and compounded those divisions.

This section examines the five themes of the good relations strategy and examines in what way the communities of Belfast have reacted and addressed the impact of the pandemic on their lives and examines if they have been able to ensure that "good relations is everyone's business" breaking out of the traditional binary ways of thinking about Belfast.

Theme 1: Strong, Positive and Transformative Civic Leadership - Inclusive Governance with local community change makers

The Good Relations Strategy seeks to promote and build strong positive and transformative civic leadership which can support the diversity and inclusion of all people and communities living in the city. The role of those in positions of leadership is vital in this task. The need for strong and positive

leadership extends well beyond politics and into the civic sphere. All those in positions of leadership in education, media, faith, sport, cultural, voluntary and community, private business, and others, have a role to play in transforming Belfast's society into a rich diverse community.

This civic leadership and engagement was clearly demonstrated during the pandemic with many change makers from different walks of life demonstrating their leadership skills at a time of crises in a range of ways.

Civic Engagement is "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make a difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes."

Thomas Ehrlich, (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching)

Political leadership was demonstrated through Elected Members working together to make decisions quickly. They exhibited a shared sense of purpose in addressing the crisis within the city through working in the public interest for all. Party politics were put aside and the common good became a strong driver in making things happen quickly and efficiently for all. This included geographic and thematic community sharing of resources to meet immediate need.

Central and local government bureaucracy which at times can slow down decision making and stifle creative or innovative thinking was replaced with a more agile system of decision making with access to senior decision makers and clear lines of communication with staff who met on a regular basis.

Crisis management and relationship management systems were put in place. Dashboard, information flows and critical communications pathways were established with supporting user guides for all staff engaged in the covid response within Council to know and understand their role and response pathways to ensure every enquiry was acted on appropriately.

Community leaders were very quick to respond to the crises and in some cases "were the first out of the blocks" in terms of getting things moving locally. Many were linked into their local communities

and organisations, who knew the local needs at grass roots level.

Α traditional silo-based approach government to decision making and activities was replaced with a "whole system" approach. Horizontal and vertical relationships were developed through Belfast City Council's new Area-based teams across Belfast which connected with central government decision makers within the Department for Communities, the Belfast Health Trust, the Public Health Agency and others. New ways of addressing issues proposed were implemented with a focus on getting things done quickly. This led to speedier decision making at all levels.

A solutions based practical approach to front line services was adopted and put into action quickly by all engaged. This was driven by the existence of strong bonding and linking social capital driven by strong cross sectoral relationships that have been developed over many years between council staff and elected members working locally with community leaders. Tacit knowledge was exhibited by local community, local elected members and local government staff local knowledge, connections and provided relationships real strength to shaping an effective response, one driven by a strong understanding of what would

Leadership & community change makers...

Bob Stoker, a community leader at South City Resource Development Centre demonstrates one of many examples of strong, positive leadership which crosses the geography of Belfast. While Bob comes with a civic leadership record dating back many years, a crisis often shows up the inclusive change makers of our city in different ways.

While Bob's focus was on the south of the City his relationships and collaborative efforts reached far beyond. Strong relationships across Belfast with many community organisations during the response to Covid helped deliver services and support to residents in need. Many times, out of hours and on weekends when resources were thin on the ground and people were in need, calls were made and without question people delivered across the community and traditional divided geography. With a crisis action plan for events such as social, economic or environmental challenges already in place under Bob's leadership, developed a couple of years ago, the team were ready to react when the pandemic was announced. While no one could have predicted the pandemic would take the shape it did, preparation to respond quickly in an organised and co-ordinated manner was made possible because of the action plan.

Understanding "local", having also completed a house survey which identified those who may need help if a crisis struck, also demonstrated the power of up-to-date data. Bob and his team were able to act on this data and immediately understand who would need support with food, medicine, fuel, finance or even in some cases where residents may become isolated quickly. While the community is growing and transient in the south of the city, like many other areas, core links to activities around the community centres also allowed them to remain connected and understand the community to pin point need. Employing local people, running pre/after school care, expanded the networks and linked to parents, families and friends in the neighbourhood. These expanded networks brought important local understanding and connectedness. Links to church groups and a range of community groups helped to delegate responsibility to different areas of the community and covered needs like isolation, signposting or support. Often translation issues were challenging but, these were overcome through children, sometimes having better language skills or connecting to other cultural groups for support. At the heart of leadership, organisation and co-ordination was communication. As described by Bob, the Council Area Team Mangers and support from the Department for Communities, was easy, highly responsive and the City Council stepped up to the mark. This in no small part key to ensuring no person was missed and needs were supported and met.

work or wouldn't work within local areas and one that was quick to identify the most vulnerable within local areas and the types of solutions necessary to addressing their needs.

The goodwill exhibited by Council staff demonstrated an emphasis on the common good, another focus of the good relations strategy. Council staff were re-deployed willingly and quickly and were able to use their strengths, skills, relationships and experience to flexibly work together with other statutory and community partners in getting things done; in identifying creative solutions and in planning and executing actions quickly. This resulted in increased relationships and collaboration across sectors.

Significant resources were allocated to local communities from the Department for Communities and were distributed to local communities through Council. Council staff worked with local communities to distribute this with less bureaucracy while simultaneously ensuring good governance. The Council also managed a range of its own support funds for local communities through its departments directly.

Solutions and permissions around data were sorted quickly to respond appropriately.

There were, however, some leadership gaps in small pockets across Belfast where perhaps community infrastructure has not been fully developed or is still at an early stage of development. This, in many respects, acts as a counter factual to those areas where investment in community infrastructure has been strong and the differences that this investment can make to making communities more resilient. Many such people and communities who would normally not have accessed the support were enabled through the new ways of working and because of the circumstances during the pandemic response.

The Good Relations Strategy aimed to progress a number of actions, many of which have been positively progressed as a result of the pandemic.

- The pandemic has proven that this journey is progressing and that transformative leadership at all levels can come together in a crisis and create change agents that can make the city better for everyone. Transformative leadership skills among civic leaders, local community change agents and statutory policy makers or service providers has been tested during the crises and has demonstrated an ability and willingness to work together based on a strong tacit knowledge of local communities that can make things happen quickly and effectively
- Social innovation has been demonstrated through the area-based teams, through the Belfast
 Community Response Hub and the Strategic partners on the ground, resulting in evidence-based
 solutions to problems that contribute collectively to the city, area and neighbourhood
 regeneration framework
- Within these Area Based Teams there has been opportunities for open dialogue on how each part of the city can become more resilient to shocks and stressors
- Processes and existing structures, formal and informal, have been challenged and reshaped in the short term. The challenge will be how this type of momentum can be maintained moving forward and how it can be used to address good relations stressors for the city moving forward
- The reaction to the pandemic has enabled and built more intercommunity trust by providing more
 networking opportunities within the area-based teams. The strong existence of bridging, bonding
 and linking social capital within and between communities has been demonstrated across the city.
- Community and voluntary sector leaders in particular have been able to shine a light on those
 citizens and communities within in the city which are marginalised or disengaged from other social
 or community activities, many of whom were hit hardest by the pandemic. Empathy has been

built with a greater understanding and awareness of the perils of poverty and vulnerability among many people across the city. The city feels like a more cohesive place.

A civic Leader and a mobilised community reaching out and beyond...

Leadership at local level which impacts and transcends a City has been demonstrated many times during the Covid Response. Community stories have emerged through this research of people responding selflessly to the needs of others. On the Shankill Road a soup kitchen was initiated by one of the council's elected members. The kitchen started making soup for local people including those who were shielding, refugees and people with no recourse to public funds or who were referred through the Belfast Hub helpline. A call was put out on social media for volunteers and within hours there was over 60 responses from cooks, drivers and skilled administrators. A mix of people from across the North Belfast area joined in and ran the kitchen for three months making over 200 cups of soup a day all of which were delivered to those in need. The diverse nature of response for a city in transformation was demonstrated through the make-up of the volunteers within the soup kitchen at a time of social need. There were drivers from a loyalist ACT initiative, volunteers from Loaf Catering, a social enterprise working with people with learning difficulties and autism actively engaged and volunteers on furlough. Everyone worked seamlessly together immaterial of their community background consciously recognising the value of volunteering and of working together on a common cause. Most importantly, relationships between the volunteers developed organically because of the common goal, sense of purpose and dedication which was driven by the leadership of a local civic leader. For many this was a life changing experience venturing out of their comfort zones, developing skills, making friends and providing new ways of thinking. As a result some are even thinking about working in the CVS or volunteering more regularly into the future

COVID-19 COMMUNITY HELPLINES



Theme 2: Shared & Connected Spaces - a smart, connected city driven by inclusive & transformative place making

The Good Relations strategy outlines that segregation remains high in Belfast, resulting in significant costs to those who live in the vicinity of these areas, such as the 90+ physical barriers that still exist across the city. The impact on relationships, labour markets, the inefficient use of services and facilities, significant urban blight, poverty and educational disadvantage are all characteristics of divided areas. The strategy aims to promote sharing over separation and the economic, social and environmental benefits of such. It outlines the need to continue to create spaces for communities to interact and make connections with each other, moving from parallel living to meaningful relationships and casual interactions. Has the pandemic achieved this? Many consulted would say that "yes it has".

One of the actions within the Good Relations strategy is the creation of opportunities for greater connectivity and sharing and the need to continue to build relationships within and between communities to increase the confidence of people in using and developing shared spaces and services. The Area Team approach has brought area-based representatives together regularly, co-ordinating and building trust, in enabling the sharing of information thus building the planning of shared services across the City.

The strategy talks about how technology has a significant role to play, creating opportunities for the creation of greater virtual shared spaces and connectivity between communities. The pandemic has created numerous virtual shared spaces which has sped up the concept of promoting sharing over separation and the resultant economic, social and environmental benefits. The Call Centre at the heart of Belfast's response has kept communities connected to the Council and other service providers. Social media also became a shared space to share information and support to local communities.

Many of the community and voluntary sector programmes have adapted quickly to online provision and while many people are suffering zoom fatigue, many older volunteers are happy to engage in online sessions as it can help address some of the loneliness felt by many during these unprecedented times.

Building relationships in the area-based partnerships helps to build relationships across communities that can in the longer-term increase confidence in using and developing shared spaces and shared services. The area-based partnerships and many of the local projects has created opportunities for bridging and linking social capital to be developed perhaps more quickly than would have been possible in "normal" times, building on the already developing relationships across the city. Many of the projects have helped to create spaces for communities to interact and make connections with each other, moving from parallel living to meaningful relationships and casual interactions.

With lockdown came the need for people to get out and about and engage in some form of physical activity. Parks and other open spaces across the city became important places to get out and exercise and get some limited socially distanced social interaction. People started to explore spaces across the city which they had never engaged in before and started to realise what was on their doorstep. These free experiences opened people's eyes to the physical assets on their doorstep and the importance of embracing these as part of a healthy lifestyle moving forward. However, some parks also became places for anti-social behaviour, but much of this was because people had little to do and nowhere to

go. For some young people they became hang out areas as there was nowhere else for them to meet with their friends. For some older people this type of engagement by young people in parks was seen as intimidating while for young people, they just needed somewhere to meet safely. These experiences identified the need for embedding the shared space principles as outlined in the Good Relations strategy ensuring that everyone feels comfortable in shared spaces and the need to support the development of a sustainable, transferable and scalable approach to the management and promotion of shared spaces.

For some, physical and psychological barriers were still a challenge even in lockdown, with some stating "it's not my patch, not my people".

The city as a safe and shared space for all was also challenged in how the city addressed those with vulnerabilities like homelessness or substance abuse challenges. ASB in the city for vulnerable people such as drug users became an issue when the city was quiet and led to an increased focus on the need for a Pharmacy Needle Exchange programme which was initiated. This also highlighted the vulnerability of some of the city's residents and the ongoing need to build on the existing multi-disciplinary approach to supporting these people. The pandemic response resulted in the inclusion of different communities, reaching out through the community including the Roma community and asylum seekers.

The impact of closing community centres and all of their activities meant that many vulnerable groups deprived of meeting places and things to do, replaced by zoom meetings and phone calls. This demonstrated the importance of the social interaction delivered by the community and

Place making in Lower Ormeau

Life in the lockdown changed many lives and routines. A new appreciation by local residents, for local shops, the park and neighbours developed. With more time at home people started bumping into neighbours and getting to know them a little better.

A community entry behind people's homes was blocked with barbed wire and rubbish and was unsightly and untidy adding to a sense of no-one cares. During lockdown the community came together and cleared and power hosed the entry; neighbours started painting their fences and walls and following this collective tidy up a new shared place was created where people could relax, and children could play safely.

During the process neighbours donated paint, rollers and brought coffee, pastries and shared conversations. Pots plants and garden furniture decorated the space. Neighbours became connected in new ways, and a realisation of friendship and a culturally diverse neighbourhood richer for its local people and place emerged because of the time spent together with a common purpose – creating a shared neighbourly space.



voluntary sector and the impact this has on social isolation and loneliness. It demonstrated how important the use of arts, heritage, sports and technologies are in animating shared spaces.

The Good Relations strategy aims to help transform contested spaces in the city. For some groups living in interface areas, their relationships and the support infrastructure has been strengthened through a common purpose around initiatives like making masks and delivering these to hospitals as well as making referrals across and into other communities.

Belfast Friendship Club during lockdown...a virtual shared space

Usually, Belfast Friendship Club would meet at Common Grounds Cafe, University Avenue. But lockdown changed all that. During normal times, Belfast Friendship Club is a safe shared space and place:

- a space for all humans, regardless of race, gender, cultural or religious background (or no religion) sexual orientation, disability etc
- a space to be friendly and supportive, bring cheer to each other and combat social isolation
- a place for solidarity not charity, we aim to interact as equals
- a friendship club, not a dating agency
- it's not a place for trying to convince others of one's religious or political views

Well, here is a quick story which summarises a smart, connected city driven by inclusive and transformative place making. Belfast Friendship Club adapted to look after its members, all in a virtual World but all in a smart, connected, and transformative manner, making a **new virtual space**.

A buddy system: members are linked together for regular phone contact. Currently 30+ people have been matched on this scheme and more continue to come forward.



Keep talking: BFC asylum seekers can apply to receive phone credit remotely on a monthly basis during the lockdown and the scheme continues.

A virtual craft table: members take turns to lead craft activities using simple household materials and these have been so prolific that we're able to offer them twice weekly in the form of pre-recorded video, live video or a photo montage. They have all been inclusive, easy to do and generated an enthusiastic following. Members have learnt how to decorate eggs with home-made dyes, created simple greetings cards, sew protective face masks, learned to knit, make soda bread, banana bread, flat breads, coriander juice, wind chimes and so much more.

Virtual BFC online: a weekly welcome to join other members for a chat, see and hear familiar faces and voices. We offer a choice of two break out rooms (a) music and a chat or (b) games.

IT support: accessing Zoom via email / phone, setting up Zoom Pro, setting up WhatsApp on desktops, managing events / invitations via Facebook is offered by one of our members.

A fitness group: one of our members leads a weekly online cardio fitness session for others

A mindfulness group: one of our members leads guided meditation sessions and a chance to talk about our mental well-being in a supportive environment.

Chief pirate's check-in with the crew: a weekly video message to reach out to and reassure our wider membership, boost morale, flag new opportunities and serve as a reminder about sources of help and support. Held live on Facebook.

A weekly BFC music podcast: took off at 8pm on Friday 27th March 2020, finding an immediate and enthusiastic audience, due, in no small part, to the professionalism of the host and the knowledge of the musical guru. Music plays a central and very popular part of BFC activities/events and the podcast gives members a chance to unify around the musical choices, announcements and dedications that usually take place at the club. The future potential for this is clear as a means of including members who cannot physically attend BFC for various reasons. This clearly has the potential to continue beyond COVID-19 and the possibilities are endless!



Theme 3: Shared Services - focusing on prevention, co-design, co-creation, & social innovation

The Good Relations Strategy states that segregation and division has led to a duplication of services for communities that live side by side but do not integrate or share easily. Improving cohesion and transforming contested spaces requires communities to create new lines of contact, empathise with one another and develop meaningful engagement and interaction, moving from conflict management to city transformation and fostering and creating the conditions for change. It states that the city needs to build on what connects people and use its assets (human, social, physical and capital), that make areas tick, with a focus on the positives rather than the negatives. It could be argued that one of the positive impacts of the pandemic, is that it has helped to create some of the foundations for transformation, demonstrated what can connect people, as well as illustrating the value of garnering and coordinating local and city-wide assets (human, social, physical and capital) around a common cause.

One of the key actions from the Good Relations Strategy revolved around the use of data and evidence-based planning. Data was at the heart of the pandemic response with the Customer Response Hub Dashboard and the Community Response Hub Programme Pack being used to pull together and coordinate data on vulnerability and facilitate better decision making, information sharing and signposting among the statutory, voluntary and community players. This improved data has enabled the co-design and co-creation of new solutions to challenging issues and promoted integrated planning, all key actions of the Good Relations strategy. A seminar with council and the community and voluntary sector was also held in June to capture learning, share experience and work together to problem solve for future challenges.

Greater innovation has been created as a result of co-designing projects together, informed by good data, of using the lived experiences of those in the community and voluntary sectors working on the ground and with a focus on outcomes. Innovative projects have emerged, supported by the range of funding options on offer from the council and DfC. These have built the capacity of organisations and communities to be confident in accessing services throughout the city with many people accessing support from organisations with whom they had never had contact before and people being more comfortable to accept support from a wide range of sources outside of their local areas. New ways of working and new capabilities have been developed, and greater trust and respect based on the skills and resources of the community have been garnered to great effect. Practical solutions were codesigned by experienced and skilled officers and volunteers across all sectors. More time was spent in building and strengthening relationships, much of which was achieved as a result of flexible working through virtual meetings and the time saved by not having to travel. For many their confidence has grown in the ability of getting things done more effectively in a shorter space of time by working together across different sectors and in partnership with the community. The unique value and contribution of the community and voluntary sector has been highlighted to many as has the working practices of the public sector.

Service deliverers have been encouraged to cut across into areas beside them in order to help others out which has supported greater attitudinal and behavioural change. This has positively challenged the binary way in which many communities live, particularly those living close to peace lines where division exacerbates social and economic issues.

Some of the highlights of the shared services focus is evidenced in the Strategic Partnerships across the city and against which support was coordinated locally. This resulted in strategic partners Service Level Agreements with the Community and Voluntary Sector groups in local areas.

Interviews with local community and voluntary sector groups demonstrated that some area-based organisations already share information and collaborate and communicate with others from other areas on a frequent basis across the geography of the city.

The interviews also illustrated that all of these organisations are already connected with a wide range of statutory agencies including the PSNI. This linking social capital has enabled agencies from different parts of the city to react quickly as a result of their relationships with each other and to utilise local knowledge to meet the needs of those vulnerable people at the time of the crisis.

Belfast City Council's City Innovation Team as part of the City's Smart Belfast Programme manages a very innovative project - the Covid Connect NI project (https://covidconnectni.com/). 'Smart Belfast' is about finding better ways for the city's innovators — universities, businesses, policymakers, start-ups, and community activists — to collaborate on innovative solutions for the benefit of all the city's citizens. Belfast City Council is working with government, universities, and



the community and voluntary sector to support a coordinated contribution by the innovator community to solving COVID-19 challenges across Northern Ireland. It aims to connect organisations and match challenge owners with potential digital solutions. It lists a range of offers and requests for digital support.

The site encourages local businesses, universities and innovators to use their digital expertise, capacity and resources to help tackle challenges during the COVID-19 crisis, and, where possible, to do so on a pro bono or

discounted basis. This is another example of cross sectoral work aimed at building a resilient city of the future, one that can respond to the shocks and stresses that resilient cities encounter.

Programmes are so important for our city and when Covid came, innovation came too. Planned during lockdown one, a co-designed/co-created programme for youth and social innovation provided so many young people with an opportunity, experience and learning of shared services.

Succession planning - our future volunteers

The Vine Centre managed the coordination of the Foodbank Volunteer programme. The group coordinated 30 Young people aged from 13-21 as volunteers on a weekly basis at their foodbank. The young people involved were from all over North Belfast, including Ardoyne, Oldpark, Lower North, Antrim Road, Shankill, Cliftonville, Ballysillan. The participants represented local schools including, BRA, St Malachys, Blessed Trinity, Boys Model, Girls Model, Mercy College and BMC.

The purpose of the project was to give the young adults a chance to work alongside others from different communities, to help them overcome the challenges they faced as a result of the lock down and to give them an experience of serving other communities with whom they would not have come into contact previously.

Over a 12-week period the participants volunteered a total of 3,500 hours between them. The participants enabled the group to pack 2,040 food parcels, 300 school lunches for children, 1,440 homeless outreach packs, 700 Spread the Love NB Packs, 400 #LetsTalkMoney@home packs, 2,000 toiletry Gift sets for older people and 100 kids activity packs. At the end of the project some of the older youth volunteers have expressed an interest in staying on in the project as longer-term volunteers.

Developing an understanding of social innovation, active engagement and working with different communities to serve others is part of the future fabric of Good Relations being everyone business. As one of the youngest city populations in Europe, programmes which bring this type of focus can only strengthen future decision makers at local level and create succession for older more experienced volunteers.

The West connected to the Rest

18

Connected communities that have been supported through Neighbourhood Renewal, Good Relations and PEACE funding over the years has enabled many parts of the city to respond at grass roots level. This has been echoed time and time again through interviews and stories heard from those in West Belfast.





A strong co-ordinated community infrastructure, local knowledge, leadership, strong messaging and communications and volunteers willing to go the extra mile for their neighbours was demonstrated from the outset in the west of the city. The local community were committed to providing any help and assistance they could. "There was so much kindness and community spirit demonstrated".

14 shares

While some areas on the fringes are maybe not as well connected as others to support systems or sometimes because of legacy of the troubles, during the pandemic response, everyone pulled together to make sure every street was supported.

While the west of the city area is often be viewed as being like a large self-sufficient village, there is no mistaking its strength in co-ordination and understanding of local need when demands are put on its community. Upper Andersonstown Community Forum headed up the strategic partnership in the west of the city and worked closely with the Greater Shankill Partnership, who co-ordinated over 14 different groups in its geography.

The response following covid lockdown announcements was immediate with food parcels supporting its 70 electoral wards allocated based on need. Many neighbourhood groupings came together and volunteers on furlough helped co-ordinate, pack food parcels, drive and deliver across the area. This swell of volunteers were able to help and support out when people needed it most. Messaging on social media reflected the spirit of # stronger together, # working together and #StaySafe!

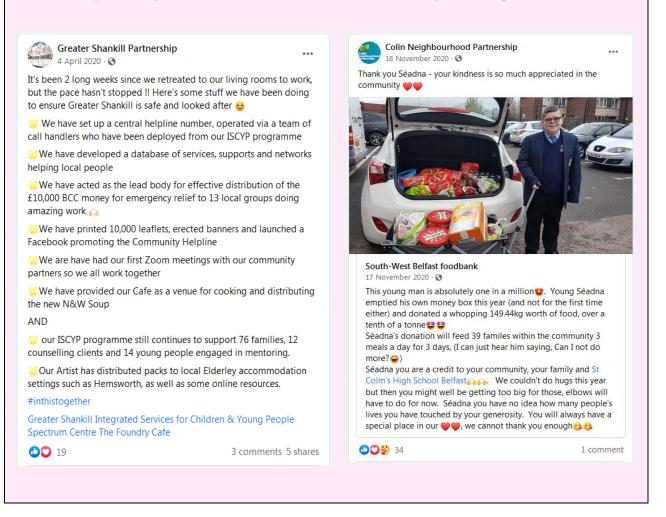
Groups joined forces and came together to help protect the most vulnerable in the local community. This included s coordinated approach through Colin Neighbourhood Partnership with local organisations such as Sally Gardens Community Centre, Colin Safer Neighbourhood Project, Conservation Volunteers, Lagmore Community Forum, Mount Eagle Community Centre, Good Morning Colin and Youth Initiatives.

A co-design process was initiated with Council and at the same time connections were made with weekly meetings set up between the Health Trust to connect the area and ensure the needs of the most vulnerable were met.

Areas like Suffolk were identified and were quickly supported by the surrounding Lenadoon, Colin and Poleglass community organisations and when resources from the Department for Communities were being divided up, a fair share for all was enabled in the allocation and support. Outlying areas like Hannahstown were also supported through the Belfast Hub and community on the ground helped deliver the much-needed support.

Regular engagement with the Greater Shankill Partnership ensured ongoing relationships and needs of the community were all connected into a support system that ensured people were helping one another and that no one was left behind. In neighbouring areas in the South and North of the City strong existing relationships ensured no one on the fringes were missed, and even on weekends there were examples of working across the geographies to help deliver prescriptions, attend to isolated people in need of food, take people to hospital or make sure elderly people felt safe.

The strategic partners connection to the Council's Area Teams and a understanding of a collaborative role within the geographies of North, East, South and West, enabled everyone to share learning, find solutions and proactively react across Belfast in a co-ordinated new way of working.



Theme 4: Structured collaboration, partnerships & resourcing

As outlined in the Good Relations Strategy, the Belfast Agenda and community planning aim to improve the connection between all the tiers of government and wider society, through partnership working, to jointly deliver better outcomes for everyone. The Belfast Agenda identifies long-term priorities for improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the city and the people who live here. The Shared City Partnership is one of the mechanisms through which the City will ensure that good relations is at the heart of what the city does. Area-based planning approaches will be used as vehicles for the delivery of the shared city goals - enabling city neighbourhoods to think strategically about how they benefit from area and citywide ambitions. The Strategy states that the council will prioritise sharing over separation in all its policy, planning and financial decisions. Once again, the pandemic has assisted in fast tracking some of the ambitions of this Good Relations outcome.

Strategic approaches to supporting the Roma Community, refugees and asylum seekers

Strategic Partners in areas across Belfast co-ordinated by an Area Integration Manager within BCC was for many in the community and voluntary sector a game changer during the Covid response. It allowed many organisations to "join the dots" and bridge the gaps in services while also connecting to the understanding, knowledge, experience and commitment of BCC staff around the needs of local communities. The new Area Team roles brought structure, better networking, communications, information sharing and problem solving not only to one area but across the city. Food was the initial priority. Thematic funding for assisting a range of communities who were identified as having vulnerability was recognised early through the area management teams and members in Council.

Understanding local groups and people and linking between food banks and connecting families in need of support, with the ability to signpost on, became an essential part of everyday support systems. The partnerships co-ordinated and connected local people with services including advice support on health, education, housing and universal credit as well as assisting people where language issues were challenging. New ways of reaching hard to reach groups of people were explored.

Through the employment of a key worker within Forward South, service deliverers were able to connect to the Roma community. A dedicated helpline was set up and an understanding of needs was established. The Forward South key worker was able to guide and shape the communication messaging in the Roma language to meet many of the needs of this community, bridging the gaps in services. Such was the need in the Roma community that calls started to come from Roma Communities right across the city. Through the Area Managers working together with other strategic partners across the city such as the food banks, the Health Trust, housing support services and the Department of Education, confidence and trust was established, and support services started to flow to these communities. As within many new communities, the importance of building an understanding of the complex family needs of these communities and the dedicated resources and bespoke communication methods and one to one support needed to engage with these communities, was highlighted. Leaflets and text messages were replaced with sound bites in WhatsApp messages in their mother tongue for clarity. Support for children's needs like baby milk, free school meals, referrals for digital devices and empowering parents were part of the problem solving and signposting activities that has enabled this community to start to feel more a part of the fabric of Belfast City - no-one left behind.

The service also found other new black and minority communities in similar situations and calls to the Forward South helpline also came from outside of Belfast City Council demonstrating the need.

Working locally with refugees and asylum seekers, Embrace NI also distributed food parcels, signposted and triaged people with a shortage of finance, support and advice. Digital deprivation for young school going children and challenges of mental health and well-being were magnified during the period of lockdown for many. While many refugees and asylum seekers are resilient having endured journeys from desperate situations in their own countries the pandemic posed a different threat to their lives and families. From a good relations perspective however partnerships between a wide range of BAME support groups such as the Sudanese Community Association, Northern Ireland Somali Association, South Belfast Roundtable among others ensured that, as far as possible, everyone's needs where met. Families were connected to local volunteers who could speak their language and who were able to assist young people with home-schooling and isolation. This transformed some of the everyday issues and enabled the young people to progress during a very tough time.

The strength of commitment by community and voluntary services was demonstrated in these stories. Many went beyond the remit of their specific service offerings to reach out, problem solve, refer and represent the needs of isolated and minority communities. All of this work was carried out in a sensitive manner, particularly around data sharing and safeguarding. BCC also worked closely with these specialist CVS support organisations to provide advice, to connect and share information learned in one area to pass on to other areas and thus avoid duplication across the city. This was very relevant given the often-transient nature of some of these communities. The building blocks to confidence and trust require ongoing support beyond the response to the pandemic.

One of the actions from the Good Relations Strategy under this theme was shifting the conversation from a binary political focus of division and segregation to a collegiate approach around the Belfast Agenda that focuses on the longer term, is pragmatic and creates opportunities for sharing. The pandemic has precipitated the swift implementation of an area-based community planning approach – one that has used a holistic area-based approach building on the strengths of local community and strategic players with local awareness, knowledge and networks. Information was easily shared and as a result signposting was responsive to need and effective.

New networks of people working together have been built up, often linked to the needs of various Section 75 groups. These groups received support and funding and were well supported during the initial phase through these area-based partnerships.

Funding opportunities, decisions and processes were quicker with anecdotal evidence demonstrating the delivery of greater value through these projects.

Given the nature of the area-based partnerships, there was evidence of much more collaboration across sectors than before. The community and voluntary sector demonstrated a strong and unique ability to pinpoint acute need down to streets and households, something that surpassed the ability of any data driven approach to do so at such speed and with such accuracy. This resulted in greater collaboration between government departments, the voluntary and community sectors and the business sector resulting in a coordinated support approach to these households during the crisis in comparison to what was happening before the crises. Building on this experience is something that many actors wish to see moving forward.

This has resulted in greater awareness of the unique roles of each of the collaborating partners, improved relationships and respect for others' skills and resourcefulness and resources. This understanding is the building block for improved working relationships moving forward and must be built upon if the longer-term vision of the Belfast Agenda is to be met.

The collaborative effort has resulted in the establishment of new relationships and new ways of working. Many statutory respondents during the research stated that this collaborative and agile approach to work has resulted in better outcomes often with less resources.

Respondents also noted that having a common goal resulted in a greater focus on co-design and coproduction, more innovative thinking, a shared sense of accountability and greater trust between the different cross sectoral partners.

Being able to engage more effectively with civic society as well as considering good relations outcomes in all of the council's policy, planning and financial decisions were two of the actions from the Good Relations Strategy under this theme. Community representatives, many of whom are on the front line, felt that during the pandemic response process that their voices were heard and that solutions to support them were being turned around faster, resulting in their ability to help those most in need more quickly. However, while the roll out of grants from Council and the Department was well supported, some stated that there was too much money which needed to be spent in a very short period of time with not enough strategic thinking around how this related to need and to the long-term effects of this short-term increase in funding. Many also stated that while the roll out of micro grants was an easier way to obtain resources, for many on the front line during a crisis, there were still too many processes for applicants and that moving forward a more flexible and strategic approach was required.

East Belfast Coronavirus Community Support Group (EBCCS) was established in late March 2020, by a group of community organisations, churches and local politicians. The purpose of the group was to collectively co-ordinate practical responses in local communities throughout East Belfast during the Coronavirus pandemic.



The success of the response emanated from the fact that it was conducted at a local level, by local people who had a connection to, and understanding of the communities they served. They were able to identify local issues and provide local solutions. EBCCS acted quickly and decisively, with regular meetings facilitating an adaptable approach as the situation developed. Innovative ideas were sought and groups encouraged to play to their strengths. Although East Belfast already had a strong community infrastructure, the coming months revealed an unprecedented level of cooperation.

The group acted as a catalyst to mobilise and co-ordinate the community sector in East Belfast. The purpose was to ensure that every resident had access to information and support.

It established a telephone helpline, operating seven days a week, 12 hours a day. Social media was also mobilised to share information, and a Facebook site was created. EBCDA (East Belfast Community Development Agency) agreed to manage a WhatsApp group "EB Local Response Updates", allowing those directly involved in delivering services to maximise and share resources. The Helpline was operational within two days and would run for 101 days, responding to over 1,200 calls. Within 17 days of being established, 33,000 leaflets advertising the Helpline were delivered

to individual homes. The response to the crisis included 35 existing groups delivering services across East Belfast, from the Short Stand to Tullycarnet and from Sydenham to Braniel. Other individuals and groups assisted with logistics, funding and specialist support. As new needs emerged and trends were identified, EBCCS responded accordingly. "Fone Friends" was established so that groups could reach the isolated and unconnected, to alleviate angst and loneliness. While supplying food parcels and meals became a mainstay of the response, providing reassurance and making contact with the vulnerable, and those shielding, was also key.

When funding was released from the Department for Communities and Belfast City Council, it was overseen by EBCCS and managed by EBCDA. The groups were able to: source and distribute PPE Equipment, (10,000 bottles of hand sanitiser and 12,000 pairs of protective gloves), distribute food parcels (4,200) and supply cooked meals (5,000). This progressed to providing educational packs for children and resilience packs for the elderly and families, 850 packs in total.

Communities made themselves central to the response. The concept of a partnership approach, involving the community, was truly embedded in relationships at all levels with government.

Theme 5: An intercultural city and respectful cultural expression within the rule of law

The Good Relations Strategy states that diversity is an important aspect of the city's future success and international experience demonstrates that the cities that are most successful are those that have embraced diversity. The strategy aims to foster strong and positive relations between people from all different cultures, religious beliefs, political opinions and identities, where no one is left behind. While acknowledging the positive role that cultural activity plays within society, the strategy also aims to lead the task of transforming Belfast into a successful, shared society, in which good relations and inclusion can flourish and one where cultural expression can be celebrated and undertaken within a culture of lawfulness.

One of the actions of the Good Relations Strategy was to demonstrate leadership in addressing the negative impact of the relationship between political identities and public expressions of culture. Lockdown came at the end of March 2020 and with it the cancelling of the St Patrick's Day celebrations and the 12th of July demonstrations, two of the most important yearly cultural festivals in Belfast. Leaders across Belfast played a significant role in ensuring that the cancellation of these celebrations was not seen as the curtailment of anyone's right to celebrate their cultural identity.

St Patrick's Day Celebrations 2020 cancelled

Lord Mayor of Belfast Daniel Baker in March 2020 said:

"Our St Patrick's Day celebrations are always hugely anticipated and a great day out for people right across the city, so it's obviously very disappointing that this year's event will not go ahead as planned. The decision to postpone this year's event has been taken as a precaution given members' and the public's concern around coronavirus."

Despite this, there were still some events in the Holyland area of South Belfast among students on St Patrick's Day.

12th July Demonstrations 2020 cancelled

Edward Stevenson, Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland in April 2020, said:

"In the current circumstances, the gathering of hundreds of thousands of Orangemen and women, together with their accompanying bands and spectators, would not be responsible. I appreciate that our culture and traditions are very much a way of life for the Orange family, however in light of the current situation we must prioritise the safety of not only our members, but of the entire community".

Local communities and residents embraced these curtailments recognising the greater common good that was required in order to keep people safe. Instead of the events, people celebrated in their homes and local areas, respecting lockdown rules and regulations broadly within a culture of lawfulness. Bands had virtual practises and played on the street for the NHS on Thursday nights, within which all communities could engage and embrace the music and its role in thanks to others

who were risking their lives during the pandemic. Music became a source of healing rather than something that defined communities and their identity.

Another of the actions from the Good Relations Strategy was the need to foster strong and positive relations between people from different cultures, religious beliefs, political opinions and identities. The community leaders of many of the City's different institutions demonstrated leadership and helped to foster strong and positive relations between people from different cultures, religious beliefs, political opinions and identities which helped to demonstrate progression against the City's Good Relations aims under this theme.

The Orange Order across Belfast was very strong in donating PPE. The Orange Order centrally purchased a shipment of personal protective equipment (PPE), included masks, aprons and hand sanitiser, to distribute to healthcare workers across the island of Ireland. The shipment was divided among its 12 County Grand Lodges on the Island for distribution through 108 District Lodges including those in Belfast. The lodges were active in raising money, sharing much-needed supplies and helping older people in their own communities.

As a result of the pandemic greater awareness was raised around the intercultural nature of Belfast as a City and the need to develop solutions that responds to these different needs. During the first phase of the pandemic some 56,874 food parcels were distributed across Belfast. During this distribution awareness was heightened about the multicultural nature of Belfast and the different cultural diets and needs that existed, demonstrating that no one food parcel suited all people.

The George Floyd death in the United States and the growth of the "Black Lives Matter" movement in the city also highlighted the different levels of fear that existed across the City's diverse population to the pandemic and the need for a nuanced response to it in different parts of the city and among different cohort groups. People of colour seemed concerned about the virus affecting them with growing concerns about deaths among this population. Alongside this was an increase in negative racism on social media which also heightened fear among the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population in the City and demonstrated the need among policy makers to be mindful of the types of stressors that can reduce resilience within a city at a time of crises and once again the need for nuanced responses to such threats.

Virtual area-based meetings which discussed strategies to address the effects of the pandemic locally brought people into conversations together which may have been difficult in normal circumstances. In virtual meetings only one person can talk at a time, meaning that active listening to the opinions of others was much more prevalent. Virtual meetings took away some of the fears that some people had in crossing into other areas – the virtual nature of the meetings acting as a bridge and creating new relationships with people in safe spaces.

Conclusion - Leaving No-one behind

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on the most disadvantaged groups in our city. It has shone a light on those social issues that already existed prior to the pandemic; issues such as food and fuel poverty, isolation among the elderly, education, social exclusion, domestic violence, mental health, alcohol and drug misuse. Many of these issues have worsened over the last year. There have been both economic and social consequences created through the crisis. Any plan of recovery must address these systemic issues if we are to ensure that no-one is left behind.

- During the pandemic, essential services were limited for the elderly, the poorest and those with a disability. There have been gaps in face-to-face service provision, limited or no access to facilities, and a lack of regular support services.² Fuel and food poverty, issues which already existed, have been exacerbated and amplified.³ While those who were shielding were provided with regular support, what happens to them after this support is no longer there? How will regular services resume and resume to meet the emerging needs of vulnerable people?
- How will we support women and children who have been in 'lockdown' in an environment of abuse and who have been trapped without the provision of regular support services? Issues of domestic violence, of being in 'lockdown' with an abuser, of not being able to leave the situation, must be a terrifying place to be. How will society support those who have had to endure such scenarios, so that they still have their future and potential? 4
- Many migrants, refugees and minority ethnic communities have suffered significant poverty since lockdown with many not being able to fall back on the welfare state due to their immigration status and having "no Recourse to Public Funds". Many have been isolated due to not having the same social or family connections as most of the indigenous community. Cultural, linguistic and low community capacity has created enhanced challenges for migrant communities, with many not having access to their jobs during the pandemic.⁵ How do we ensure that the issues that the pandemic exacerbated food, fuel, migration issues and digital poverty will be addressed post-pandemic?
- Problems for young people with poor or limited access to digital devices, quality Wi-Fi, broadband, lack of printers and multiple members of the family sharing a single device, has created educational, social and connectivity inequalities. Furthermore, the educational gap, which already existed prior to the pandemic will only have widened, particularly in areas where young people were being taught at home by parents who themselves have low educational attainment. How will our education system and wider society support those who lost out with the 'home schooling' approach because their parents simply couldn't undertake it, through no fault of their own? ⁶
- People at home who were already addicted to alcohol and drugs will have been confined to their homes without support and an alternative outlet in their lives. Further evidence of increased alcohol consumption during 'lockdown' means that our health and social care system could be facing huge physical and mental health challenges in the future in dealing with the consequences of this.⁷
- Carers in their home will not have received the required respite because of the demands at home with limited access to support.⁸ How will society support the parents of children with emotional

 $^{^2\} https://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/articles/2020/10/age-uk--research-into-the-effects-of-the-pandemic-on-the-older-populations-health/$

³ https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/11/poor-families-living-costs-have-surged-during-pandemic-uk-study-finds

⁴ https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-52076789

⁵ https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53780303

⁶ https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/policypost/Digital-exclusion-during-the-pandemic_0.pdf

⁷ https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-53684700

 $^{^8\} https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/news/2020-10-05/exhausted-family-and-friends-spent-92-million-extra-hours-caring-loved-ones$

- and physical challenges and carers of people who are elderly, disabled or infirm as we come out of the pandemic?
- The Health system prioritised dealing with the pandemic. Many people who have life threatening illnesses or are waiting on a diagnosis, had consultations and surgery cancelled or postponed. ⁹
 How will our system support those who have been unable to receive care or treatment in a timely way?
- A well-documented issue concerns people suffering from mental ill health and well-being. This was already a significant issue. However, while those who entered the pandemic with a pre-existing mental health challenge will have found 'lockdown' extremely difficult. The 'lockdown' in itself will have created mental health challenges for people who were not previously experiencing mental ill-health. Coupled with the reality that counselling, therapy services, support groups and other interventions fell during the 'lockdown', society needs to urgently set about supporting those who are struggling with mental ill-health as we emerge from the pandemic. ¹⁰
 Not only has poverty become a real issue for the first time for people on furlough, they will also have missed out on the new ways of agile and responsive working that have come into play in many workplaces as a result of the pandemic. ¹¹ How will we re-integrate and upskill those who

At the time of writing COVID-19 has magnified poverty, health and inequality in different and cross sectoral ways. We need to understand the causes of this as well as the consequences of poverty in our society. For this we need good data and we need to plan together and to track progress in creating a more equal and cohesive society. While solutions exist, issues are often complex; transcending legacy relationships, systems, available resources and leadership.

have not had the benefit of work over the last year?

The cost of the imposed regulations around COVID-19 is often higher for people with lower incomes, leaving poor people with insufficient means to protect themselves. The closure of many social services infrastructure has led to the reduction in the ability of social safety nets and other measures designed to protect the most vulnerable, to work as effectively as they once did. The changing regulations and the opening and shutting down of society created uncertainty, gradually leading to increased dependency on crisis support systems.

The emergency response of urgent intervention through the provision of food, medication and schemes such as furlough and the increase in the weekly rate of Universal Credit helped people just about 'get through' the pandemic and 'lockdown'. The community and voluntary sector made sure that in the provision of essential interventions, that no-one was left behind. However, the challenge now is in how we support people to rebuild their lives, communities and our city.

Ensuring that no-one will have been left behind means an urgent and effective strategy by all in our society to address the needs of those who continue to suffer: those who are still in poverty, exhausted carers, our migrant population, victims of abuse, those grieving the loss of a loved one, people who have lost meaning, people who need medical care, people suffering from addiction, young people who need a boost to their educational attainments and those who continue to suffer from mental ill-health.

⁹ https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-

 $[\]underline{55916465\#:}\text{```:text='Battling\%20Covid\%2D19',}operations\%20cancelled\%20in\%20one\%20week.\&text=That\%20could\%20include\%20surgery\\ \%20for,head\%2C\%20neck\%20and\%20colon\%20cancers.$

 $^{^{10}\,\}underline{\text{https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/mh-impact-covid-pandemic.pdf}}$

¹¹ https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-56515487

When we emerge from the pandemic, society simply can't wipe it's brow in relief that it is all over. We all have a responsibility to direct the resources at our disposal to the task of rebuilding the lives of those who have suffered and continue to suffer, through no fault of their own.

Belfast City Council has a leadership role to play in this regard. It is a part of a wider support infrastructure, which through working together can achieve more. The Draft Programme for Government outlines the outcomes that all government departments and local government should work to achieve. The pandemic has demonstrated how central and local government can work alongside the community and voluntary sector and the private sector in a crisis and get results. We should now be examining how we build on this co-production activity in "normal times". These future pathways will also require adjustments to get back to a sense of normality, while working with a focus on citizens and our communities in recovery first.

The next steps

Lessons from the first lockdown demonstrates the **importance of continued investment in community infrastructure** to supporting the recovery. There is never time for complacency. We are often affected by outside influences like Brexit and the fallout from political differences in which the most vulnerable in our city lose out.

The gains made during the Covid response cannot be allowed to disappear and move back into a business-as-usual scenario. There is a need to **continue to cultivate integrated services at a local area-based level** building on the new area based working model, while not forgetting the importance of thematic approaches. This type of model has the potential to really help all of the city's stakeholders to take a **strategic view of the needs of the city** at an area basis, to help the city **break down barriers** that stifle progression and to identify projects and programmes that can help areas recover. **Investing in neighbourhoods** and creating that sense of belonging, trust, confidence and hope among residents to move across the city freely is important from a good relations perspective.

Taking a **whole systems approach** means including all sectors in investing in conversations about how the city can start to retain and create good well-paid jobs right across the city, that everyone feels comfortable and safe in accessing and that help people out of poverty and onto a more sustainable household footing.

Building the capacity of the community and working with the sector and other partners to create a **new community support framework** based on the new agile working methods that have emerged as a result to the pandemic response process should be pursued. This **should have at its heart a good relations golden thread**, recognising that a city at peace with itself can become a thriving and prosperous one. It can **build on the tacit knowledge**, **skills and capacity of all players** but particularly those in the community and voluntary sector whose capacity has been built up over many years both during and after the years of conflict and community rebuilding. We should remain cognisant of the aging nature of those individuals who have travelled the journey towards a more peaceful society and the need to **cultivate and embed new relationships** within and between our communities. Many of these human assets within our communities will retire eventually. It is important to **ensure that their knowledge is shared before they move on and that succession planning becomes a top priority with our young leaders**. Knowledge of key workers in CVS organisations and their contacts also play an important role in the **future of networking** for the city. This needs to be built on and shared constantly to ensure continuity in service. Developing **our young volunteers and leaders** is vital for the future relationships across the city.

There is a strong drive for the city to examine the concept of **community wealth building**. CLES¹², the national organisation for local economies states that traditional economic development practice and developer-led regeneration are failing to address the economic challenges of our time. Community wealth building is a new people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people. Resourcing the sector to deliver and create community wealth and maximize the opportunities presented by investment in the city to stimulate the local economy and deliver social and economic value is a focus of the city's recovery plan. In order to achieve this there is a need to keep building on the relationships between organisations and the new ways of working. There is a need to continue to keep collaborating and being **imaginative**, **agile and resourceful** and remembering what has been accomplished in such a short period of time in terms of how things are done from a service delivery

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¹² https://cles.org.uk/

perspective, during the pandemic response. Above all citizens need to be placed first in terms of the recovery.

Good, plain English communication is very important so that people understand what is being planned and how they can engage in decision making moving forward. Investing in good communication methods and channels is vital. Sharing but yet protecting data in particular about those who are most vulnerable is essential. Developing the right processes for all organisations in the community and voluntary sector around data management and handling is essential.

A **transformational journey** has started – there is now a new connectedness within local areas and between local areas and the statutory and the private sector. It is now time to continue to grow capacity and bring partners and collaborators together.

Integration across sectors is crucial as is mainstreaming of policy thinking into the everyday lives of people. The community and voluntary sector is connected on a day-by-day basis with local communities. They are and need to be recognised as the lynchpin that makes integration work. The community and voluntary sector faces both the community and government agencies and other public bodies and needs to be seen as a solid trustworthy delivery partner by all stakeholders. More traditional habits of doing things needs to change among all stakeholders and new pathways with positive views taken. If **the whole system** is seen as one coherent unit working for local citizens, then **co-design and co-production of services will work effectively**. Investing in staff support and training among all stakeholders will build trust.

While facing new challenges, the Belfast Community Planning Partnership, should **continue to deliver on The Belfast Agenda's ambitions**, while the council should continue to build on the Corporate Plan, the Inclusive Growth Strategy, the Resilience Strategy, the Good Relations Strategy and other city plans and strategies that can drive forward transformative change across the city.

Building business resilience, community capacity and digital innovation with a focus on public safety and developing people skills is key to recovery. Working in collaboration with partners to regenerate and reshape the city centre and increase community connectivity between the city and arterial routes will play a role in reducing poverty and increasing good relations through cohesion and cultural connectedness.

Increased focus on **sustainable economic development** must take account of impacts on the environment and deliver on quality of life and wellbeing within our communities. It is the shared responsibility of communities, the NI Executive, its departments and Council city partners to sustain a positive, solution focussed approach, proactively, co-designed and engaged to deliver and improve on the outcomes for Belfast and its citizens who live, work and harmoniously engage together.

Recovery plans should seek to maximise and harness benefits from new strategic investments, emerging developments and funding opportunities. Immediate, medium and long-term opportunities exist to create and shape economic opportunities. A recovery framework which is mindful of minimising the human cost, providing relief to communities and delivering essential day-to-day services should be the focus. At the time of writing a six-pillar recovery plan was being drafted. Its focus was on helping to support communities and the economy to recover by building on the strengths and assets as a city and the wider city region.

The pandemic will further intensify existing inequalities and create significant economic and social challenges for our communities in the coming years. The impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities, mental health and wellbeing, social isolation and vulnerability and financial worries including income,

food and fuel poverty are all too obvious. Council will need to work with government to scale up projects to help address these issues. Leadership at all levels is vital and decision makers will need to engage with communities, evolve and deliver, ensuring a thread of good relations runs through everyone's business. The good relations commitments within Together, Building a United Community are outlined against four key strategic priorities. Each of these key priorities must continue to be supported by the shared aims:

- Our Children and Young People: to continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations.
- Our Shared Community: to create a community where division does not restrict the life opportunities of individuals and where all areas are open and accessible to everyone.
- Our Safe Community: to create a community where everyone feels safe in moving around and where life choices are not inhibited by fears around safety.
- Our Cultural Expression: to create a community, which promotes mutual respect and understanding, is strengthened by its diversity and where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced.

We should remain committed, steadfast and focussed on these.

The journey ahead will not be easy, but the infrastructure in communities, the relationships across the city, the focus on the common good which exists across the community and the spirit of hope which focuses on a prosperous future for all, demonstrates that as a city emerging from conflict, we have more in common than divides us. With one of the youngest populations in Europe, **Belfast has youth, innovation and the creatively to drive it forward positively, leaving no one behind**.

Contributors

Many thanks to all who took precious time out of their busy schedules to contribute to this good relations project and its findings.

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Paul McDonagh-Business Owner

Organisations Support References

NICVA Survey Updates

Community Relations Forum

Volunteer Now

Forward South Partnership

South Belfast Community Resource Centre

Upper Andersonstown Community Forum

Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group

Southcity Resource and Development Centre

East Belfast Coronavirus Support Group Stories- A Connected Community

Intercomm

Colin Neighbourhood Safety Partnership

North Belfast Advice Partnership

Crusaders Football Club

Loughview Community Action Partnership

Greater Shankill Partnership

Agenda Item 3b

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Subjec	ct:	Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2	021 - 2026			
Date:		9 th November 2021				
	ting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services Department	vices, City & Ne	ighbourhood		
Contac	ct Officer:	Vivienne Donnelly, City Protection Manager, City & Neighbourhood Services Department				
Restric	cted Reports					
Is this report restricted?			Yes	No X		
!	f Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?				
	After Committe	ee Decision				
After Council D						
Sometime in the						
		ie ruture				
	Never					
Call-in						
Is the decision eligible for		· Call-in?	Yes	X No		
1.0	Purpose of Repor	t or Summary of main Issues.				
1.1	The Committee wil	II be aware that in accordance with the	e statutory prov	isions of Part III of		
	the Environment (N	Northern Ireland) Order 2002, and as a	a consequence	of the outworkings		
of the first round of review and assessment of ambient air quality for the city, complete						
	2004, Belfast City Council declared four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) across					
	city for a combination of exceedances of the hourly, 24-hour and annual mean Air Quality					
		nd, Scotland, Wales and Northern Irela	and objectives t	or nitrogen dioxide		
	(NO ₂) and particula	ite matter (PM ₁₀).				
1.2	The four AQMAs w	vere declared in a <i>'ribbon'</i> manner, en	compassing the	e (i) Ormeau Road,		
	(ii) Upper Newtownards Road, (iii) M1 Motorway and A12 Westlink corridor, and (iv) from					
	` '	he junction with East Bridge Street ar		, , ,		
	3.5	are pariodori with Edot Dridge Officet at	La	or pringe outlook to		
	the junction with the		1 Chart Ctrand T	_		
	the junction with the in place.	e Ravenhill and Albertbridge Roads and	d Short Strand. T	_		

1.3 Source apportionment studies undertaken for the AQMAs indicated that exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀) objectives were principally associated with road transport emissions. It should be noted that exceedances of the particulate matter (PM₁₀) objectives occurred only within the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor and that this AQMA was revoked for particulate matter (PM₁₀) exceedances in 2014, due to the relevant objectives being achieved over a number of preceding years. 1.4 Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 requires that where an AQMA has been declared, a council shall subsequently prepare an Air Quality Action Plan containing mitigation measures that the council and its Competent Authority partners intend to implement in pursuit of the achievement of air quality objectives within the AQMA. 1.5 Accordingly, Belfast City Council, Competent Authorities and other partner organisations published the first Air Quality Action Plan for the city in 2006. A further Air Quality Action Plan was published in 2015. With the conclusion of the 2015 Air Quality Action Plan in 2020, the Council and partner organisations have now developed a new 5-year Air Quality Action Plan, covering the period 2021-2026, that is designed to address the few remaining nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) hotspots within our AQMAs and to improve ambient air quality generally for the city. 1.6 Although aspects of the new Air Quality Action Plan, including proposed mitigation measures, have already been considered by Committee during the Plan development process, this paper serves to present the completed Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 to Committee for consideration and approval. 2.0 Recommendations. 2.1 The Committee is asked to: Review and approve the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 and; • Agree that the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 be submitted to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) independent technical assessors for appraisal. 3.0 Main report Key Issues 3.1 The Committee is advised that the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 has been developed with regard to the various requirements of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) local air quality management technical guidance document LAQM.TG(16) and utilising the UK Regions (exc. London) Air Quality Action Plan Template

2020, amended to reflect Northern Ireland governance arrangements.

- 3.2 Defra have recommended that Air Quality Action Plans be periodically reviewed and whilst no time period has been explicitly established, best practice suggests that a review should take place no later than every five years, or more frequently if significant changes to sources have occurred within the council area. Accordingly, the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 has been developed with an anticipated lifespan of 5 years, but it is noted within the document that the Plan may be amended during its lifetime to reflect any additional actions necessary to address excessive concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) across the city, as identified through the detailed review and assessment project for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), currently being delivered by AECOM consultants and scheduled to report in early 2023.
- 3.3 Progress with implementation of the new Air Quality Action Plan will be reviewed by the Action Plan Steering Group on at least an annual basis in order to comply with government reporting requirements, either via the current Progress Report or via the forthcoming Annual Status Report. As part of the public discussion into a Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland, DAERA have proposed that Annual Status Reports will replace current Updating and Screening Assessment and Progress Reports, thereby aligning Northern Ireland with ambient air quality reporting arrangements already in place in the other devolved administrations. Annual Status Reports are proposed to be submitted to DAERA by 30th September of each year.
- 3.4 In terms of the document structure, the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 includes an executive summary that also provides information concerning the roles and responsibilities of those organisations that have been involved in the Plan's development.
- 3.5 The Plan also includes an introductory section and a summary of recent local air quality management conditions for the city, including headline trend data for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).
- The Plan includes brief summaries of various strategies, plans and policies that contribute towards improving ambient air quality for the city, including the Belfast Local Development Plan, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy and the Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan, etc.
- 3.7 The Plan provides various source apportionment information, identifying the extent to which key sources of ambient air pollution contribute to the air quality objective exceedances that have been identified within our Air Quality Management Areas. There are accompanying calculations demonstrating the emission reductions required to achieve the air quality objectives and the anticipated years when compliance will be achieved.

- 3.8 The Plan then provides details of key policy areas for improving ambient air quality in Belfast such as by encouraging the uptake of active travel and public transport. The Plan also provides a limited assessment highlighting the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns on local transport activities and ambient air pollution levels.
- 3.9 The Plan document includes details of the 12-week public consultation exercise for the new Air Quality Action Plan, in fulfilment of the statutory requirements of Schedule 2 Air Quality: Supplemental Provisions of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, together with some key consultation summary statistics.
- 3.10 Table 5 of the Air Quality Action Plan lists all of the mitigation measures to be implemented by our Competent Authority partners and other city organisations and bodies represented on the Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group. Table 5 includes a description of the measure, the lead authority, an implementation date, an estimated completion date and an ambient air quality benefit. The table details 51 mitigation measures, including the action identified at the previous meeting of the People and Communities Committee that the Council, as part of the Air Quality Action Plan, would include greater enforcement within smokeless zones and agree to develop an awareness campaign to educate residents on the impact of polluting home fuels (Action 51).
- 3.11 Appendix 1 to the Air Quality Action Plan contains a summary of the various responses to the public consultation on the draft Air Quality Action Plan. The Committee is advised that these consultation responses have already been circulated amongst Competent Authority partners and other city organisations and bodies represented on the Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group. Where these competent authorities, organisations or bodies have provided responses to the consultation comments, they have been captured within the relevant section of Appendix 1 Table A1.
- Details of all of the ambient air quality and related references cited throughout the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 are included within the Reference section, towards the rear of the document.
- 3.13 The Committee is advised that in accordance with local air quality management policy guidance, the Air Quality Action Plan is to be submitted to DAERA for technical appraisal by the Department's independent assessors. The Action Plan will be brought back to Committee for further consideration should any significant revisions be required by the assessors.

3.14	Once formally approved, it is anticipated that the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-			
	2026 will be made available in printed copy and via the Council's website.			
	Financial & Resource Implications.			
3.15	There will be design and printing costs associated with the formal publication of the Belfast			
	City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026.			
	Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments.			
3.16	An Equality Screening and a Rural Needs Assessment have been completed for the draft Air			
	Quality Action Plan for Belfast 2021-2026. These documents currently remain available to			
	review on the Council's Your say Belfast consultation platform, via the following web link:			
	https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk/air-quality			
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached			
	Appendix 1 – Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021 - 2026			







Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026

In fulfilment of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002- Local Air Quality Management

1st November 2021

Local Authority Officers	Eliza Barszczewska-Lyner Rebecca Corey
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Report Reference number	BCC / AQAP2021
Date	1 st November 2021

Executive Summary.

This Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has been produced as part of our statutory duties required by the Local Air Quality Management framework. It outlines the actions that the Council, our competent or relevant authority partners, and other city bodies or organisations will take to improve ambient air quality in Belfast during the years 2021-2026. This AQAP succeeds the previous Action Plan, which covered the period 2015-2020. The Air Quality Action Plan 2015-2020 for the city drew upon all forms of ambient air quality and transport planning activities, including sustainable transport options as well as engineering solutions.

Projects delivered, which contributed to the previous Action Plan, included:

- Development of a new Belfast multi-modal transport model;
- The Belfast Rapid Transit System (BRT1: East West and to Titanic Quarter);
- Development and enhancement of Park and Ride facilities;
- Bus fleet improvements and public transport commitments from Translink;
- Just Eat Belfast Bikes;
- Belfast City Council fleet improvements;
- Development of a Belfast City Council Active Travel Plan.

Progress on implementing individual measures within the 2015-2020 AQAP was reported in the Council's Air Quality Progress Report 2020¹.

Whilst the previous AQAP delivered improvements in ambient air quality within our AQMAs and across the city, a limited number of transport related nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) hotspots remain. Moreover, fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) has emerged as an additional air pollutant of concern. The aim of this AQAP is therefore to continue reducing emissions from transport sources and to promote and enable a shift onto more sustainable modes of transport to achieve compliance with the air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide. In addition, the aim of the Plan is also to identify, develop and implement mitigation measures, where necessary, to address concentrations of PM_{2.5} across the city.

¹ BCC Air Quality Progress Report 2020 (source: https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/assets/documents/dc-reports/BCC_AQ_Progress_Report_2020.pdf).

It should be noted that whilst Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21st May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe has introduced a series of target and limit values for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), these are not presently in regulation for the purposes of local air quality management. Moreover, the World Health Organisation² (WHO) has recently published updated global air quality guidelines for particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide. The WHO has advised that whilst the guidelines are not legally binding standards, they do however provide WHO Member States with an evidence-informed tool that they can use to inform the development of ambient air quality legislation and policy.

This Air Quality Action Plan therefore contains actions under a number of broad themes including:

- Initiatives to promote greater levels of walking and cycling within Belfast;
- Initiatives to encourage increased public transport patronage within Belfast;
- Initiatives to promote better vehicle fleet management (e.g. cleaner and more efficient fleets);
- Initiatives to manage the demand for private vehicles commuting to Belfast City
 Centre and to hence encourage modal shift;
- Initiatives to encourage large organisations to consider greener energy options;
- Implementation of policies that contribute to lower air pollution levels;
- Engineering, highway and road improvements that contribute to lower air pollution levels and;
- Delivery of a Detailed Air Quality Assessment project to provide information on emissions and concentrations of PM_{2.5} across the city in order to assist Belfast City Council and its partners in the development and prioritisation of abatement and mitigation policies and measures.

Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society; children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation

Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2020e 146

² World Health Organisation, Global Air Quality Guidelines - Particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide. 2021.

between air pollution and inequality because areas with poor air quality are often less affluent areas³.

The annual health cost to society of the impacts of particulate matter alone in the UK is estimated to be around £16 billion⁴. Belfast City Council is therefore committed to reducing the exposure of people in Belfast to poor air quality in order to safeguard and improve health.

Within this AQAP, Belfast City Council and its partners have outlined how we plan to effectively tackle ambient air quality issues within our control. However, we recognise that there are a large number of air quality policy areas that are outside of our direct responsibility (such as vehicle emissions standards, agreed at a European level), but for which we may have useful evidence. Accordingly, we will continue to work with regional and central government on policies and issues beyond Belfast City Council's and our partners' direct influence or control.

Responsibilities and Commitment.

This AQAP was prepared by the City and Neighbourhood Services Department of Belfast City Council (BCC). In producing this Action Plan, Council Officers have worked in partnership with those organisations represented on the Belfast Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group, as detailed below:

- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA);
- Department for Infrastructure (DfI);
- Belfast Planning Service;
- Translink;
- Sustrans and;
- Belfast Harbour Commissioners;

Progress with implementation of the new Action Plan will be reviewed at least on an annual basis in order to comply with government reporting requirements, including via Progress or Annual Status Reports, and it will be updated at least every five years in

³ Air quality and social deprivation in the UK: an environmental inequalities analysis, 2006.

⁴ Defra, Abatement cost guidance for valuing changes in air quality, 2013.

order to achieve prompt compliance with UK Air Quality Strategy Objectives, as well as reducing the overall impact of ambient air pollution on public health and the environment.

Public Consultation Process.

Belfast City Council consulted on a draft version of this Air Quality Action Plan from the 12th May to 3rd August 2021. The 12-week consultation exercise was completed via the council's online consultation hub, Your say Belfast. The consultation process was promoted via the Council's various social media channels and through the summer 2021 edition of the Council's, 'City Matters' magazine that was sent to all households in Belfast. We have also consulted with those organisation or bodies identified in Schedule 2 Air Quality: Supplemental Provisions. Consultation Requirements of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002.

If you have any comments on this Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026, please send them to Air Quality Officers at:

Belfast City Council, The Cecil Ward Building, 4-10 Linenhall Street, Belfast.

Telephone: 028 9032 0202

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Responsibilities and Commitment	iii
1 Introduction	1
2 Summary of Current Air Quality in the Belfast City Council Area	2
3 Belfast City Air Quality Priorities	5
3.1 Planning and Policy Context.	5
3.2 Source Apportionment.	16
3.3 Required Reduction in Emissions.	28
3.4 Key Priorities	33
3.5 Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic.	46
4 Development and Implementation of Belfast City AQAP	
4.1 Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement	52
4.2 Public Consultation Results.	54
4.3 Steering Group.	58
5 AQAP Measures	
5.1 Overview	60
5.2 Air Quality benefits of proposed mitigation measures	62
Appendix A: Response to Public Consultation on the Air Quality Action	
Plan	77
Glossary of Terms	
References	97

List of Tables

	 Required Reduction in Emissions of Road NOx to Meet Objectives31 Estimated Reduction in Road NOx, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} Emissions Between 2019-2026 Along Westlink Corridor (source: Emission Factor Toolkit v10.1)
Table 5.1	- Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 Action Plan Measures66
Table A. 1	Summary of Responses to Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement on the AQAP776
List of Fig	gures
Figure 2.1	- Trends in Annual Mean NO ₂ Concentrations Measured at Automatic Monitoring Stations4
	- Sources of NOx Emissions in Belfast
Figure 3.4	3 - Sources of PM ₁₀ Emissions in Belfast
Figure 3.6	5 - PM _{2.5} Emissions in Northern Ireland (source - Air Pollutant Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland: 1990-2018)21
J	' - Contribution of Primary and Secondary Sources to Annual PM _{2.5} Concentrations in Belfast22
	- Changes in NOx Background Pollution Sources in Belfast between 2014 and 201923
	e Changes in PM _{2.5} Background Pollution Sources in Belfast between 2014 and 201923
	0 - Contribution of Different Vehicle Types to Total NOx, PM ₁₀ and PM _{2.5} Road Emissions in Belfast AQMAs26
	1 - Comparison Charts of Journey Composition in 2014-16 and 2017-19.33
	2 – Journey Composition for Urban Areas in Northern Ireland 2016-1833
	3 - Percentage Composition of Journey Distance in Northern Ireland344 - Dfl Belfast Cycle Map, Illustrating Cycle Infrastructure within Belfast City Area
J	5 - Proportion of all journeys where the main mode of travel is walking, cycling or public transport: 2009 to 201942
Figure 3.1	6 - Dfl Published Covid-19 Traffic Flow Figures Comparison for 2020/21.46
Figure 3.1	7 - Belfast AQMS Provisional Monthly NO ₂ Averages during Covid-19 Pandemic47
Figure 3.1	8 - Patronage (%) NIR, Metro and Ulsterbus 1 st March – 16 th August 2020, as compared with 201948

5
5
6
6
7

1 Introduction.

This Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) outlines the actions that Belfast City Council, its Competent or Relevant Authority partners and other city organisations or bodies will deliver from 2021 to 2026 in order to reduce ambient concentrations of air pollutants and exposure to air pollution; thereby positively impacting on the human health and the quality of life for residents and visitors to Belfast.

This Plan has been developed in recognition of the legal requirements on Northern Ireland Local Authorities to work in pursuit of the Air Quality Strategy (AQS) objectives under Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 and to comply with the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) statutory process.

This Plan will be reviewed at least every five years and progress on the various measures set out within this Plan will be reported upon annually within Belfast City Council Air Quality Progress Reports or Annual Status Reports.

2 Summary of Current Air Quality in the Belfast City Council Area.

The UK Air Quality Strategy and Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 place a duty on Northern Ireland councils to periodically review and assess ambient air quality within their districts against a series of health-based objectives.

Belfast City Council completed its first review and assessment of ambient air quality for the city in 2004 and concluded that areas surrounding four of the city's main arterial road transport routes were variously exceeding the government's air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀). Source apportionment at that time revealed that the principal source of the NO₂ and PM₁₀ exceedances was road transport emissions. The four areas were subsequently formally declared by Order as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). These AQMAs are:

- M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor;
- Ormeau Road from its junction with Donegall Pass to the former Belfast City boundary at Galwally;
- Cromac Street to the junction with East Bridge Street and then from East Bridge Street to the junction with the Ravenhill and Albertbridge Roads and Short Strand; and the
- Upper Newtownards Road from the North Road junction to the former Belfast City boundary at the Ulster Hospital.

Once an AQMA has been declared, Regulations and Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance require that the Council should develop an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) and seek actions from relevant 'Competent Authorities'. Competent Authorities are defined in the Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 and broadly include Northern Ireland government Departments, district councils, the Northern Ireland Authority for Energy Regulation and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

The Council published its first AQAP for the city in 2006 and at the conclusion of this first Action Plan, 90% of the Action Plan components had been completed, with 6% of actions ongoing and 4% still to be commenced.

This Action Plan led to general and specific improvements in ambient air quality across the city and in mid-2012, the Council commenced development of a new Air Quality Action Plan for the city to address the remaining NO₂ hotspots. Concentrations of PM₁₀ were complying with annual and daily mean objectives at this time within the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor AQMA.

The Council published a second AQAP for the city in 2015, which concluded at the end of 2020. A final review of the implementation of various mitigation measures included within 2015-2020 AQAP was undertaken and reported by the Council to the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) as part of the Council's 2020 Air Quality Progress Report¹, submitted to DAERA in June 2020.

Whilst previous AQAPs have delivered improvements in ambient air quality across the city, a limited number of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) hotspots remain. Moreover, fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) has emerged as an additional ambient air pollutant of concern for the city.

Accordingly, the aim of this Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 is to continue to reduce NO₂ emissions from transport sources and to promote and enable a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport in order to achieve compliance with UK Air Quality Strategy objectives for NO₂. Where necessary, an additional aim of this Action Plan is to identify, develop and implement mitigation measures to address concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) across the city.

A review of monitoring data for Belfast indicates that there have been some recent improvements in NO₂ concentrations across the city (Figure 2.1). As a result, Belfast City Council considers that there may be an opportunity for revocation of the AQMAs along the Ormeau Road and Upper Newtownards Road, where monitoring data demonstrates recent sustained improvements in annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations, with levels consistently below the annual mean objective.

Accordingly, the Council will liaise with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Department for Infrastructure and other Competent Authority partners concerning the revocation process.

There have been no monitored exceedances of Air Quality Strategy Objectives for any other ambient pollutant in recent years across the city, and no significant new sources of air pollution have been identified, which would have the potential to alter the current understanding of ambient air quality across the city.

However, the Council is aware of recent evidence from national studies indicating that domestic solid fuel burning contributes more than previously thought to particulate emissions⁵. The contribution of solid fuel combustion to PM_{2.5} concentrations has also been recognised within the UK Clean Air Strategy 2019⁶. Moreover, the National Atmospheric Emission Inventory (NAEI), 'Air Pollutant Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland 1990-2017' publication highlights that for Northern Ireland in 2017, residential, commercial and public sector combustion accounted for 52% of overall PM_{2.5} emissions, and that this sector was dominated (82%) by emissions from residential combustion⁷.

Belfast City Council and DAERA have therefore decided to undertake a detailed assessment for the city, for PM_{2.5} and NO₂ pollutants. This project commenced in February 2021 and will report in early 2023.

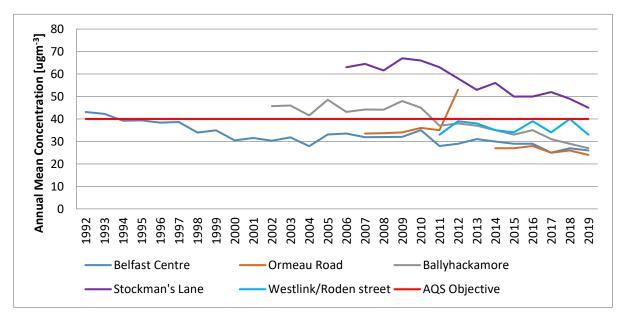


Figure 2.1 - Trends in Annual Mean NO₂ Concentrations Measured at Automatic Monitoring Stations.

⁵ King's College London, Airborne Particles from Wood Burning in UK Cities, 2017.

⁶ Defra, Clean Air Strategy, 2019.

⁷ National Atmospheric Emission Inventory (NAEI), Air Pollutant Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland 1990-2017, 2019.

3 Belfast City Air Quality Priorities.

3.1 Planning and Policy Context.

Whilst this Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan has been developed in recognition of the legal requirement on Northern Ireland councils to work towards Air Quality Strategy (AQS) objectives, in accordance with the requirements of Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 and relevant Regulations made under that Part, in order to meet the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) statutory process, there has also been significant input at a local level in the form of encompassment of existing Plans and Strategies in place within Belfast and Northern Ireland as a whole, to which this Air Quality Action Plan aligns. Accordingly, preparation of this Air Quality Action Plan has involved a review of existing plans, policies and strategies in place within the Belfast City area, which relate to, or aim to tackle ambient air quality issues for the city. This review has facilitated the development of a robust and meaningful Air Quality Action Plan, which links with and builds upon existing Strategies, to ensure a well-rounded and multi-faceted approach to tackling ambient air quality issues for Belfast.



3.1.1 The Belfast Local Development Plan⁸ – *currently at Draft Plan Strategy* stage pending outcome of statutory Independent Examination process.

The Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out strategic and operational policies as to how sustainable development can be achieved within Belfast city, by guiding future investment and development decisions. It follows the Development Strategy 20359 and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement¹⁰ to provide the spatial representation of Belfast's Community Plan, The Belfast Agenda. The Local Development Plan will help to shape the direction of future change within Belfast by ensuring that new applications submitted for development are in accordance with the provisions and requirements of the Plan.

A key challenge within the Local Development Plan is to provide for increased accessibility into and throughout the city and to accommodate projected growth in travel demand, whilst also discouraging single occupancy private car use for commuting purposes. The Plan Strategy will therefore facilitate future transport initiatives for the city, including promoting walking and cycling, modal change and supporting public transport measures through the integration of land use and transportation planning.

The Local Development Plan will support development of an efficient integrated transport network offering travel choice that minimises congestion and air pollution. In addition, the Plan will encourage the expansion of green infrastructure networks for walking and cycling across the city to encourage active travel, improve ambient air quality and promote increased use of public transport, whilst retaining suitable provision for cars.

Through Strategic Policy SP3, which seeks to support development that maximises opportunities to improve health and wellbeing, development will not be permitted where it will result in significant harm to life, human health or wellbeing. Moreover, the development of sustainable neighbourhoods, with good access to a range of local facilities and services, will encourage walking and cycling. The provision of good

⁸ Belfast City Council, Local Development Plan, 2021 (source: https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning/Localdevelopment-plan-(1)).

⁹ Department for Infrastructure, Regional Development Strategy, 2010 (source: https://www.infrastructure-

ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/regional-development-strategy-2035.pdf).

10 Department for Infrastructure, The Strategic Planning Policy Statement, 2015 (source: https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/SPPS.pdf).

quality green open space, linked to a green and blue infrastructure network, will improve ambient air quality and create health benefits. Improving connectivity between residential and employment areas, which are well served by a range of sustainable travel modes, will encourage active lifestyles and reduce air pollution.

Strategic Policy SP6 Environmental Resilience will support development where such development helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the development is adaptable in a changing climate to build environmental resilience.

Strategic Policy SP7 Connectivity will support connectivity to and within the city by sustainable transport modes, such as public transport, walking and cycling. Land for sustainable transport infrastructure projects will be safeguarded and opportunities to protect and enhance existing provision will be maximised.

Operational policies on transport address active travel, creating an accessible environment, transport assessments, travel plans, new transport schemes, and access to public roads, access to protected routes, car parking, standards and design.

Other operational policies that support this Air Quality Action Plan in improving ambient air quality are renewable energy development (policy ITU 4), ENV1 Environmental quality, GB1 Green and blue infrastructure network policy, OS1 Protection of open space policy and TRE1 Local Development Plan policy on trees.

Through operational policy TRAN 5, the Local Development Plan will safeguard land required to implement new transport schemes or planned improvements to the transportation network as identified in the Department for Infrastructure's extant transport plan, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, 2015¹¹, which encompasses the Belfast City Council area. This includes proposals for new and improved walking and cycling routes, enhanced or new public transport services and park and ride proposals, all of which will encourage a shift from private vehicle use, thus aiding the AQAP in its goal of reducing nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter emissions from road transport activities. Through operational policies TRAN 1 and TRAN 4,

Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 Page 159

¹¹ Department for Infrastructure (formerly Department for Regional Development), Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, 2015 (source: https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/drd/04%20-%20Belfast%20Metropolitan%20Transport%20Plan%202015%20-%20Chapter%203%20-%20An%20overview%20of%20the%202015%20Plan.pdf).

significant generating uses will require a travel plan and to make appropriate provision for shower and changing facilities.

3.1.2 Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015.

The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) 2015 is the current extant Transport Plan. It was developed to deliver an integrated transport network, improving opportunities for interchange between different modes of transport and providing real travel choices, particularly in the Belfast Metropolitan Area's main transport corridors. In general, most of the key elements of the Transport Plan have been delivered or are under review. A new Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan is currently under development to integrate with the Belfast Local Development Plan. The new Transport Plan is expected to include transport projects which will improve air quality in the city.

Whilst not explicitly listed within BMTP 2015, the Department for Infrastructure has continued to take forward a number of high-profile transport projects. These include the Belfast Transport Hub, Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2 (if confirmed as part of the final Belfast Region City Deal), Park and Ride facility expansion, improved active travel interconnectivity and general public transport route improvements. Delivery of these projects will contribute to this Action Plan's goals of reducing NO₂ and PM_{2.5} emissions from transport activities.

3.1.3 Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy.

The Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy¹² outlines a framework of how the Council aims to grow and regenerate the city core and its surrounding areas. Eight policies for the city centre provide a vision for eight areas of intervention considered most essential to Belfast's success, several of which set out aspirations to create a green, walkable, cyclable city centre and integrating shared spaces and connectivity throughout the city. Such examples include the development of the Lagan River corridor as a recreational spine for the city. Moreover, the Belfast City Council Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan, one of the key strategic projects of the Regeneration and Investment Strategy, also aims to manage the number and type of parking spaces in the city in order to reduce commuting to the city centre in

¹² Belfast City Council, Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, 2015 (source: https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Documents/Regeneration-and-investment-strategy).

single occupancy private cars and hence encourage sustainable travel modes. The Strategy also supports access by public transport, cycling and walking. These objectives provide a direct link to this AQAP, by not only promoting greener development, but also catalysing the implementation of proposed actions within this document, thereby aiding in the reduction of NO₂ and PM_{2.5} emissions from transport activities, whilst encouraging a healthier city as a whole.

3.1.4 Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan.

The Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan¹³, is inter-connected with the AQAP through its proposals for creating a strategic framework for green and blue infrastructure, i.e. a green space network and a blue infrastructure network interconnected by strategic connections. For example, Belfast has a growing number of greenways and community paths linking across the city. Greenways are dedicated movement corridors, free of motor vehicles, which provide a safe environment for walkers, runners and cyclists to move around the city. Where segregation from other road users is impossible, the Council has developed community paths with a strong identity to help users navigate efficiently across the city. These links help connect green spaces and often run parallel to blue infrastructure. As well as helping to develop a new sustainable approach to travel, they provide an excellent opportunity for urban greening to enhance the green space network. The Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan also highlights opportunities for integration of green walls into buildings, bridges and supporting walls within AQMAs, where there may be space constraints. There may also be opportunities for increased planting of street trees along, or in the areas surrounding AQMAs. In addition, improved ambient air quality will be supported through the promotion of more active modes of transport such as walking and cycling.

3.1.5 Belfast Open Spaces Strategy.

The *Belfast Open Spaces Strategy*¹⁴ supports the shared growth component of the *Belfast Agenda* and *Local Development Plan*. As Belfast aims to deliver significant inclusive growth and opportunity, the Strategy aims to have a well-connected network of high-quality open spaces by 2035. The seven strategic principles outline the goals

¹³ Belfast City Council, Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan, 2020 (source: https://www.pacni.gov.uk/sites/pacni/files/media-files/BCC-AD-GRIP ndf)

¹⁴ Belfast City Council, Belfast Open Spaces Strategy, 2019 (source: https://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/s77241/Appendix%201.pdf).

of the Strategy, many of which supplement the objectives and actions of this AQAP as follows:

- SP1: Provide welcoming shared spaces;
- SP2: Improve connectivity;
- SP3: Improve health and wellbeing;
- SP4: Support place-making and enhance built environment;
- SP5: Increase resilience to climate change;
- SP6: Protect and enhance the natural environment;
- SP7: Be celebrated and support learning.

Whilst all of the principles are inter-connected, principles SP2, 3, 4 and 5 relate directly to ambient air quality and will therefore support this AQAP in achieving its objective actions.

SP2 is however most closely linked with ambient air quality. As the greatest proportion of nitrogen dioxide emissions across the city comes from road transport, by providing alternative active travel routes throughout Belfast City, this strategic principle will help to promote the required modal shift away from private vehicle use towards active travel, needed to reduce NO₂ road transport emissions.

SP3 advises that the Council will explore ways to improve ambient air quality, specifically within the identified AQMAs and across the City through the use of open spaces and vegetation to help absorb pollutants. This strategic principle will therefore aid in the reduction of air pollution emissions throughout the Belfast urban area.

SP4 will ensure that the inclusion of open spaces and active travel routes are at the forefront of planning policy, to ensure that as the city grows and develops, sustainable modes of transport will be at the forefront of development¹⁵, thus assisting this Action Plan in achieving its objective actions.

Finally, given that nitrogenous gases play an important role in global climate change, the inclusion of green spaces and promotion of a modal shift to active travel (as

¹⁵Belfast City Council, Belfast Local Development Plan: Draft Plan Strategy, 2021 (source: https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/getmedia/1314db21-0fd8-4221-9c1f-b9e884575e77/SD006_DPS_ConRep.pdf).

described in SP5) will aid in the reduction of these pollutants from road transport sources¹⁶.

3.1.6 Bolder Vision for Belfast.

The 'Bolder Vision for Belfast. Reimagining the Centre'¹⁷ document also sets out how a green, walkable, cyclable network of streets and places will improve health for all, revitalise the City's economy and restore a sense of collective pride in the centre of the City by the communities located within and around it. The document highlights that too many journeys are made by car, often with only one person in the car, and that even with significant investment in public transport, car journeys are forecast to grow by 2030. As a consequence, bold changes are required to make space for prioritising walking, cycling and public transport by repurposing surface car parks and road space to halt significant congestion and improve ambient air quality.

3.1.7 Action on Climate Change.

In October 2019, Belfast City Council declared a climate emergency and agreed that urgent action was needed to prepare for climate change, agreeing to take forward its adaptation and mitigation plans in tandem in order to expedite the process. Since then, Belfast City Council has formed the Belfast Climate Commission in partnership with Queen's University of Belfast, and the Belfast Resilience and Sustainability Board and a group of city stakeholders, which sits within the Belfast Community Planning Partnership structures. Within Belfast City Council, an All-Party Working Group on the Climate Crisis has been established, and an internal officer group, the Climate Plan Programme Board oversees internal progress. Through the Belfast Climate Commission and working with PCAN (Place Based Climate Action Network) a Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for Belfast has been produced, which will inform future actions.

3.1.8 Belfast Resilience Strategy.

The Council's climate plans form part of the *Belfast Resilience Strategy*, which sets out the city's ambitious aims to transition Belfast to an inclusive net zero-emissions economy within a generation.

¹⁶ IPCC, Atmospheric Chemistry and Greenhouse Gases, 2018.

¹⁷ Belfast City Council, Bolder Vision for Belfast – Re-imagining the Centre, 2020 (source: https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/news/a-%E2%80%98bolder-vision%E2%80%99-for-belfast).

Belfast City Council is committed to:

- Becoming a carbon-neutral organisation as urgently as possible;
- Producing an action plan setting out how we will become a carbon-neutral organisation;
- Working with partners across Belfast and with central and devolved government to seek to ensure that Belfast district's net carbon emissions are reduced by 80% compared to 2005 levels as quickly as possible.

Currently, the Council is working towards publishing a climate adaptation and mitigation plan. When published in 2021, the plan will aim to deliver the vision set out in the draft *Belfast Resilience Strategy* - to transition to an inclusive net zero-emissions economy in a generation. The Plan is being developed in consultation with a number of cities as part of Belfast's membership of the Resilient Cities Network. The climate plan will focus actions that can be taken as a Council in relation to:

- Climate adaptation actions taken to prepare for the effects of climate change, such as building flood defences;
- Climate mitigation processes associated with preventing or alleviating the impacts of climate change, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions by reducing our carbon footprint.

As noted previously, given that nitrogenous gases play an important role in global climate change, the *Belfast Resilience Strategy* will form a key role in reducing such emissions, thus aiding this AQAP in its goals.

3.1.9 Translink Climate Positive Strategy.

Following on from the Council's climate and resilience objectives for the city, the forthcoming *Translink Climate Positive Strategy*¹⁸ aims to achieve at least a 50% reduction in the organisation's current greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, in line with its 'Climate Action Pledge'. The Strategy aims to place Translink at the forefront in the journey towards zero emission public transportation, and for all its buses, trains and buildings to be net zero by 2040. The main goal of the Strategy is for Translink to become Climate Positive by 2050, going beyond achieving 'net zero' to create an environmental benefit by removing additional carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the

¹⁸ Translink, Climate Positive Strategy, 2021.

environment while allowing growth in the business. It is anticipated that this step change in reducing Translink's environmental impact will be supported by the measures set out in the Strategy and will seek to maintain Translink's leadership position within a rapidly evolving climate change framework. To achieve these aims, a climate positive philosophy will be applied across the whole range of Translink's operations. This includes the transport fleet, buildings, estate and all associated aspects. Having an aspirational Climate Positive Strategy aims to further improve local ambient air quality, help to keep the population active and moving, and help to rebuild the economy to be fit for a low emissions future.

3.1.10 Belfast Harbour Air Quality Strategy.

In January 2020, Belfast Harbour Commissioners published a Statement of Intent¹⁹ to provide an Air Quality Strategy for the Belfast Harbour Estate. The aspiration is that people, who live in, work in and visit Belfast Harbour, should be able to enjoy an environment that is clean and safe, with air quality that is not harmful to human health. The Statement of Intent outlines a consistent approach and key actions that are required to improve ambient air quality across the Harbour Estate and to go beyond the Commissioners' statutory duties. The Air Quality Strategy for the Belfast Harbour area will be created through an analysis of a baseline emissions inventory, which will consider all relevant emissions generated on site, and under the control or direct influence of Belfast Harbour, including road movements, operation of port equipment, pilot and work boat operations, energy usage, workshop operations and emissions from vessels at berth. Given that Belfast Harbour is a key Stakeholder within this Action Plan, it is considered that actions within this AQAP and the Harbour's own Strategy are closely inter-linked, thereby assisting the Council to improve ambient air quality and deliver the air quality objectives for the city.

3.1.11 Belfast Cycling Network.

In addition to various above-mentioned Strategies, the *Belfast Cycling Network* was published on 4th June 2021²⁰. The Belfast Cycling Network provides a blueprint for developing a coherent, connected and safe infrastructure for everyday cycling in the city over the next ten years. It delivers on a key commitment in *'Northern Ireland' Changing Gear – a Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland'*, published by the former

¹⁹ Belfast Harbour Commissioners, Air Quality Strategy – Statement of Intent, 2020 (source: file:///C:/Users/CoreyR/Downloads/Air%20Quality%20Statement%202020%20(3).pdf).

²⁰ Department for Infrastructure, Belfast Cycling Network 2021 (source: https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/making-belfast-active-city-belfast-cycling-network-2021).

Department for Regional Development in August 2015. The Bicycle Strategy itself outlines the three pillars of 'Build', 'Support' and 'Promote' and highlights the importance of other measures such as promoting the 'Cycle to Work' scheme to employers and the creation of high quality infrastructure that provides equal priority for cycling, active travel hubs and secure cycle parking where it is required. The Team have also previously highlighted the need for frequent and clear public awareness campaigns similar to the, 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing²¹' health and social wellbeing initiative, adding that initiatives of this type should be informed by behavioural change approaches and supported by practical schemes such as cycle to work incentives.

3.1.12 World Health Organisation European Healthy Cities Network – Phase VII Priorities (2019-2024).

Belfast has been a member of the World Health Organisation (WHO) European Healthy Cities Network for more than 30 years and recently received re-designation status as a city included within Phase VII of the Network. WHO Healthy Cities is a global movement, which works towards putting health high on the social, economic and political agenda of city and regional governments, with the vision that 'Healthy cities are places that deliver for people and the planet. They engage the whole of society, encouraging the participation of all communities in the pursuit of peace and prosperity. Healthy cities lead by example in order to achieve change for the better, tackling inequalities and promoting good governance and leadership for health and well-being. Innovation, knowledge-sharing and health diplomacy are valued and nurtured in healthy cities.'

There are three overarching goals within Phase VII of the Healthy Cities Network:

- Goal 1: Fostering health and well-being for all and reducing health inequities;
- Goal 2: Leading by example nationally, regionally and globally; and
- Goal 3: Supporting implementation of WHO strategic priorities.

Moreover, there four additional priorities that are specific to Belfast; the first of which, Promoting Healthy Transport, is of particular relevance to Belfast's efforts to improve ambient air quality:

Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2029e 166

²¹ Public Health Agency, Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing, 2020 (source: https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/take-5-steps-wellbeing-english-and-11-translations).

- Promoting Healthy Transport (strengthening partnership and coherence): the overall goals are to increase physical and mental well-being through promotion of good quality active travel infrastructure; and to generate the evidence to support car reduction, improving air quality and increasing the use of public space for improved health.
- Greening the City: intersectoral partnerships for healthy places. The overall goals are to develop and deliver healthier and more equitable urban environments for all citizens and to generate global influence.
- Community Prosperity: these are caring places that enhance health and well-being and reduce health inequalities. The overall goal is to change public policy to include interventions to generate prosperity in left behind communities, strengthen community assets, create caring places and reduce health inequalities.
- Inequalities Training: building public health capacity at the local level. The overall goal is to increase capacity at operational and strategic levels across sectors for the greater leadership for health and well-being and to support organisations to shape policy and deliver action that will improve health and well-being for all and reduce inequalities.

Belfast's membership of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network is facilitated by Belfast Healthy Cities, which leads on the development and implementation of actions associated with each of the Phase VII priorities.

Belfast Healthy Cities is an independent partnership organisation, governed by a Board of Directors, elected annually and representing the public, university, voluntary and community sectors. It is funded by a range of partners including Belfast City Council, the Public Health Agency, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

3.2 Source Apportionment.

Source apportionment studies allow local authorities to identify the extent to which different key sources of ambient air pollution contribute to the air quality exceedances that have been identified within their areas. Consequently, source apportionment studies assist local authorities to correctly target the most important pollution sources and to focus principal measures within an Air Quality Action Plan²².

As previously highlighted within this Action Plan, the main pollutant of concern for Belfast is nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and although we do not currently monitor exceedances in relation to any other ambient air pollutants, this AQAP focuses also on particulate matter; especially the fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) fraction, as a result of emerging recent public health concerns around the heath disbenefits of this pollutant.

Consequently, the following source apportionment studies relate to these two pollutants. The purpose of these source apportionments is to also demonstrate how pollution sources have changed over time, especially since 2014 when the previous source apportionment study was completed as part of the development of the 2015-2020 Air Quality Action Plan.

3.2.1 Emission Sources by Activity Sector.

The Council does not presently maintain a detailed local emissions inventory database for the city. The below analyses have therefore been based on recent UK National Atmospheric Emission Inventory (NAEI) reports and associated interactive emissions maps²³. NAEI data are frequently used as a starting point in the compilation of local emission inventories, which may then be used to assess the status of current and future air quality. The Council would advise that the development of a local emissions inventory for the city will form part of the Detailed Assessment project for PM_{2.5} and NO₂, which commenced in February 2021.

The NAEI compiles emissions data for several sectors, producing a detailed estimate of emissions across the UK. Details of the various sectors are provided below:

Air Quality Hub, 2021 (source: https://www.airqualityhub.co.uk/advice-note/source-apportionment/).
 UK NAEI Interactive Map, 2020 (source: https://naei.beis.gov.uk/emissionsapp/).

- 1. Combustion in Energy Production and Transformation;
- 2. Combustion in Commercial, Public & Agriculture;
- 3. Combustion in Industry;
- 4. Production Processes;
- 5. Extraction and Distribution of Fossil Fuels;
- Solvent Use;
- 7. Road Transport;
- 8. Other Transport and Mobile Machinery;
- 9. Waste Treatment and Disposal;
- 10. Agriculture and;
- 11. Nature, Land Use Change and Other.

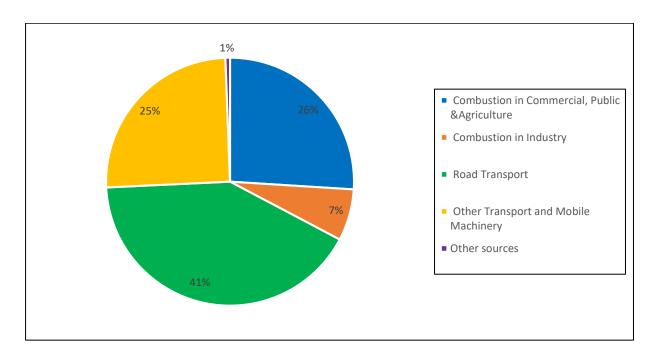


Figure 3.1 - Sources of NOx Emissions in Belfast.

Figure 3.1 demonstrates that the main source of nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions within Belfast remains road transport (41%), followed by combustion sources (26%), predominantly comprised of domestic combustion. Other transport and mobile machinery sources make up a further 25% of total NOx emissions, where the principal source of emissions within this sector is shipping. Combustion in Industry accounts for 7% of total NOx emissions. The other sectors listed above (Waste Treatment and Disposal, Agriculture, Nature, Land Use Change and Other,

Combustion in Energy Production and Transformation, Production Processes, Extraction and Distribution of Fossil Fuels, Solvent Use) collectively contribute approximately 1% of total NOx emissions.

Although, road transport remains the principal source of NOx emissions within Belfast, there has been a noticeable downward trend in emissions from road sources, which is not unique to Belfast itself, but is also observed across Northern Ireland as a whole, as illustrated within the *Air Pollutant Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland:* 1990-2018²⁴ report.

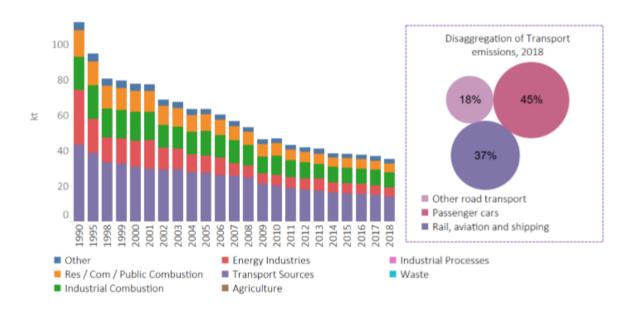


Figure 3.2 - Nitrogen Oxides Emissions in Northern Ireland (source - *Air Pollutant Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland: 1990-2018*).

The inventory report advises that 'NOx emissions have declined by 69% since 1990, partly due to changes in transport sources. This decline is driven by the successive introduction of tighter emission standards for petrol cars and all types of new diesel vehicles over the last decade. Since 2008, emissions from passenger cars have further decreased, which is mainly driven by improvements in catalyst repair rates, resulting from the introduction of regulations controlling the sale and installation of replacement catalytic converters and particle filters for light duty vehicles. However, the increasing number of diesel cars offsets these emissions reductions, because diesel cars have higher NO_X emissions relative to their petrol counterparts. Energy

Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2029 170

²⁴ NAEI, Air Pollutant Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland: 1990-2018, 2020 (source: Report: Air Quality Pollutant Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland: 1990-2018 - NAEI, UK (beis.gov.uk).

industries have also had a notable impact on the trend with implementation of abatement technology and reductions in the amount of coal used'.

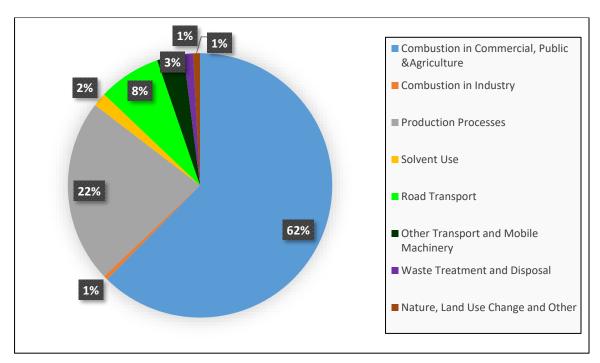


Figure 3.3 - Sources of PM₁₀ Emissions in Belfast.

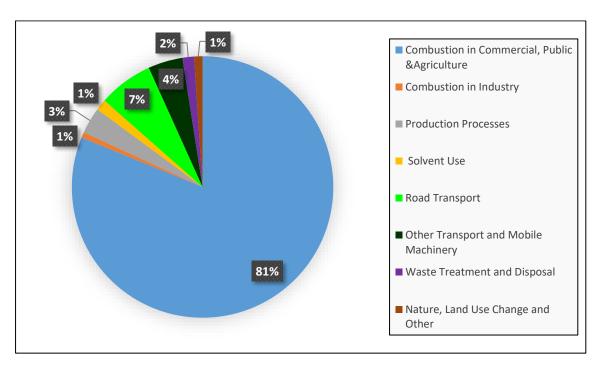


Figure 3.4 - Sources of PM_{2.5} Emissions in Belfast.

Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show that in Belfast, the *Combustion in Commercial, Public & Agricultural* sector is the main source of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions. Within these sectors, the principal emissions arise predominantly from domestic combustion

sources. Road transport accounted for 8% (PM₁₀) and 7% (PM_{2.5}) of primary emission sources of particulate matter.

As illustrated in figure 3.5, there is a downward trend in particulate matter emissions from road transport and increases in emissions from residential, commercial and public sector combustion observed across the whole of Northern Ireland, as presented within the recent, *Air Pollutant Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland:* 1990-2018 report.

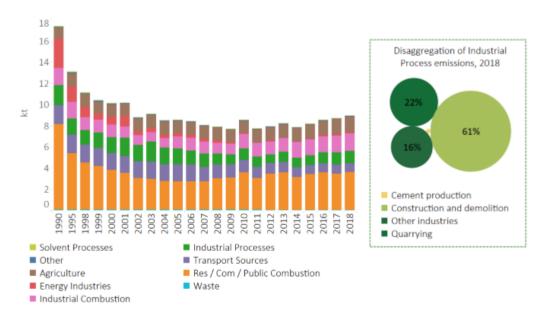


Figure 3.5 - PM₁₀ Emissions in Northern Ireland (source - Air Pollutant Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland: 1990-2018).

The inventory report further highlights that, 'Emissions of PM₁₀ have declined by 49% since 1990, with the major decrease observed between 1990 and 2004. The decreasing trend was defined by emissions from residential, commercial, and public sector combustion, with a reduction in the use of peat and coal and fuel switching across many economic sectors from coal and oil to natural gas. PM₁₀ exhaust emissions from vehicles have also been decreasing due to the successive introduction of tighter emission standards over time, while non-exhaust PM₁₀ emissions from vehicles have been increasing due to increasing traffic activity. In recent years, emissions from residential, commercial, and public sector combustion have primarily increased coincident with increasing wood fuel use in the residential sector (BEIS, 2019a)'.

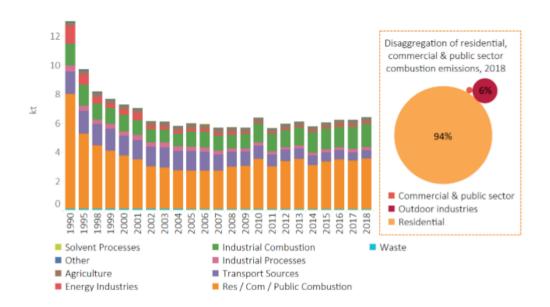


Figure 3.6 - PM_{2.5} Emissions in Northern Ireland (source - Air Pollutant Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland: 1990-2018).

Figure 3.6 shows that within Northern Ireland, 'Emissions of PM_{2.5} have declined by 51% since 1990, with the major decrease observed between 1990 and 2004. As with PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} emissions have a large number of significant sources. However, process emissions tend to produce coarser PM fractions and as such, combustion emissions are of greater importance for PM_{2.5} compared to PM₁₀. For PM_{2.5}, residential combustion accounted for 51% of 2018 emissions. The primary drivers for the decline in emissions since 1990 are the switch in the fuel mix used in electricity generation away from coal and towards natural gas, particularly in the early timeseries, and later reductions in emissions from the transport sector due to the introduction of progressively more stringent emissions standards through time. Since 2005, declines in emissions have been offset by increases in emissions from the residential sector, and in particular, the combustion of wood'. It should however be noted that the majority of the Belfast City Council area has been declared as a series of smoke control areas and that within smoke control areas, wood can only be used within an exempted appliance.

However, it is worth noting that in addition to these direct (primary) emissions of particles, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} can also be formed from chemical reactions in the atmosphere of gases such as nitrogen oxides (NOx) and sulphur dioxide (SO₂); these are called secondary particles. Secondary particle sources make a considerable

contribution to the overall mass of PM_{2.5} in Belfast, accounting for around 37% of total background PM_{2.5} concentrations within the city, as shown below in Figure 3.7.

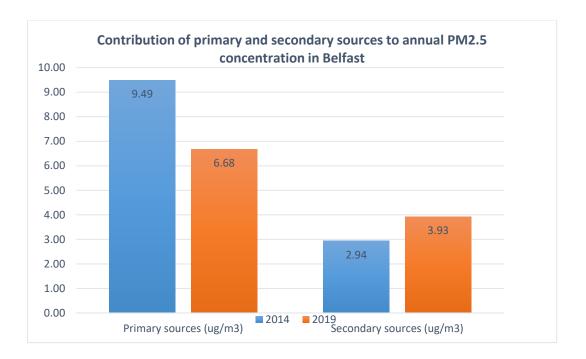


Figure 3.7 - Contribution of Primary and Secondary Sources to Annual PM_{2.5} Concentrations in Belfast.

NOx emissions, predominantly from road transport sources, are a significant source of secondary particulate matter. Therefore, measures to reduce the emissions of these precursor gases are often beneficial in reducing overall particulate matter concentrations. Residual sources (including coastal marine salt sources) are also major contributors to PM_{2.5} concentrations across Belfast (22-24%).

3.2.2 Changes in NOx and PM_{2.5} concentrations since implementation of the previous 2015-2020 Air Quality Action Plan.

Defra background pollution concentrations maps²⁵ are provided to assist local authorities in support of Reviews and Assessments of ambient air quality.

The main purpose of the background maps is to provide estimates of background concentrations (average concentrations for 1x1 km areas) for specific ambient pollutants. These can also be used in air quality assessments to better understand the contribution of local sources to overall pollutant concentrations. They also provide

²⁵ Defra, Background Mapping for Local Authorities, 2020 (source: https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/laqm-background-home).
Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2020e 174

information on how pollutant concentrations change over time across a wide area and an estimated breakdown of the relevant pollution sources.

Council officers have undertaken an analysis of the background concentrations (NOx and PM_{2.5}) for two areas within Belfast; the city centre area and the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink AQMA (in the vicinity of the Stockman's Lane monitoring station), to examine how background pollution sources have changed between 2014 (prior to implementation of the previous 2015-2020 AQAP) and during 2019.

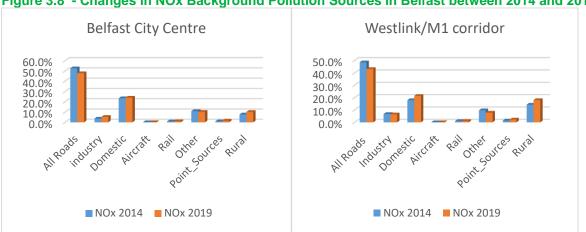
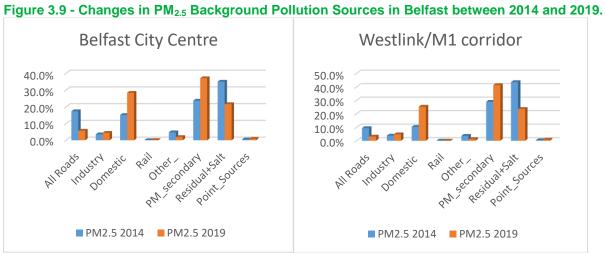


Figure 3.8 - Changes in NOx Background Pollution Sources in Belfast between 2014 and 2019.



Based on analyses of background concentrations in Belfast, road transport is still the principal source of NOx background concentrations in Belfast; however, concentrations from road transport have fallen by over 20% between 2014 and 2019 across the city.

It is worth mentioning however that these analyses refer to background concentrations, which are average concentrations for 1x1 km areas across the city. Therefore, road transport will account for significantly higher proportions of NOx concentrations at locations close to busy roads.

Contributions from domestic sources to background PM_{2.5} concentrations have increased significantly since 2014 and it is estimated that background PM_{2.5} concentrations from domestic sources have doubled in some parts of the city.

Road transport was a significant source of background PM_{2.5} in 2014 within the city centre and accounted for some 17% of PM_{2.5} background concentrations. However, this source of PM_{2.5} background pollution has decreased significantly over recent years due to stricter vehicle emissions standards, to the extent that road transport currently accounts (2019 data) for only 7% of total PM_{2.5} background concentrations in Belfast.

Secondary sources make a considerable contribution to the overall mass of PM_{2.5} in Belfast, accounting for around 37% of the background total PM_{2.5} concentrations in the city centre. 'Secondary PM_{2.5} particles' are formed by the chemical reaction of gases such as SO₂ and NO_x comprised of nitric oxide (NO) and NO₂.

3.2.3 Vehicle Fleet Composition and Emissions.

Tackling the problem of NO₂ concentrations near to arterial road routes into and out of the city is still the most immediate air quality challenge for the city. Accordingly, the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide is the only ambient air quality objective that is currently not being achieved within Belfast.

Although NOx emissions have fallen across the city since the introduction of the previous AQAP, road transport remains the main source of NOx emissions with Belfast, accounting for over 40% of emissions within the city centre during 2019.

Therefore, as road transport emissions are of principal concern, Council officers have undertaken an analysis of the percentage contribution of different vehicle classes to overall NOx emissions.

Although road transport presently accounts for only a small percentage of overall PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ primary emissions in Belfast, an analysis has also been undertaken for particulate matter. Transport emissions have been calculated for four arterial roads located within AQMAs, using the latest Defra Emission Factor Toolkit²⁶ and road traffic data provided by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). However, the Council would draw attention to the relatively limited traffic data available for use in this assessment.

Unfortunately, due to a reduction in traffic census points across Northern Ireland over recent years, some roads have had to be assessed on the basis of historical traffic counts and fleet composition data, dating from between 2010-2015. Moreover, due to the gradual introduction of a revised vehicular classification system, some fleet composition assumptions have been employed within the analyses.

Whilst it is impossible to a draw detailed conclusion, due to the historical nature of the data and the need for assumptions, the following key points can be drawn from the information presented in Figure 3.10:

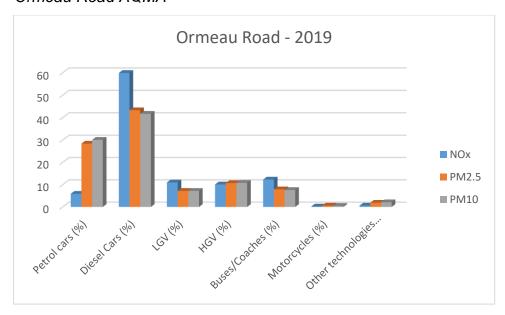
- by far the biggest contributors to NOx emissions are diesel cars;
- diesel and petrol cars are by far the biggest contributors to PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ emissions;
- LGVs, HGVs and buses / coaches contribute approximately equally to NOx, PM_{2.5}
 and PM₁₀ concentrations across the surveyed locations and;
- The contribution from HGVs is significantly enlarged along the A12 Westlink.

-

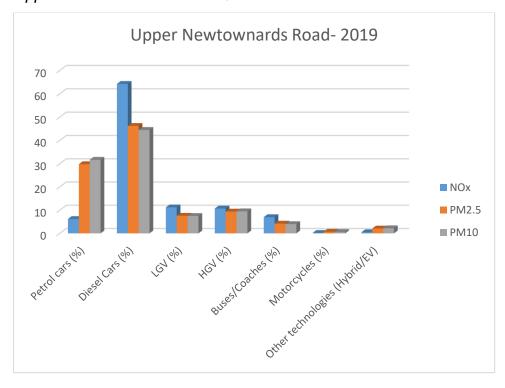
²⁶ Defra, EFT 10.1, 2020.

Figure 3.10 - Contribution of Different Vehicle Types to Total NOx, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} Road Emissions in Belfast AQMAs.

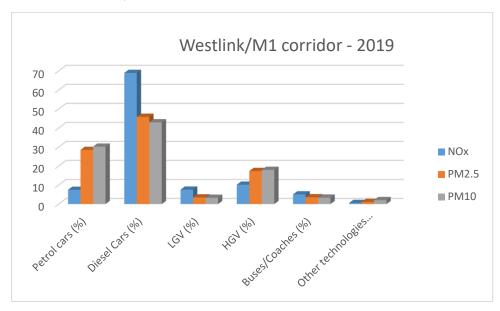
Ormeau Road AQMA



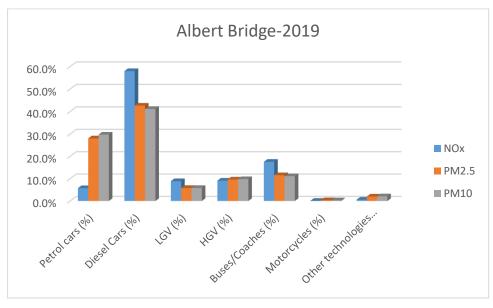
Upper Newtownards Road AQMA



M1/Westlink AQMA



Cromac Street and Albertbridge Street AQMA



3.3 Required Reduction in Emissions.

There have been no monitored exceedances of Air Quality Strategy Objectives for any other ambient pollutant in recent years across Belfast. Therefore, only the reductions in NOx emissions required to meet the annual mean objective for NO₂ have been considered in this section.

Annual mean exceedances (above 40 μgm^{-3}) during 2019 occurred at following roadside monitoring locations: Black's Road (42 μgm^{-3}), Great George's Street (45 μgm^{-3}), Stockman's Lane (45 μgm^{-3}), opposite the Westlink AQMS at Mulhouse Road (45 μgm^{-3}) and at Henry Place (53 μgm^{-3}). All are located within the existing M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink AQMA and have been the subject of mitigation measures for some time.

Moreover, it is worth noting that these 2019 exceedances occurred at roadside locations (0.5 – 4 m distance from the road) and not at relevant human health receptor locations; generally taken to be the façade of a residential property. It is generally accepted that nitrogen dioxide concentrations decline rapidly with distance over the first 20m from the kerb. Accordingly, when the abovementioned 2019 NO₂ annual mean concentrations were corrected in accordance with local air quality management technical guidance to take account of the separation distance to the nearest residential properties, the results indicated that NO₂ concentrations were below the 40 µgm⁻³ annual mean objective at all residential premises located in the vicinity of the Blacks Road monitoring site, at Great George's Street and at the closest residential properties, located at Roden Street and Blackwater Way, to the Mulhouse Road monitoring site. Distance corrected nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentrations were around 42 µgm⁻³ at a residential receptor location at Stockmans Lane during 2019. Whilst distance-corrected 2019 nitrogen dioxide concentrations were below the 40 µgm⁻³ annual mean objective at all residential premises located in the vicinity of Henry Place and Carlisle Road, calculations suggest that some properties on the opposite side of the Westlink, located some 6m from the kerbside, may have experienced nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentrations of around 42 μgm⁻³ during 2019. Moreover, some residential properties located at Little George's Street and Southwell Street, adjacent to the signalised junction of the A12 Westlink and York Street are located a similar distance (7m) from the A12 Westlink kerb. Belfast City Council has since established monitoring sites at these two additional Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2029e 180

locations in order to accurately assess ambient nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentrations.

It should be noted that during 2017, Belfast City Council engaged with the DAERA and Defra in order to evaluate Pollution Climate Model (PCM) national atmospheric dispersion modelling that had been undertaken for the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area as part of the development of the government's 2017 'Air Quality Plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations in Belfast Metropolitan Area (UK0028)'. Measures referred to within the government's Plan document included many that were drawn from the 2015-2020 Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan, including for example, development of the Belfast Rapid Transit system, development of the Belfast Transport Hub, enhanced bus priority on Metro routes and improved car parking controls, promoting the use of electric vehicles, promoting active travel in order to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport, instead of the private car and investing in public transport, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure to encourage greater use of these transport modes.

National modelling undertaken on behalf of Defra and DAERA, using the Pollution Climate Model (PCM) for roadside nitrogen dioxide, suggested that the A2 Sydenham Bypass, stretches of the A55 road at Kennedy Way, Stockmans Lane, the Upper Knockbreda and Knock Roads and the A12 Westlink corridor were predicted to exceed the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide in 2015, but would likely all achieve compliance by the end of 2022 and be maintained thereafter²⁷. As a component of the evaluation process, Belfast City Council completed a comparison of this national modelling using 'in house' atmospheric dispersion modelling software, Cambridge Environmental Research Consultants (CERC) Atmospheric Dispersion Modelling Software (ADMS-Urban), local road geometry and local transport data provided by the Department for Infrastructure. The outworkings of the Council's evaluation study indicated that there were no predicted exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective at relevant receptor locations on the A55 Upper Knockbreda and Knock Roads and along the A2 Sydenham Bypass during 2015 and thereafter. The study did however suggest that there were likely to be exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective at relevant receptor locations along

²⁷ Defra, Air Quality Plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations in Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (UK0028), 2017 (source: https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/no2ten/2017-zone-plans/AQplans_UK0028.pdf).

sections of the A12 Westlink corridor in 2015 and 2020 but compliance might be achieved at the end of 2021; potentially one year in advance of that predicted by the government's modelling. The Council's modelling therefore predicts that by 2022, exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective will only be expected to occur within the carriageway confines of the A12 Westlink corridor and not therefore at relevant human health receptor locations.

These revised and refined predictions relating to achievement of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective were accepted by DAERA and Defra and referred to by DAERA in its November 2020, 'A Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland – Public Discussion Document'. In the Public Discussion document, the Department acknowledged however that the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor is perhaps the most difficult stretch of road on which to tackle NO₂ exceedances, given its role as a key transport corridor that is central to Northern Ireland's strategic road network.

Accordingly, in view of the outworkings of the government's and Belfast City Council's nitrogen dioxide modelling predictions for the city for future years, it is considered that the actions commenced via the previous Belfast City Air Quality Action Plans and continued and extended through this Air Quality Action Plan, covering the period 2021-2026, will help to ensure that the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective and equivalent EU limit value are achieved at all locations across the city by the end of 2022 at the latest.

Belfast City Council has nevertheless undertaken calculations of the extent of road NOx emissions at the above-mentioned monitoring locations, to estimate the scale of emissions' reduction required to achieve the annual mean objective for NO_2 of $40~\mu gm^{-3}$. The required reductions in emissions have been calculated in line with Chapter 7 of the Defra Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance document LAQM.TG(16)²⁸.

Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2029e 182

²⁸ Defra, Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (TG16), April 2021.

Table 3.1 - Required Reduction in Emissions of Road NOx to Meet Objectives.

Monitoring Site Location	Measured NO ₂ Concentration 2019 (μgm ⁻³)	Road NOx Concentration (µgm ⁻³)	Required Road NOx Concentration (µgm ⁻³)	Percentage Required Reduction
Black's Road	42	43.18	38.7	10%
Great George's Street	45 43/6		32.57	26%
Stockman's Lane	45	50.05	38.7	23%
Mulhouse Road opposite Westlink AQMS	45	50.05	38.7	23%
Henry Place 53 62.78		62.78	32.57	48%

Calculations demonstrate that there needs to be a reduction in road NOx of around 48% at the worst-case scenario location (Henry Place - Westlink canyon) in order to achieve compliance with the annual mean air quality objective for NO₂ at this location.

This new AQAP covers the period 2021-2026. Therefore, additional calculations using available local traffic data (DfI) and the Defra Emission Factor Toolkit v10.1 were undertaken to demonstrate anticipated changes in road emissions between years 2019-2026 for the area of the A12 Westlink corridor, where the greatest emissions reductions are required. Local fleet composition data, aggregated by Euro standard, was not available for the purposes of this calculation. Accordingly, a distribution of road vehicle classes was obtained from the Defra Emissions Factor Toolkit (EFT) v10.1. Results suggest that by 2026, on the basis of changes in fleet composition and vehicle age alone, NOx road emissions will decrease about 50% along the Westlink corridor, which is the approximate amount required to achieve compliance with the nitrogen dioxide annual mean UK objective at the worst case scenario location (Table 3.2). Furthermore, whilst not reflected within the following table, the Toolkit (EFT) v10.1 also assumes that there will be an increase in vehicles powered by other technologies (e.g. EV, Hybrid, Hydrogen etc.).

Table 3.2 - Estimated Reduction in Road NOx, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} Emissions Between 2019-2026 Along Westlink Corridor (source: Emission Factor Toolkit v10.1).

	All	Petrol	Diesel	All	L CVa	Buses/Cesebes	
Vehicles		Cars Cars		HDVs	LGVs	Buses/Coaches	
	(g/km/s)	(g/km/s)	(g/km/s)	(g/km/s)	(g/km/s)	(g/km/s)	
NOx	49%	6%	50%	73%	54%	75%	
PM _{2.5}	14%	0%	36%	16%	25%	31%	
PM ₁₀	9%	0%	31%	11%	21%	22%	

Note: It should be noted that these calculations are designed to provide an indication only and include several assumptions, including no increase in traffic volume.

The measures proposed within this AQAP (Table 5.1) are mainly based around reducing vehicle emissions and encouraging other modes of travel in order to reduce the use of private vehicles on Belfast roads. Therefore, with the abovementioned predicted emission reductions and the continuing introduction of ultra-low or zero emission vehicles, principally as a result of the introduction of more stringent Euro emission standards and the UK government's commitment to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars in the UK by 2030, coupled with the proposed mitigation measures contained within this Action Plan, it is predicted that Belfast should achieve compliance with NO₂ annual mean UK objective even at 'worst case' roadside locations during 2026.

3.4 Key Priorities.

3.4.1 Active Travel

The required modal shift away from private vehicle use towards more sustainable forms of transport, including active travel (walking and cycling), has the potential to significantly improve ambient air quality by reducing the number of vehicles on the roads and thus causing an associated reduction in nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter emissions from transport sources. Moreover, when reviewing the following information concerning modes of travel in Northern Ireland, obtained from the *Travel Survey for Northern Ireland Reports* (2014-2016, 2016-2018 and 2017-2019) published by Dfl²⁹, it is clear that a focus on shorter journeys of less than 5 miles in length, which could reasonably be achieved through walking or cycling, is the most feasible approach to achieving the required modal shift.

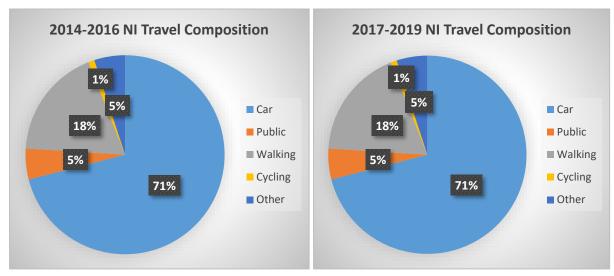


Figure 3.11 - Comparison Charts of Journey Composition in 2014-16 and 2017-19.

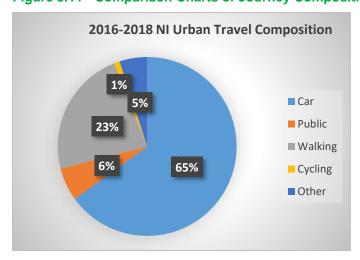


Figure 3.12 – Journey Composition for Urban Areas in Northern Ireland 2016-18.

²⁹ Dfl, Travel Survey for Northern Ireland Reports (2014-2016, 2016-2018 and 2017-2019).

Figure 3.11 above illustrates that journey composition has not altered over recent years in Northern Ireland, with only 19% of all journeys made by active travel means. Although this figure is slightly increased for Belfast, with a total of 24% of journeys made by active options (Figure 3.12), this is still a lower proportion than might be expected, given the distribution of journey distances, as demonstrated in Figure 3.13.

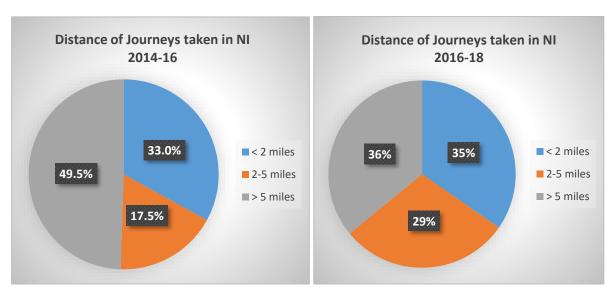


Figure 3.13 - Percentage Composition of Journey Distance in Northern Ireland.

On average, each individual within Northern Ireland makes an estimated 906 journeys per year. This statistic, similar to the journey type, has not altered significantly since 2014. However, as can be seen above, there appears to be a marked increase in the percentage number of 'shorter' journeys made within NI between 2014 and 2018. Previously, just over half of all journeys made were less than 5 miles, but *Northern Ireland Travel Survey 2016-2018 Report* indicates that approximately 64% of all journeys made are now less than 5 miles. With this in mind, it is perhaps surprising that the uptake of active travel does not demonstrate a similar trend.

As Belfast City grows, there is a risk that busy roads will become increasingly congested. Over half of commuters move through the city by private vehicle but without an alternative, planned growth could add a further 100,000 vehicle trips to peak hours. In addition to the pressure that this would add to the road network capacity, the additional emissions would have air pollution and climate change impacts. As such, finding alternative routes through the city that accommodate more

sustainable and healthy walking and cycling is imperative^{30,31}. Moreover, the benefits of more active modes of transport extend beyond physical health such as reduced risk of cardiovascular or respiratory diseases; they can improve overall wellbeing, with those walking or cycling recognised as being some of the happiest commuters when compared with those driving or taking the bus³².

3.4.1.1 Impact of Previous Action Plan Measures.

The 2015-2020 Air Quality Action Plan contained a range of measures proposed by Dfl to encourage modal shift, including committing towards improving and extending the cycle network in Belfast City Centre through introduction of a network of parallel routes including contra-flow cycle lanes and shared use bus and cycle lanes. The Department stated that it would provide secure cycle parking and promote cycle to work and public bike hire schemes. In addition to these, other measures from the previous plan included the Belfast Bikes Hire Scheme and the implementation of an Active Travel Plan headed by Belfast City Council.

There has been some progress with regard to actions relating to the *Bicycle Strategy* for *Northern Ireland*, with an increase in the number of cycle lanes within Belfast City between 2014 and 2020 installed at the following locations:

- Alfred Street,
- **Work Street**,
- Durham Street,
- College Square North,
- College Street,
- Middlepath Street,
- Comber Greenway improvements (Dundonald Ice Bowl Bridge, widening, resurfacing),
- Connswater Community Greenway.

³⁰ Belfast City Council, Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan, 2020 (source: https://www.pacni.gov.uk/sites/pacni/files/media-files/BCC-AD-GBIP ndf)

 ³¹ Government Office for Science, Future of the Mobility Transport System, 2019 (source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/780868/future_of_mobility_final.pdf).
 32 Martin et al., Does active commuting improve psychological wellbeing? Longitudinal evidence from eighteen waves of the British Household Panel Survey, 2014.

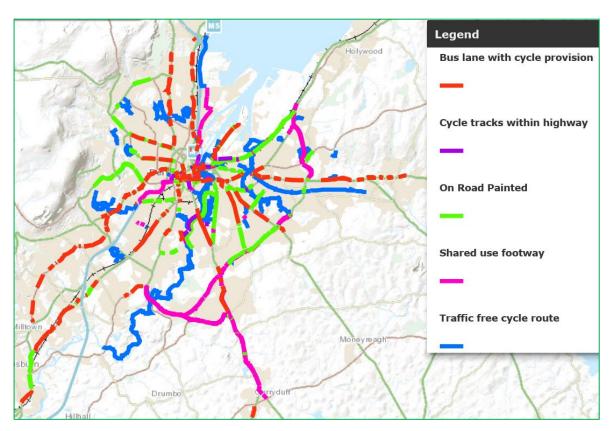


Figure 3.14 - Dfl Belfast Cycle Map, Illustrating Cycle Infrastructure within Belfast City Area. Source: Dfl Belfast Cycle Map (arcgis.com)³³

In the past year, the Covid-19 pandemic has also provided an opportunity to introduce a number of 'pop-up' cycle lanes and associated infrastructure throughout the city, including routes on the Dublin Road, Donegall Road and Grosvenor Road, whilst existing lanes on the Crumlin and Oldpark Roads have been improved. The new routes are designed to improve access into the city centre, as well as provide easy access to Belfast's hospitals. As these routes were introduced after the *Travel Survey Report* was released, data is not yet available to show how these measures have impacted upon cycling statistics within Belfast City. There is however still room for further improvement regarding connectivity and accessibility of these active travel routes throughout the city, to ensure that everyone has access. The redesign of complex junctions between the routes illustrated above is one option that will allow safer connectivity and assist the movement of active travellers throughout the city.

In contrast, the Belfast Bikes Scheme has over-achieved on its goals to provide 300 bikes and 30 docking stations to the public for hire. Currently, there are now over 350 bikes in operation, with over 47 docking stations located throughout the city for ease

³³ Department for Infrastructure, Belfast Cycle Map, 2021 (source: Dfl Belfast Cycle Map (arcgis.com)).

of access. Moreover, during December 2020, 450 'SMARTbike 2.0' bikes were rolled out across the docking stations, replacing the previous model of bike. At the height of its use, the Belfast Bikes Scheme generated 19,807 rentals in July 2015 and 15,350 rentals in July 2019. It is noted however that use of this scheme can be influenced by the weather, and so there can be seasonal and monthly fluctuations in patronage. Although the Scheme continues to be successful, even with a slight drop in rental numbers over recent years, the Covid-19 pandemic appears to have played a significant role in 2020's reduced rental statistics, with 3,462 bike rentals in November 2020. It is unclear at this stage how the pandemic will impact upon long term scheme uptake, rental numbers and trends in usage³⁴.

Following on from this, the *Active Travel Plan* interconnected an array of actions, including both the Belfast Bike Scheme and infrastructure improvements, along with other active travel promotions, such as the *Active School Travel Programme*³⁵. The aim of this Plan was to promote and encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport within Belfast, with a goal of moving individuals away from private car usage, where other active travel means were feasible.

Infrastructure improvements included development of the Connswater Community Greenway, the Ormeau Park Bridge and extension to the Lagan Weir and Lookout. There have been some encouraging movements in these areas; for example, the Connswater Community Greenway now has over 9km of linear park through east Belfast, which serves 40,000 residents and 23 schools. The project has so far created 16km of foot and cycle paths, as well as 26 new and/or improved bridges that cross the river. This is highly beneficial to the promotion of active travel, as it provides a clean and aesthetically appealing route option to the residents of east Belfast³⁶. Furthermore, plans were approved in early 2021 for the creation of the Ormeau Park Bridge for use by both walkers and cyclists.

The Active School Travel Programme is currently serving over 400 schools in Northern Ireland, with the aim of encouraging walking and cycling as students' main form of transport. In the schools where Sustrans works, the Active School Travel

³⁴ Just Eat Belfast Bikes Performance Indicators, 2015, 2019 and 2020 Reports.

³⁵ Sustrans Active School Travel Programme, https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/2019/northern-ireland/active-school-travel-in-northernireland

36 Connswater Community Greenway, https://www.connswatergreenway.co.uk/project/about-connswater-community-greenway.

Programme has made a difference, however success is compromised by infrastructure limitations around many schools. Some have no footpaths whilst others have 60 mph speed limits in operation outside of the school gates.

Sustrans has reported increases in active travel uptake in participating schools, as detailed below:

Active School Travel Programme Results (2018-2019):

- Active travel increased from 35% to 53% at participating schools.
- At the same time, car use fell from 58% to 41%.
- * Cycling increased from 3% before engagement to 6% at follow up.
- The proportion of pupils walking increased from 27% to 31%.
- More pupils reported travel by park and ride/ stride, scoot journey rising from 5% to 13%.

The *Active School Travel Programme*, jointly funded by DfI and the PHA is a good example of cross-departmental working, and could link with:

- Infrastructure improvements, and;
- Cycle skills training for all P6 pupils (currently fewer than 4% of children receive this only 16 children per participating school, and only in the first year of that school's involvement in the programme).

However, despite the *Active School Travel Programme* being in operation over several years, national statistics indicate a drop in active travel by school students. When comparing Dfl's *Travel to and from School by Pupils in NI 2014/15 and 2019/20* reports³⁷, there appears to be an increase in primary school students utilising the private car as their main source of transport, increasing from 61% in 2015 to 68% in 2019/20 and from 30% to 33% for post-primary students. However, many post-primary students still use the bus as their main mode of transport to and from school (48% of the survey respondents in both 2015 and 2019). Walking also follows a negative trend, dropping from 29% in 2015 to 19% in 2019 for primary school students and from 19% to 17% for post-primary school students. With these statistics in mind, it indicates that previous actions regarding active travel in schools

Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2029e 190

³⁷ Dfl, Travel to and from School by Pupils in NI 2014/15 and 2019/20 Reports.

have not entirely fulfilled and sustained their goals. Therefore, given that such a large proportion of rush-hour traffic is associated with school travel (reportedly 1 in 5 vehicles are short school runs), it is all the more important to focus on achieving a modal shift from private vehicle to active travel for this sector as part of this Action Plan.

3.4.1.2 Attitudes to Active Travel.

With these actions in mind, it is important to note that the attitudes to walking and cycling within Northern Ireland are an important consideration when determining how modal shift towards active travel can be achieved. In 2015, the *Cycling in Northern Ireland* report noted that in relation to attitudes of cycling, 54% of all respondents were in the 'no way, no how' group, i.e. not interested in cycling at all. This has increased somewhat in the most recent 2019/20 report, which cites 67% of all respondents in this group – an increase of 13%. Furthermore, there have been decreases in the 'enthused and confident' and 'interested, but concerned' groups, dropping from 18% and 25% in 2015 to 14% and 16% in 2019/20 respectively. The percentage of individuals who described themselves as 'strong and fearless' also followed the same trend, however insignificant, dropping from 4% in 2015 to 3% in 2019/20. These results are a worrying trend, as although cycling has been encouraged in recent years, it appears that promotions and incentives are unlikely to have had a positive impact given peoples' ingrained reservations concerning the safety of cyclists on Northern Ireland roads³⁸.

In contrast to the Cycling in Northern Ireland report, which covers all of Northern Ireland, the Belfast Bike Life report³⁹, which covers Belfast specifically, presents a somewhat more optimistic picture. The 2019 report puts the figure of those in Belfast that do not cycle and do not want to cycle at 44%, with those that do not cycle but would like to cycle at 31%. The remaining 25% of the population currently do cycle to a greater or lesser degree.

There is a significant disparity in confidence in cycling between men and women, with a higher proportion of male respondents describing themselves as 'strong and fearless' (5%) and 'enthused and confident' (20%), while females have responded

³⁸ Dfl, Cycling in Northern Ireland 2015 and 2019/20 Reports.

³⁹ Sustrans, Belfast Bike Life Report, 2019 (source: https://www.sustrans.org.uk/bike-life/bike-life-belfast).

with 1% and 7% respectively. By comparison, 55% of all cycling trips in the Netherlands are made by women. This gender imbalance in Northern Ireland needs considerable focus. Sustrans have implemented women's cycling courses to help encourage females to cycle more. However, given the lack of change in Northern Ireland statistics between 2015 and now, more concerted actions may be required to bridge this gender gap.

Looking deeper into reasons for the lack of increase in active travel use, the *Attitudes to Walking, Cycling and Public Transport in NI* report⁴⁰ illustrates that the major reasons why people choose not to cycle are down to 'no cycle lanes', 'too much traffic' and 'traffic goes too fast'. These reasons have not altered in the last few years. Ironically, if people chose to cycle more, then there would likely be less traffic on the roads and cyclists might not be so heavily impacted by traffic numbers. However, given that the biggest reason (~70%) for people not cycling is 'no cycle lanes', it is clear that more needs to be achieved regarding Belfast's cycling infrastructure, in order for people to feel more comfortable using cycling as an active form of transport.

This point is supported by the Belfast Bike Life reports. The 2019 report indicates that traffic-free routes, away from roads and cycle tracks along roads that are physically protected from motor traffic and pedestrians (i.e. separated infrastructure), are key to providing people with the freedom and confidence to cycle for everyday journeys.

In relation to walking, levels of satisfaction have remained relatively similar over recent years. The *Attitudes to Walking, Cycling and Public Transport in NI* report noted that 64% of respondents were satisfied with the current situation of walking in 2017/18. In the 2019/20 report, the figure had reduced to 59%. As was highlighted however, respondents from urban areas were more likely to be satisfied with walking, with Belfast City Council's response rate at 65%; virtually unchanged from 2017/18. The main reasons for dissatisfaction have also remained relatively steadfast, with the main three reasons noted as 'poor lighting at night', 'traffic goes too fast' and 'poor footpath conditions' in both the 2017/18 and 2019/20 reports. As some of these

⁴⁰ Dfl, Attitudes to Walking, Cycling and Public Transport in NI 2017/18 and 2019/20 Reports.

concerns coincide with cycling attitudes, it would be worthwhile to focus upon infrastructure improvements that benefit both forms of active travel.

3.4.1.3 How Will New Measures Help to Achieve a Modal Shift?

As noted above, the main reason for respondents not utilising active travel options is down to a lack of 'safe' infrastructure, i.e. segregated cycle lanes, street lighting etc. With this in mind, the new actions proposed within this document focus more on infrastructure improvements to help facilitate a modal shift from private vehicle use to active travel options. Such actions include ongoing delivery of the Belfast Cycling Network (which requires a Delivery Team and budget allocation, in order to deliver it as a single project), green recovery, traffic management (i.e. traffic reduction strategies such as one-way systems, closing rat-runs and prioritisation of pedestrians and cyclists), Active Travel Hubs and greater inter-connectivity with public transport. Behaviour change programmes to promote active travel and public transport are essential to achieve modal shift. Projects like the Active Travel Hub in east Belfast, funded by DAERA, have proved very successful in providing information and offering skills training to get more people walking and cycling. It is anticipated that these measures will enable active travel to become central to individual's travel choices, thereby enabling the required behavioural changes to be achieved and significantly reducing NOx and PM emissions from road transport sources.

In addition, over the course of this AQAP period, it is expected that the new Local Development Plan and Belfast Metropolitan Travel Plan will come into effect. Whilst their contents cannot be assumed in advance, both Plans are expected to include substantial demand management measures to restrict the use of private cars in the city centre and for commuting purposes in particular. The documents will build upon the Council's Car Parking Action Plan⁴¹, which seeks to reduce uncontrolled long stay parking on the edge of the City Centre in association with the Department for Infrastructure.

3.4.2 Public Transport.

Public transport is an essential public service, vital to the economic, social and environmental well-being of our society. Increasing the proportion of journeys undertaken by public transport has the potential to reduce the number of private

⁴¹ Belfast Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan, https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/business-and-investment/regeneration/car-parking-strategy
Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 Page 193

cars on our roads, reduce harmful emissions, deliver air quality standards and tackle the climate emergency.

Moreover, public transport plays a key role in encouraging active travel. Translink, the primary provider of public transport in Northern Ireland, is collaborating with key stakeholders including the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), Sustrans and local councils to improve integration of public transport and active travel.

As indicated within the Chapter 3.4 Active Travel, recent statistics indicate that most journeys within Northern Ireland are undertaken by private car. There has been no significant change in modal choice for many years. In 2017-2019, 48 public transport journeys were made per person per year. This equates to 5% of all journeys made, the same proportion as during 2014-2016 (5%). See figure 3.15 below.

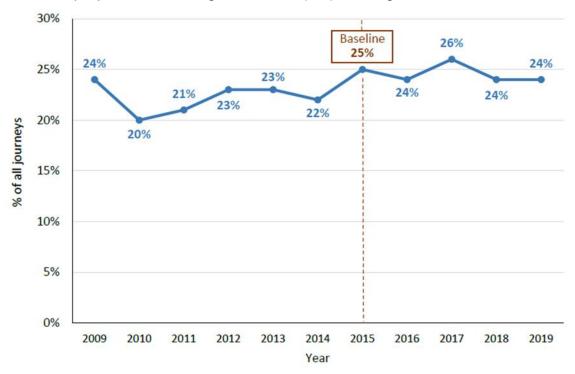


Figure 3.15 - Proportion of all journeys where the main mode of travel is walking, cycling or public transport: 2009 to 2019.⁴²

However, public transport in Northern Ireland has been growing in popularity over recent years, with more commuters attracted by efficient, modern services. In 2018/19, Translink recorded over 84.5 million passenger journeys made by the public transport network, the highest such figure in the past 20 years. This included

⁴² Department for Infrastructure, Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) headline report 2017-2019. (https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/travel-survey-northern-ireland-tsni-headline-report-2017-2019).

over 15 million journeys on NI Railways and over 600,000 journeys every week on the Metro and Glider services within Belfast.

Whilst passenger numbers have decreased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, an opportunity exists to rebuild and restore services in the months ahead. Evidence from the first lockdown during spring 2020 is clear, in that there was a marked global reduction in transport related air pollution (nitrogen dioxide), whilst public transport continued to operate.

As we emerge from the pandemic, it is vital that widely used public transport networks return to their essential role of providing greener, healthier and more active travel options for a better economic recovery.

As Belfast City is seeking to increase the city's population by 66,000 to over 400,000 by 2035, there is a risk that busy roads will become more congested. Moreover, as over half of all commuters still move through the city by private vehicle, engendering and supporting modal shift away from the private car onto more sustainable forms of transport is imperative.

Whilst it has been previously acknowledged that walking and cycling can cater for some shorter journeys, if Belfast is to have clean air and reduced congestion, as well as to continue to be the regional economic driver for NI, then it must facilitate greater levels of longer-distance sustainable transport from dormitory towns and rural areas by public transport.

Public transport also has a huge role to play in the economy reaching net zero. Translink have developed a Climate Positive Strategy for the organisation, setting out ambitions for them to be net zero by 2040. Translink introduced the first hydrogen-powered buses to the Belfast Metro fleet in December 2020. This project, which is partially funded by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) and Dfl, has seen the introduction of the first hydrogen powered double-deck fleet on the island of Ireland. By mid-2022, 100 Zero Emission buses will be operating in Belfast. Moreover, all Belfast Metro services will be operated by zero-emission vehicles by 2030.

To make public transport more attractive, Translink offer integrated travel solutions that are attractive, sustainable and good value for passengers. Other Translink initiatives include the introduction of a new integrated, account-based ticketing system and real-time passenger information as well as full integration between services, in relation to both journeys and fares.

In addition, Translink is working with the Department for Infrastructure to promote and extend bus priority schemes, including bus lanes. These measures are vital to maximise the effectiveness of new zero / low-emission fleet and to maximise the benefits to the environment and ambient air quality.

Other Department for Infrastructure and Translink initiatives that can help to influence change towards more sustainable forms of transport include further development of Park and Ride sites and the development of Phase 2 of the Belfast Rapid Transit project (BRT Glider), if confirmed as part of the final Belfast Region City Deal, and providing a new integrated Transport Hub for Belfast.

Changes towards more sustainable transport behaviour are already evident, as Translink has delivered unprecedented growth in public transport across Belfast, with over 40,000 additional passengers using the Glider corridors each week since the service started. It is estimated that there has been an 8% modal shift on the routes served by the Glider service, which was introduced to Belfast in September 2018⁴³. Moreover, the Glider vehicles are delivering a 90% reduction in nitrogen oxides and particulate matter emissions relative to the oldest vehicles in the Metro fleet.

Currently, the Glider provides fast and reliable services connecting east and west Belfast, Titanic Quarter and other key locations of economic and social activity within the city centre and along the Glider corridors. Dfl is leading on the development of a second, north-south Belfast Rapid Transit Glider route, which will encompass Belfast city centre and the Ormeau Road Air Quality Management Area. This is being taken forward for consideration as one of three infrastructure projects within Belfast Region City Deal.

⁴³ Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, A Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland – Public Discussion Document, 2020.

Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2029e 196

It is also worth highlighting that the Belfast Rapid Transit Glider project (BRT1) has been recognised as a 'good practice' public transport project within the National Bus Strategy for England⁴⁴.

Since the previous 2015-2020 Air Quality Action Plan, the Department for Infrastructure and Translink have introduced a range of other initiatives encouraging modal shift. Accordingly, measures included in this 2021-2026 Air Quality Action Plan and detailed in Table 5.1 will further promote public transport over private car travel.

In addition, the Belfast City Council Local Development Plan will set out strategies and proposals supporting a shift towards more sustainable and low emission modes of travel, as well as reducing the proportion of car-based travel throughout the city. The Plan Strategy will facilitate future transport initiatives for the city, including promoting walking and cycling, modal change and supporting public transport measures through the integration of land use and transport planning.

⁻⁴⁴ Department for Transport, Bus Back Better, 2021 (source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/980227/DfT-Bus-Back-Better-national-bus-strategy-for-England.pdf).

3.5 Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Ambient air quality improvements have been a key consideration for government and local councils over recent years. As an addition, it is considered that we now have an opportunity to achieve and sustain cleaner air as Belfast City continues to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

There is no doubt that Covid-19 has had significant and long lasting impacts on our society. Figure 3.16 below illustrates the overall percentage change in traffic numbers during 2020 as compared to 2018/2019 pre-lockdown data⁴⁵. The graph demonstrates an initial drop-off of approximately 70% in traffic numbers at the height of the first lockdown in March 2020. Figure 3.17, which illustrates provisional monthly NO₂ mean concentrations at each automatic air quality monitoring station (AQMS) within Belfast, also follows a similar trend, depicting a significant drop-off in NO₂ concentrations at all AQMSs, except the A12 Westlink site during the same period, which is likely due to the A12 Westlink's function as an arterial route through Belfast from western and southern regions of Northern Ireland. The same trends are depicted during the second lockdown, with a correlation between the reduction in traffic on Belfast's roads and monitored NO₂ concentrations.

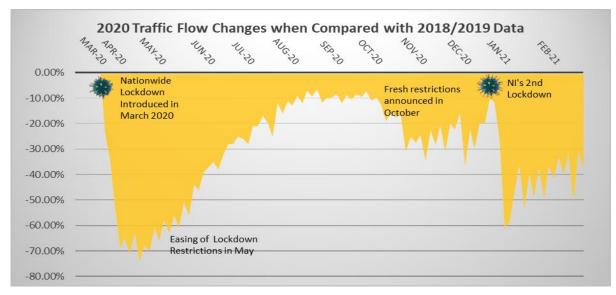


Figure 3.16 - Dfl Published Covid-19 Traffic Flow Figures Comparison for 2020/21.

Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2029 198

⁴⁵ Dfl, Published Traffic Flow Figures 2021 (source: https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/traffic-flow-figures).

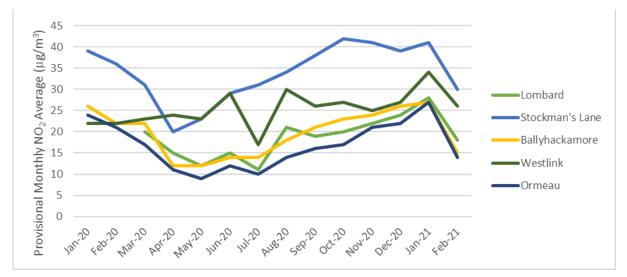


Figure 3.17 - Belfast AQMS Provisional Monthly NO₂ Averages during Covid-19 Pandemic.

Whilst both graphs demonstrate the established link between road traffic and ambient NO₂ concentrations, they also show that when restrictions were eased in the summer and autumn months of 2020, road traffic did not fully return to normal levels, instead averaging off at around 90% of original levels. It remains unclear when, or even if pre Covid-19 traffic levels will return. As the past year has confirmed that some businesses are able to 'work from home', it is also unclear whether some businesses might maintain this manner of working, even after restrictions have been finally lifted. If this is the case, the reduced levels of traffic depicted in Figure 3.16 may well be the new 'normal' and in turn, be beneficial to ambient air quality across Belfast City.

A significant portion of the traffic flow reduction may also be associated with reduced public transport timetables, which were introduced at the beginning of the first lockdown in March 2020. Given the need to stay at home and reduce close contact with individuals as much as possible, it is unsurprising that public transport use within Northern Ireland was significantly impacted. Figure 3.18 below illustrates the impact of the pandemic on public transport use. The graph shows that use of NI Railways, Metro and Ulsterbus services reduced to less than 50% of pre-lockdown levels⁴⁶.

Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 Page 199

⁴⁶ Northern Ireland Assembly, Decarbonising Transport in Northern Ireland research paper, 2020.

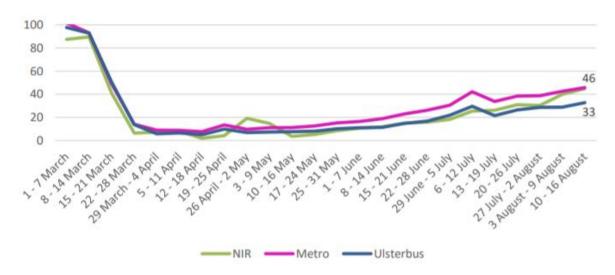


Figure 3.18 - Patronage (%) NIR, Metro and Ulsterbus 1st March – 16th August 2020, as compared with 2019.

The challenges of maintaining safety and social distancing on public transport, and by extension the usage of this mode of transport, have been an unfortunate consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, which is likely to play a role in determining how effective proposed public transport actions outlined within this Air Quality Action Plan may be. It is unclear whether businesses will maintain their new 'work from home' arrangements after Covid-19 restrictions have been finally removed and how long public transport usage will therefore take to return to pre-lockdown levels.

Although public transport use has been significantly reduced in the past year, it should be noted that when restrictions were relaxed, patronage levels on some services, such as the Glider in West Belfast, recovered very quickly to over 70% of pre-Covid levels. This demonstrates the importance of this type of investment and how important public transport is to key workers and people in areas of higher deprivation.

Furthermore, there is also some evidence that the pandemic has actually initiated an increase in the use of active travel in some cities. Manchester has, for example, recorded a 22% increase in cycling when compared with pre-lockdown levels. This has boosted walking and cycling to the extent that it now accounts for 33% of all journeys within that city. Liverpool and Cardiff have also noted similar modal shifts in travel through 2020, while anecdotal evidence suggests that bike sales have also soared. Belfast has also experienced a similar improvement in the use of active travel, with usage of the Comber Greenway up by more than 75% between April

2020 and March 2021, when compared with pre-lockdown levels in the same period during 2019/20, comprised of around 55% cycling and 45% walking. With this in mind, this Action Plan should seek to encourage and hasten active travel improvements, using the pandemic recovery process as a catalyst to further improve levels of walking and cycling within Belfast. However, Covid-19 has also resulted in the emptying of the city centre, as many people have been working from home. Therefore, when planning for cycling infrastructure, including pop-up cycle lanes, consideration should be given to new routes, including within suburban areas, to allow easy access to active travel routes from peoples' homes.

It is worth noting, however, that active travel tends to be more susceptible to poor weather, and so drop-offs in cycling and walking numbers are also typically reported during the colder, wetter winter months⁴⁷. Hence, a multi-modal approach is likely to be much more achievable in terms of sustainable travel, to provide individuals' with the option of moving to public transport when weather conditions worsen and viceversa.

DAERA⁴⁸ formally commissioned Ricardo Energy & Environment consultants to undertake an, '*Investigation of Effects of Covid-19 Restrictions on Air Quality in Northern Ireland*' and to that end, the consultants investigated the effects of the first Covid-19 'lockdown' restrictions in the spring and early summer of 2020, on ambient air quality acorss Northern Ireland. The resultant report consequently focuses on the period from the 1st January 2020 to 31st May 2020, spanning the early weeks of the pandemic, the onset of social distancing measures on the 16th March 2020, the beginning of the 'lockdown' period on the 23rd March 2020, through to the end of May 2020, when some easing of the restrictions had begun.

The consultants identified that emissions from industrial processes were likely to have decreased, though it was not possible to quantify this. They noted however that electricity demand statistics for the lockdown period indicated that any reduction in emissions from the power generation sector was likely to be small: probably less than 1% of the Northern Ireland total, in the cases of both sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx).

 ⁴⁷ Next Bike, Just Eat Belfast Bikes Rental Statistics, 2021 (source: https://www.belfastbikes.co.uk/en/belfast/statistics/).
 ⁴⁸ Ricardo, Investigation of Effects of Covid-19 Restrictions on Air Quality in Northern Ireland, Report for DAERA. April 2021 (https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/documents/technical-reports/NI_Covid_Report_Issue2.pdf)

Ricardo Energy & Environment further identified that traffic count data from 14 locations showed that the lockdown caused dramatic decreases in road traffic, with vehicle numbers (particularly cars) falling sharply when social distancing began on the 16th March 2020. Vehicle numbers had typically dropped to around one third of usual levels by early April 2020. As road vehicles usually account for some 30% of Northern Ireland's total NOx emissions, the lockdown restrictions were estimated to have resulted in a short-term reduction of 20% in the region's emitted NOx during the first few weeks of lockdown. At most locations, traffic numbers then gradually began to recover steadily through the rest of April, May and June 2020 but by the start of July 2020, vehicle numbers had still not returned to pre-lockdown levels, suggesting a longer-term reduction in vehicle numbers. Flights and rail services also demonstrated dramatic decreases during the lockdown period.

In terms of the impact of the lockdown on ambient air quality concentrations, Ricardo Energy & Environment idenitified that measured ambient NOx and NO2 concentrations fell substantially during lockdown. On average, over the period from the beginning of lockdown to the end of June 2020, nitrogen dioxide concentrations were 44% lower than under normal conditions; corresponding to an absolute average reduction of $13\mu gm^{-3}$. The Belfast Stockmans Lane monitoring site, which had exceeded the 40 μgm^{-3} annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide in recent years, had a mean concentration of less than 30 μgm^{-3} during the lockdown period (31 μgm^{-3} in March 2020, 20 μgm^{-3} in April 2020, 23 μgm^{-3} in May 2020 and 29 μgm^{-3} in June 2020).

Ricardo Energy & Environment advised that an analysis of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdown on ambient concentrations of particulate matter (PM₁₀) was more challenging, as particulate matter pollution tends to be dominated by regional background levels rather than local primary emissions. Accordingly, the consultants concluded that trends were less clear for PM₁₀ than for other ambient pollutants, with some NI monitoring sites showing an increase and others showing a decrease. They therefore concluded that on average, there was a small increase (<1 μ gm⁻³) in PM₁₀ concentations over the lockdown period when compared to normal conditions.

In summarising, Ricardo Energy & Environment advised that notwithstanding the clear reduction in emissions and ambient concentrations of NOx, it would be an over-simplification to state that overall ambient air quality in Northern Ireland had improved during the lockdown.

4 Development and Implementation of Belfast City AQAP.

4.1 Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement.

In developing this new 5-year Air Quality Action Plan, Belfast City Council have consulted with a wide range of relevant organisations, stakeholder groups and members of the public at various stages of the process.

The council has also fulfilled the various statutory consultation requirements in relation to the development of the Action Plan as detailed within Schedule 2 Air Quality: Supplemental Provisions of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, the Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 and the Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010. We have therefore consulted with following authorities, organisations, bodies or persons:

- a) the Department (DAERA);
- b) each district council whose district is contiguous to the council's district;
- c) such competent authorities exercising functions in, or in the vicinity of, the council's district as the council may consider appropriate;
- d) such bodies or persons appearing to the council to be representative of persons with business interests in the district to which the review or action plan in question relates as the council may consider appropriate;
- e) such other bodies or persons as the council may consider appropriate.

In May 2020, relevant 'Competent Authority' partners were invited by Belfast City Council to participate in the Steering Group tasked with the development of this new 5-year Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast.

As part of the consultation process, the Council has also undertaken a 12-week public consultation exercise into a draft version of the new Air Quality Action Plan from the 12th May 2021 to the 3rd August 2021 inclusive. The consultation process comprised of an online questionnaire, delivered via the council's Your say Belfast consultation hub, and the provision of four online information events provided for consultee groups. The consultation exercise was publicised via the council's various social media channels, through email and via the Summer 2021 edition of the Belfast City Council 'City Matters' residents' magazine, which is provided to every Belfast

household. Consultation emails were sent to those interest groups specifically identified for engagement by the council's People and Communities Committee, i.e.

- Adjoining Councils;
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;
- British Heart and Lung Foundation;
- Belfast Healthy Cities;
- · Belfast Chamber of Commerce;
- Friends of the Earth;
- Belfast Taxis and:
- Trade Unions.

As development of this new Air Quality Action Plan and the associated consultation process took place during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Public Health Agency was unable to participate, given health prioritisation measures. However, Public Health Agency representatives have been advised of the development of a new Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast and have been invited to engage with the Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group throughout the implementation and administration of the new Action Plan.

As Covid-19 pandemic regional restrictions have been implemented across Northern Ireland, no '*in person*' public consultation events were undertaken.

Belfast City Council would advise that the majority of consultation responses were received as formal submissions to the online consultation process. Further comments were also received at online events, with some consultation comments submitted by email directly to the Council.

4.2 Public Consultation Results.

In total, 59 individuals and 5 organisations provided formal submissions as part of the

consultation process by completing the online questionnaire provided via the

council's Your say Belfast consultation hub, or by providing their comments directly to

the council.

To capture feedback related to the draft Air Quality Action Plan, consultees were

asked to comment on the importance of the priority actions for each of the below

themes:

Public transport;

Active travel;

Sustainable energy and fuels and;

Assessment and reporting of air quality.

For each theme, consultees were also invited to provide comments on the draft Air

Quality Action Plan priorities and to provide recommendations for new or additional

actions to be included within the final Air Quality Action Plan.

The results of the public consultation were, in general, supportive of the key priority

areas of intervention and air quality actions contained within the Air Quality Action

Plan. Headline statistics for the consultation process indicated that:

• 95% of consultees agreed with the aims of the Action Plan;

88% of the consultees agreed that the proposed actions contained within the Air

Quality Action Plan will improve air quality within Belfast.

Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 below confirm that the majority of consultees consider

the proposed actions within the Plan as being either 'important' or 'extremely

important'.

Figure 4.2 - Responses in reference to survey question, 'This question focuses on actions relating to public transport. How important or unimportant are the following proposed actions?'



Figure 4.1 - Responses in reference to question, 'This question focuses on proposed actions relating to active travel. How important or unimportant are the following proposed actions?'

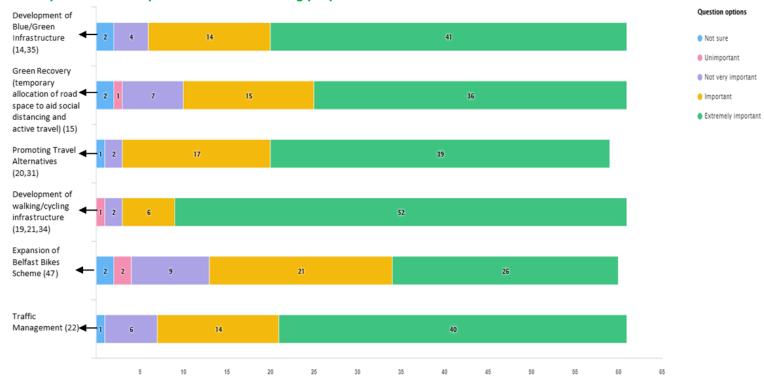


Figure 4.4 - Responses in reference to question, 'This question focuses on proposed actions relating to sustainable energy and fuels. How important or unimportant are the following proposed actions?'

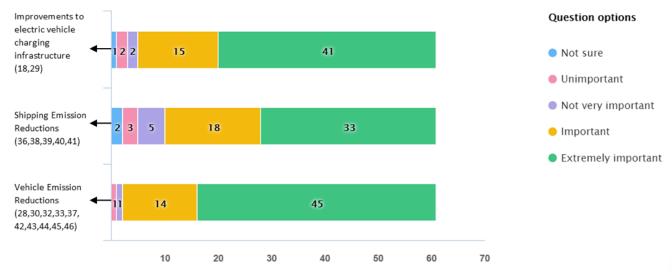
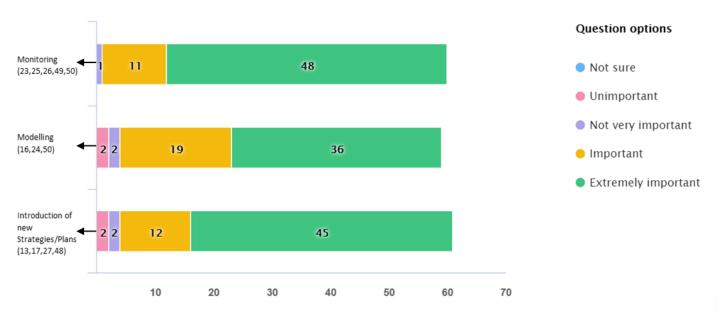


Figure 4.3 - Responses in reference to question, 'This question focuses on proposed actions relating to the assessment and reporting of air quality. How important or unimportant are the following proposed actions?'



Moreover, most consultees indicated that they would be willing to make lifestyle changes, including adopting greater levels of walking, cycling and public transport usage, in order to improve ambient air quality within Belfast (Figure 4.5 below).

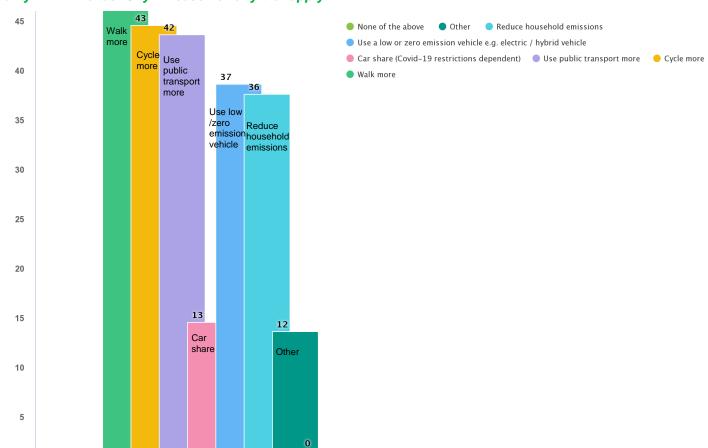


Figure 4.5 - Responses to Question 'What, if any, lifestyle changes would you be willing to make to improve air quality within Belfast City? Please tick any that apply.'

Some consultees suggested however, that the Air Quality Action Plan proposals do not go far enough in improving ambient air quality and that important additional measures such as addressing domestic emission sources, energy and transport incentives and indoor air quality have not been included (seven comments in total referred to these types of measures). Moreover, many consultees indicated that they do not consider electric vehicles to be a solution to reducing transport emissions.

Additional new measures such as Low Emission Zones, vehicle scrappage schemes, vehicle idling prevention and air quality awareness campaigns were recommended.

Belfast City Council has undertaken an analysis of the consultation feedback received and summarised all of the major queries, concerns and recommendations received from the consultees into a range of key themes. This analysis and Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group responses or areas for further comment are summarised within Appendix A.

4.3 Steering Group.

The Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group is responsible for the overall development, implementation and management of this new 5-year Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast, which is necessary to meet statutory obligations under Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, the Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 and the Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 in relation to local air quality management.

The Steering Group consists of representatives from relevant 'competent authority' partners, identified within the above-mentioned legislation, as well as other organisations that wish to contribute views and measures that can be implemented across the city to further reduce ambient air pollution.

The 2021-2026 Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group and associated Terms of Reference were established in May 2020.

Members of the Steering Group include:

- Belfast City Council;
- Belfast Planning Service;
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA);
- Department for Infrastructure (DfI);
- Translink:
- Sustrans and;
- Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

General responsibilities of Steering Group members include:

- Providing regular updates from each organisation on progress with actions or new and innovative initiatives that can assist in improving ambient air quality specifically within AQMAs and also across the city;
- Attending Steering Group meetings and providing relevant input and information from each organisation in advance of these meetings;
- Disseminating action planning information to relevant levels of management within their organisations;

- Providing an annual update to Belfast City Council and Steering Group partners on how their organisation is progressing with the actions detailed within the Action Plan, in line with reporting requirements established via Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance;
- Acting as a co-ordinator and conduit for air quality information from the respective organisation to the Steering Group for the purposes of local air quality management;
- Exchanging relevant information in a timely and appropriate manner.

5 AQAP Measures.

5.1 Overview.

It was anticipated that the successful implementation of the various mitigation measures included within the Air Quality Action Plan 2015-2020 would have allowed Belfast City to achieve the air quality objectives for NO₂ at all relevant receptor locations by the end of 2020.

Most of the proposed mitigation measures were completed or were proposed as longer-term ongoing actions. A summary on implementation of the Air Quality Action Plan 2015-2020 measures was included within the Belfast City Council Air Quality Progress Report 2020¹.

As highlighted in previous chapters of this Action Plan document, Belfast City Council has recorded reductions in nitrogen dioxide concentrations at all of our automatic monitoring stations over the past five years. However, as indicated within Section 3.3 of this report, our study also suggests that there were likely to be exceedances of the NO₂ annual mean objective at relevant receptor locations along sections of the A12 Westlink corridor during 2019, with compliance predicted to be likely achieved by the end of 2021.

In July 2017, the UK government, 'Air Quality Plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations in Belfast Metropolitan Area (UK0028)' was jointly published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department for Transport (DfT)⁴⁹. Within the 'Additional Actions in Northern Ireland' section of the UK plan, a number of roads within the Belfast agglomeration were identified as exceeding the annual mean limit value for NO₂, with 2022 predicted to be the limit value compliance year for the agglomeration.

An additional modelling evaluation project, undertaken by Belfast City Council during 2018 suggested that compliance could be achieved in Belfast in 2021, one year earlier than predicted by national modelling.

⁴⁹ Defra & DfT, Air Quality Plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations in Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (UK0028), 2017 (source: https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/no2ten/2017-zone-plans/AQplans_UK0028.pdf).

Calculations presented in Section 3.3, 'Required Reduction in Emissions' of this Action Plan suggest that by 2026, assuming there is no increase in traffic levels overall, current NOx road emissions will have decreased by around 50% along the A12 Westlink corridor, which is the reduction required to achieve compliance with the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective at the worst case roadside locations (within the carriageway confines of the A12 Westlink corridor).

Nevertheless, in developing this new Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast, Steering Group members wish to not only achieve and maintain the various air quality objectives but also to further reduce the levels of pollution across the city for ambient pollutants, including nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). Accordingly, it is intended that implementation of the various mitigation measures detailed within the following Table 5.1 will reduce pollution levels beyond what might reasonably be anticipated as a consequence of increasingly stringent vehicle emission standards.

Although this Plan does not currently include mitigation measures in relation to domestic and other significant combustion sources, Belfast City Council has already commenced a detailed assessment for the city, for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) in order to better understand PM_{2.5} sources and concentrations across the city, which will, where necessary, assist in determining appropriate mitigation policies and measures to reduce ambient PM_{2.5} concentrations and associated public exposure. Moreover, it should be noted that there are already measures in place within Belfast to regulate emission of smoke from premises. The majority of the Belfast City Council area has been declared as a series of Smoke Control Areas, where households may only burn 'authorised fuels' or use 'exempted appliances' when burning unauthorised fuels. These types of fuels and appliances have been formally tested to demonstrate that they emit only limited amounts of smoke when used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions. Notwithstanding, it is Belfast City Council's intention to deliver greater levels of enforcement within the city's various smoke control areas and to develop and deliver an awareness campaign to educate Belfast residents concerning the impact of using polluting fuels within their homes.

In 2017, Defra issued a practical guide for those that need to use wood burning stoves or open fires to reduce environmental and health impacts. This guidance can be found on the Defra smoke control webpage⁵⁰.

5.2 Air Quality benefits of proposed mitigation measures.

The measures proposed within this AQAP are based principally around reducing vehicle emissions and encouraging other sustainable methods of travel to reduce vehicle numbers on the roads.

It is not possible to quantify benefits of all mitigation measures, in terms of pollutant emission and/or concentration reductions. Accordingly, all measures have been afforded equal priority within the Action Plan, as they will contribute to improvements in ambient air quality.

Most measures, proposed as part of this Action Plan, refer to delivering modal shift away from private car use towards active travel (walking and cycling) and using public transport (DfI/Translink/Sustrans). As discussed within Section 3.4 Key Priorities, increased levels of walking and cycling, combined with improvement to public transport can reduce congestion and consequently improve ambient air quality across the city. Measures to improve walking and cycling infrastructure will be complemented by changes in city centre parking provision and management as proposed within the Belfast City Council Parking Strategy and Action Plan; those changes will aim to reduce commuting by single occupancy private cars to the city centre.

Although it is challenging to accurately quantify changes in ambient air quality as a consequence of active travel, it is anticipated that the proposed Action Plan measures will contribute to the desired behavioural changes and consequently reduce emissions from road transport sources.

Behavioral changes can however more readily be quantified in relation to public transport statistics. As reported by Translink within *Air Quality Action Plan 2015-2020 Progress Report 2020*¹, Belfast remains one of the few cities in the UK which is

Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2029e 214

⁵⁰ Defra, Smoke Control (source: https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/reports?report_id=948).

experiencing sustained growth in passenger journeys. Since 2014/15 financial year Metro and Glider services have increase passenger journeys to over 30 million per year (2019/20). That is an impressive increase of over 4 million journeys (+15.5%).

Moreover, since the introduction of the previous AQAP, the Belfast bus fleet has improved significantly in relation to reducing emissions, with currently over 50% (52.08%) of the fleet classified as Euro 6. Furthermore, Translink is proposing to continue improving its bus fleet within the timescale of this Action Plan. By December 2022, all buses and coaches operating in Belfast are to achieve the Euro 6 emission standard. This will significantly reduce exhaust emissions from buses. Calculations undertaken by Council Officers, using available local traffic data (DfI survey 2013 Chichester Street, Translink fleet composition 2020) and the Defra Emission Factor Toolkit v10.1, have postulated an 86% decrease in NOx emissions and an 11% decrease in PM_{2.5} emissions from the Belfast bus fleet between the years 2020 and 2022, within the Belfast City Centre area.

Translink has also proposed the introduction of over 100 new zero emission buses to the Greater Belfast area by April 2022 and a programme to decarbonise the bus fleet by 2030. This forms a key part of Translink's Climate Positive Strategy and will be fundamental in creating cleaner and greener public transport to positively impact the climate emergency and ambient air quality (source: Department for Infrastructure, news release, December 2020).

Currently, buses contribute to over 10% of road NOx emissions in the Ormeau Road AQMA and in the Cromac Street and Albertbridge Road AQMA. Therefore, the introduction of a zero-emission fleet will help to further reduce NO₂ concentrations in these areas.

Further to the various measures proposed by DfI, Sustrans and Translink, Belfast Harbour has proposed the introduction of a range of mitigation measures, which will reduce emissions from vehicles and vessels associated with Harbour operations (Table 5.1). It is worth noting that emissions from *Other Transport*, mostly comprised of shipping, make up 25% of total NOx emissions for Belfast⁵¹. Accordingly, reducing

⁵¹ UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory Map – Belfast Local Council Area, 2018 (source: https://naei.beis.gov.uk/emissionsapp/).
Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026

emissions from Harbour operations can therefore contribute significantly to ambient air quality improvements across the city.

At present, it is not possible to quantify the impact of Belfast Harbour's proposed measures due to a lack of baseline data. This will however be possible in the near future, as Belfast Harbour is implementing an ambient air quality monitoring programme within the Harbour area and will develop an associated emissions inventory to evaluate all relevant Harbour emissions, including from road transport movements, operation of port equipment, energy usage, and emissions from shipping. Therefore, once the Belfast Harbour air quality monitoring programme is established, improvements in ambient air quality can be determined and reported, based on a review of the monitoring data.

A summary of all Action Plan mitigation measures is presented in Table 5.1, which contains:

- A list of the actions that form part of this Plan;
- The responsible individual and departments / organisations who will deliver each action;
- A timescale for implementation and estimated completion and;
- The expected benefit in terms of pollutant emission and/or concentration reduction.

To ensure that the AQAP measures are implemented by relevant dates, and to provide a medium for other contributors to report on the implementation of their measures, the Council will convene a meeting of the Air Quality Action Planning Steering Group on at least an annual basis. During meetings, Steering Group members will be able to present progress on their own proposals and consider the implementation of the wider Action Plan measures.

In addition, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs local air quality management guidance document LAQM.TG(16) establishes phased ambient air quality reporting requirements for councils. The guidance currently advises that the local air quality management regime is still to be reviewed within Northern Ireland and until this has been completed, the previous reporting system has been extended

until June 2023. Accordingly, Belfast City Council has been required to provide an Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) report in June 2021⁵² and to then provide Action Plan Progress Reports in both June 2022 and June 2023. Detailed assessments are to be undertaken whenever necessary.

To this end, Belfast City Council will monitor implementation of the Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 via at least annual meetings of the Action Planning Steering Group and will report progress to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) via our various Action Plan Progress Reports or alternatively via Annual Status Reports, when they are introduced..

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Table 5.1 - Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 Action Plan Measures.

	No.	Measure	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits
_	1.	Zero Emission Public Transport	Translink	Introduce circa 100 new zero-emission buses to the Greater Belfast area.	Nov 2020 to April 2022	December 2022	Replaces c.100 diesel buses with zero emission vehicles.
	2.	Zero Emission Public Transport	Translink	Develop Programme to decarbonise the bus fleet in the Greater Belfast area.	November 2022 to December 2025	December 2030	To remove all diesel buses in Belfast Metro and replace with a zero-emission fleet by 2030.
Ď	3.	Bus Fleet Improvement	Translink	Through vehicle modification, deliver minimum Euro 6 emission standards for all buses and coaches operating in Belfast.	October 2020 to December 2022	December 2022	Significant reduction in NOx and particulate matter emissions.
age 218	4.	Decarbonisation of the rail network	Translink	Work ongoing on a feasibility assessment to decarbonise the rail network including the potential roll out of electrification, battery traction and hydrogen technologies.	October 2020	December 2023	Ultimately, zero emission on the rail network by 2040.
	5.	Future Ticketing System	Translink	Contactless payment on Metro / Glider. Account-based ticketing on all bus and rail services.	2018	2022	Provide greater ease of use, improved integration and best value for customers, thereby encouraging modal shift to public transport and a reduction in emissions from cars.
	6.	Belfast Transport Hub	Translink	Major new multi-modal transport hub for Belfast.	2020 Procurement of the main works contractor is ongoing and work on the new station is due to commence in Q1 2022.	2025	Provide a new integrated transport hub, including facilities for active travel to encourage and facilitate increased modal shift towards sustainable transport.

	7.	Promote Public Transport	Translink All BCC stakeholders	Undertake engagement across companies, organisations and agencies to incentivise reduced use of the private car and greater use of public transport. Provide information at our stations, on Personalised Travel Planning, Corporate Commuter Initiatives (CCIs), providing best value fares information and promotional activity to attract modal switch onto public transport. Promote the use of low and zero emission buses with the development of new branding and messaging to highlight their benefits.	November 2020	Ongoing	Modal shift from car use to public transport/active travel will reduce emissions.
Page 219	8.	Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2	A Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Infrastructure project being developed by DfI	If confirmed, as part of final Belfast Region City Deal, advance the development of Phase 2 BRT – bus priority measures, enhanced facilities & new vehicles. One of 3 infrastructure projects being taken forward by Dfl as part of BRCD	TBC – depends on BRCD prioritisation	TBC – depends on BRCD prioritisation	The proposed BRT 2 route options appraisal, which launched for public consultation on 26 July 2021, encompasses the City Centre and Ormeau Road AQMA. BRT will have a beneficial impact on modal shift, traffic movements and direct pollution levels along the route. For example, the Glider vehicles are demonstrating a 90% reduction in NO ₂ and particulate matter emissions relative to the oldest vehicles in the Metro fleet.
	9.	Bus & Rail based Park & Ride / Interchange	DfI Translink	1500 additional Bus & Rail Park and Ride spaces by 2023 across NI. Promotion of active travel links.	April 2018	March 2023	Modal shift from car use to Public Transport / Active Travel will reduce GHG emissions.

	10.	Bus Route Improvements	DfI Translink	Bus priority on all key Metro corridors in Belfast equivalent to that provided on the BRT Glider corridors. Bus stop 'balancing' to reduce stop/start.	April 2020	March 2025	By converting general traffic lanes to bus lanes, journey times are reduced and consequently fuel consumption and emissions are reduced. By better balancing the location and number of bus stops, dwell times are reduced, reducing idling, stop/start and associated emissions.
Page 220	11.	Park and Ride	DfI Translink	The current Park & Ride Strategic Delivery Programme aims to deliver circa 2,000 additional spaces by 2025 (dependent on budget allocation)	2013	2025	This extension to the programme will have positive impacts on improving air quality for Belfast by providing alternative transportation for commuters travelling into the city rather than relying upon the private car.
	12.	Improved walking and cycling connectivity to public transport interchanges	DfI Translink	Enhance walking and cycling infrastructure to bus and rail stations, halts and Park and Ride sites.	2021	Ongoing	Improve infrastructure to make it easier and more attractive to walk and cycle to and from public transport interchanges, thereby reducing car usage and associated emissions.
	13.	Bicycle Strategy for NI Belfast Cycling Network	DfI Sustrans	The Bicycle Strategy will be followed with a Belfast Cycling Network to guide the development and operation of cycling infrastructure across the city for the next 10 years.	2017	Published June 2021	Increased levels of cycling could reduce congestion, improved air quality, reduce noise pollution and contribute to a cleaner environment.

				A public consultation on the draft Belfast Cycling Network was held in early 2017. A consultation report was published in 2018.			
	14.	Blue / Green Infrastructure Funding	Dfl	Capital grant funding for Councils to construct greenways. The following greenway projects have been allocated a grant over the 2020/21 and 2021/22 period: Lagan Gateway greenway (BCC) Forth Meadow greenway (BCC) Strathfoyle greenway (DCSDC) Strabane North greenway (DCSDC) Banbridge Riverside lighting (ACBCBC)	2020-2022 depending on available Budget allocation	March 2022	Greenways have the potential to bring significant benefits to us all in terms of more physically active lifestyles, active travel, improved mental and physical health and wellbeing, social inclusion, tackling climate change, the strengthening of the local economy and tourism.
Page 22	15.	Green Recovery	Dfl	Temporary reallocation of road space to aid social distancing and active travel: - Pedestrianisation of Hill Street/Gordon Street - Reallocation of parking spaces for extended footway use - Pop-up cycle lanes to connect main hospitals for key workers — Dublin Road, Donegall Road and Grosvenor Road	2020/21	Ongoing	Increased levels of walking and cycling could reduce congestion, improved air quality, reduce noise pollution and contribute to a cleaner environment.
	16.	Belfast Multi- Modal Transport Model	Dfl	It is expected that the Multi-Modal Transport Model will be enhanced and updated as part of the development of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan in conjunction with the Belfast City Council Local Development Plan. However, this is currently 'in abeyance' in light of the COVID emergency and the programming of work for the Transport Plans. A key use of the model will be in transport and land-use option generation and testing. The transport model will provide forecasts of traffic flows and speeds to enable the estimation of air quality using separate detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling software held by Belfast City Council.	2022	Ongoing	This model will provide the capability to estimate the likely changes in air quality arising from changes in population and employment (BCC Planning inputs) and different transport investment options (DfI). Note that the decision to develop this model is currently 'in abeyance' in light of the COVID pandemic and the

							continuing impact on travel patterns.
Page	17.	Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP)	Dfl	A new BMTP will be prepared to integrate with the Belfast City Council LDP. The BMTP will assess total transport demands arising from planned developments and the achievement of a range of agreed objectives. The new BMTP will become the extant Transport Plan and will include a range of schemes covering road, rail, bus, cycling and pedestrian networks. Whilst the contents of the new BMTP cannot be assumed in advance, it is expected to include substantial demand management measures to restrict the use of private cars in the city centre and for commuting purposes in particular. These measures are expected to complement and reinforce any measures delivered as part of the Belfast City Council Parking Strategy and Action Plan	2023 estimated in line with LDP programme	2030 in line with LDP assumed	It is expected that the balance of measures in the BMTP will impact positively on ambient air quality.
222	18.	Electric Vehicles	Dfl	 Dfl is assisting the current public charge point network operator as it seeks to replace approx. 60 charge points i.e. 30 charge posts and a further 5 Rapid charge points to upgrade and improve the reliability of the existing public network. Department officials are engaging with OZEV and the Energy Saving Trust (EST), who administer the On-street Residential Charge Point Scheme (ORCS), in particular, with reference to councils in Northern Ireland. As part of the work being carried out on the transport elements of the Executive Energy Strategy the Department is considering how to chart a pathway to support vehicle electrification and seek to address financial and non-financial barriers to the uptake of EVs in Northern 	2015	Ongoing	There are significant benefits to both the environment and to the driver in the use of electric vehicles.

				Ireland, taking into account the wider UK policy, legislative and funding environment as part of a wider clean transport strategy. The Department is developing a charging infrastructure plan, in partnership with key stakeholders from government, public, private and third sectors to develop the charging network.			
Page	19.	Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge	A Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Infrastructure project being developed by DfI	If confirmed in the final Belfast Region City Deal, the proposed bridge, is one of 3 infrastructure projects being taken forward by Dfl as part of BRCD. It will span the River Lagan from the Gasworks to the Ormeau Embankment aiming to improve accessibility to the city centre for residents and communities east of the River Lagan. The Bridge also aims to encourage both people from the city centre and local communities to use Ormeau Park for recreational use.	TBC – depends on BRCD prioritisation	TBC – depends on BRCD prioritisation	Increased levels of walking and cycling could reduce congestion, improve air quality, reduce noise pollution and contribute to a cleaner environment.
e 223	20.	Promoting travel alternatives: Behaviour change programmes	PHA, DfI and DAERA, Belfast City Council, EU Interreg (delivered by Sustrans) Cycling UK/ Sustrans/ European Cycling Federation Sustrans	Sustrans works in a range of settings: Schools with the Active School Travel Programme; Workplaces with the Leading the Way Programme; Communities – to promote walking and cycling as a mode of transport. In addition: Active Travel Hub in CS Lewis Square, east Belfast and more recently Whiterock Community Centre in west Belfast – provides a base for range of interventions with community groups, individuals and workplaces. Project to encourage walking and cycling in new Forthmeadow Greenway	Ongoing 2015 2016 2017	Ongoing - Currently all these programmes are underway, with a review of extension.	Changing people's travel habits – swapping the car for walking, cycling and public transport. Active Travel Hubs are visible in the community to provide info & encourage travel alternatives.

			Applied to run Active Travel Hub at Cathedral Gardens Cycle-friendly Employer Accreditation Scheme – Cycling UK run this in N. Ireland with support from Sustrans. Pedal Perks cycling discount scheme offered by range of businesses to encourage cycling to premises.	2018 2017		Provide facilities to encourage active travel e.g. cycle parking; changing facilities; mileage incentives. Incentivises active travel to shops and facilities.
			Belfast Bike Life report – produced every 2 years in collaboration with Dfl. Provides evidence of support for cycling and progress to date, includes a public survey of attitudes to cycling. Belfast Cycling Network – published in June	2015 Latest Bike Life report published in March 2020	Ongoing Next report due Spring 2022	
21.	Transport planning and infrastructure: Build safe protected cycling infrastructure	Dfl Sustrans	2021, the Strategy sets out government plans to develop cycle routes in Belfast. The Bicycle Strategy will be followed with a Cycling Network for Belfast to guide the development and operation of cycling infrastructure in the city for the next 10 years. A public consultation on the draft Belfast Cycling Network was held in January 2017 and in early 2018, a consultation report was published.	2017	Report published June 2021	Safety is biggest barrier to people cycling. Traffic-free greenways enable more people to walk or cycle. Urban greenways used by commuters as well as leisure trips.
			Safe Routes to School campaign – to enable children to walk and cycle rather than being driven. Strategic plan for Greenways – Paths for Everyone. Funding pot for Councils to develop	Ongoing Part of Active School Travel Programme/ lobbying work	Ongoing	
			greenways. Sustrans can assist Councils with community consultation and feasibility plans.	2016	Ongoing	
22.	Traffic management	DfI Sustrans	Introduction of 20mph speed limits School Streets – closing area around schools to traffic. This is a proposed pilot scheme,	2019	Ongoing	As above, as we saw in lockdown less traffic encourages people to walk or cycle. Traffic

which has proved successful and popular in restraint measures GB. necessary to reduce **Low Traffic Neighbourhoods** – implement TBC volume of traffic and polluting vehicles. car-free areas. Monitor particulate matter from bulk cargoes in Belfast Harbour Identify areas of high Port operational areas of Belfast Harbour 23. Dust monitoring Commenced Ongoing Commissioners concentration for action. Estate and implement mitigation measures. Establish theoretical Complete Baseline Air Quality Modelling of the Belfast Harbour AQ Modelling 24. Commenced 2022 baseline & identify areas Commissioners Belfast Harbour Estate. for attention. Conduct monthly diffusion tube monitoring of Establish baseline of NO₂ Belfast Harbour NO₂ Monitoring NO₂ at 18 sites within the Belfast Harbour Commenced Ongoing levels & identify areas for Commissioners Estate. attention. Implement real time Air Quality Monitoring for Accessible Air Quality Real Time AQ Belfast Harbour 26. Monitoring air pollution at 5 locations within the Belfast 2021 Ongoing information/ potential link Commissioners to SMART traffic controls. stations Harbour Estate. Public commitment to Belfast Harbour Publish a Harbour Air Quality Strategy. 27. 2021 2021 Strategy Page Commissioners improve Air Quality. Belfast Harbour Replace the light vehicle fleet with Reduced air emissions Low/zero 28. 2021 2025 electric/alternative fuels. carbon fuels Commissioners from vehicles. Belfast Harbour Work with tenants to encourage installation of Reduced air emissions 225 29. **EV** Charging 2021 2025 Commissioners from vehicles. EV charging points. Reduced air emissions Belfast Harbour from vehicles (subject to 30. Introduce a Car Sharing Scheme for tenants. 2021 Car sharing Ongoing Commissioners relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions). Encourage active travel, including walking and Belfast Harbour Reduced air emissions cycling to; from and within the estate for local Active Travel 2021 31. Ongoing Commissioners from vehicles. journeys. Queens Road Mobility project / SMART traffic SMART traffic Belfast Harbour Reduced air emissions 32. 2021 2023 control Commissioners system. from vehicles. Integrated commuter plans to reduce private Belfast Harbour Integrated Reduced air emissions 33. car use including first and last mile 2022 2025 commuter plans Commissioners from vehicles. connectivity. Belfast Harbour Reduced air emissions Cycle lanes 34. Additional cycle lanes and crossing points. 2020 2025 Commissioners from vehicles. Belfast Harbour Introduce Green spaces and Absorb vehicle emissions. 35. Green corridors 2021 2025

Commissioners

screening/corridors.

Assess feasibility of shore power – cruise/ferry Shore-side Belfast Harbour Reduced air emissions 2021 36. 2025 Commissioners power vessels. from vessels. Decarbonise Reduced air emissions Belfast Harbour Substitute hydrocarbon fuels with low carbon 37. port cranes & 2021 2025 from port plant & alternatives - cranes/plant & HGV's. Commissioners HGV's equipment. Decarbonise Belfast Harbour Trial alternative marine fuels - Work and Pilot Reduced air emissions 38. work & pilot 2022 2025 Commissioners Boats. from vessels. boats Commercial Belfast Harbour Assess feasibility of Clean Vessel Incentive Reduced air emissions 39. 2022 2023 incentive Commissioners Scheme. from vessels. Belfast Harbour Optimise Vessel Passage Plans & Berth Reduced air emissions 40. Ship planning 2020 Ongoing Commissioners Utilisation. from vessels. Belfast Harbour Reduced air emissions Zero carbon 41. Introduce electric/hybrid workboat. 2021 Ongoing vessel from vessels. Commissioners Driver ECO Driver ECO Training & Refresher Driver ECO From 2020/21 Fuel consumption **Belfast City** 42. Ongoing Training & Monitoring by GPS. Page Skills Council onward reduction. Promoting Replacing older commercial EU3-4 vehicles Cleaner Belfast City From 2020/21 43. Ongoing Emission level reduction. above 3.5 ton with EU6 cleaner standard. commercial Council onward 226 vehicles Ensuring vehicles meet Vehicle All fleet vehicles tested annually to From 2020/21 Belfast City their EU approved Emission 44. Ongoing Council manufacturers approved EU standard. onward Standard. Testina Promoting Reduction in the Electric Belfast City Replacing older commercial panel vans up to From 2020/21 45. commercial panel van Ongoing 3.5 ton with Electric. Commercial Council onward fleet carbon footprint. panel vans Refuse Collection Vehicle Promoting Belfast City Replacing Refuse Collection Vehicles with rear From 2020/21 46. Vehicle Electric Ongoing fuel consumption Council electric bin-lifts. onward Bin-lifts reduction. Public Bike Scheme in City Centre – 300 bikes and 30 docking sites originally in 2015 in Just Eat Belfast **Belfast City** public places, including Titanic Quarter, the From 2015 Cutting congestion and 47. Ongoing **Bikes** Council Gasworks. Queen's University and York onward improving air quality. Street. This has now increased to 47 docking

stations.

Number of planning permissions granted To limit the net loss of **Belfast City Council** zoned open space for on zoned Open Belfast City Space. Planning decisions 2035 uses other than those 2021 Council and liaising with CNS. Policy: ancillary or compatible draft Plan Strategy with open space use. LDP policy OS1 Number of planning permissions that secure Green and 75% of major permissions Belfast City Council Blue Infrastructure contributing to G & B through Major improvements. **Belfast City** Infrastructure including through Planning decisions 2021 2035 improvements. Council (BCC) and S76 Developer Agreements. Agreements. Policy: SP8 GB1 Page 227 The number of Local BCC monitoring major Development applications granted Increase in number of for renewable energy planning decisions Plan **Belfast City** renewable energy 2021 2035 development. with Development Council schemes. Policy: Management. ITU4 Number of people travelling by sustainable modes active travel, bus rail & BRT. Travel survey for An increase in the number **Belfast City** Policy: Northern Ireland 2035 of people travelling by 2021 Council (TSNI) (DfI). TRAN1 sustainable modes. TRAN3 TRAN4 TRAN5 TRAN9 Number of new To sustainably manage Housing Monitor and Belfast City dwellings permitted the number of new Planning decisions 2021 2035 annually outside Council dwellings in the (BCC). settlement limits. countryside.

Policy: DC policies Number of nonresidential proposals To sustainably manage permitted annually **Belfast City** Planning decisions the amount of new nonoutside settlement 2021 2035 Council residential development in (BCC). limits. the countryside. Policy: DC policies Additional NO2 and PM Monitoring using Small To provide more detailed Additional Air **Belfast City** Sensors and Diffusion Tube Technologies to and real time information 49. Quality Ongoing Ongoing assess air quality within Belfast City Council on pollution levels across Council Monitoring the city. area. **Detailed Air** The purpose of this project is to generate. The outcome of the Quality through the application of ambient monitoring modelling study may Assessment for and atmospheric dispersion modelling, Page serve to assist in the Fine Particulate detailed information on fine particulate matter development of mitigation Belfast City Matter (PM_{2.5}) (PM_{2.5}) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) Council/ February 2021 March 2023 policies and measures to and Nitrogen concentrations within the city boundary in DAERA better address PM_{2.5} and 228 Dioxide (NO₂) order to ascertain whether UK air quality NO₂ concentrations for the Belfast objectives, European Commission limit values across the city. City Council or WHO guideline values are being achieved in relevant human health receptor locations. area Reduced smoke emissions and greater Enforcement Belfast City Council will undertake greater levels of compliance Ongoing Ongoing within Smoke enforcement within the city's smoke control within Smoke Control Control areas areas, and it will develop and deliver an Belfast City Areas 51. and education Council awareness campaign to educate Belfast concerning the Greater awareness about residents of the adverse air quality impacts of Awareness use of polluting polluting fuels and their using polluting fuels within their homes. Campaign Ongoing adverse ambient impacts fuels. August 2022 on air quality.

Table A. 1 – Summary of Responses to Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement on the AQAP.

up Response or Comments	Air Quality Action Plan Stee	Steering Group Respondent(s)	Number of times the comment was provided during the consultation exercise	Consultee comment	
re is considered within this Air	The requirement for more cycling in	Dfl	20	Theme: Active Travel 1 Requirement for	_
n Plan is to promote and encourage ort within Belfast. The actions us substantially on infrastructure away from private vehicle use clude ongoing delivery of the ic management (including ve Travel Hubs and greater interprint for developing a coherent, by cycling in the city over the next (BMTP) (Table 5.1 measure 17)	Quality Action Plan. One of the main aims of the Air Quawalking, cycling and the use of public proposed within the Action Plan the improvements to help facilitate a motowards active travel options. Such Belfast Cycling Network, green recognicitisation of pedestrians and cyclonactivity with public transport (To The Belfast Cycling Network provide connected and safe infrastructure for ten years (Chapter 3.1.11). The new Belfast Metropolitan Transwill consider active travel measures across the Belfast Metropolitan area.	Sustrans	20	more cycling infrastructure, including safe, fully segregated and connected cycle lanes.	
clude ongoing ic managemer ve Travel Huber or the control of the c	towards active travel options. Such Belfast Cycling Network, green recomprioritisation of pedestrians and cyclonnectivity with public transport (Towards The Belfast Cycling Network provide connected and safe infrastructure for ten years (Chapter 3.1.11). The new Belfast Metropolitan Transwill consider active travel measures			lanes.	

				In addition, the Local Development Plan will encourage the expansion of green infrastructure networks for walking and cycling across the city (including new and improved walking and cycling routes) provide for active travel (Chapter 3.1.1). The measures relevant to cycling infrastructure are summarised in Table 5.1 (measures 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21 and 34)
2	Encourage behavioural change towards cycling as the main form of transport, including training for cyclists.	4	BCC DfI Sustrans	Behaviour change programmes to promote active travel and public transport are essential in achieving modal shift. Such programmes are considered within the Air Quality Action Plan. Projects like the Active Travel Hub in east Belfast, funded by DAERA, have proved very successful in providing information and offering skills training to get more people walking and cycling (Chapter 3.4.3) in a location which is served by good walking and cycling infrastructure (Comber Greenway and Connswater Community Greenway). The Belfast City Council City Regeneration and Development Team have previously highlighted the need for frequent and clear public awareness campaigns similar to the, 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' health and social wellbeing initiative, adding that initiatives of this type should be informed by behavioural change approaches and supported by practical schemes such as cycle to work incentives (Chapter 3.3.11). The Active School Travel Programme is currently has been delivered in over 400 schools in Northern Ireland, with the aim of increasing levels of walking and cycling to and from school (Chapter 3.4.1). It is anticipated that the proposed Action Plan measures will contribute to the desired behavioural changes and consequently reduce emissions from road transport sources. The measures relevant to cycling training / promotions are summarised in Table 5.1 (measures 20, 21 and 31).

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	Pop-up infrastructure in relation to the Covid pandemic (widening of footpaths etc.) should be made permanent;	1	DfI Sustrans	In the past year, the Covid-19 pandemic has provided an opportunity to introduce a number of 'pop-up' cycle lanes and associated infrastructure throughout the city, including routes on the Dublin Road, Donegall Road and Grosvenor Road, whilst existing lanes on the Crumlin and Oldpark Roads have been improved. The new routes are designed to provide easier access to Belfast's hospitals. (Chapter 3.4.1) Table 5.1 (measure 15). A review of these pop-up lanes by Dfl will shortly be completed. The outworkings of this review will assist in the delivery of future cycling infrastructure.
4	Pop-up infrastructure H&S issues (Donegall Road cycle bollards were considered as a H&S risk for one disable car user and NI)	1	DfI Sustrans	Lessons learned from the pop-up cycle lane review will be applied to the further development of pop-up cycle lanes, including the future of the Donegall Road lanes.
	More facilities needed for bicycles on trains.	1	DfI Translink	Translink, the primary provider of public transport in Northern Ireland, is collaborating with key stakeholders including the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), Sustrans and local councils to improve integration of public transport and active travel. (Chapter 3.4.2)
	More/better walking infrastructure required, including safe road crossings (McKinstry roundabout in West Belfast)	9	BCC DfI	The requirement for more walking infrastructure is considered within the Air Quality Action Plan document. The Plan recognises that there is a room for improvement regarding connectivity, accessibility and safety of active travel routes (for walking and cycling) throughout the city. The Local Development Plan will provide for the expansion of green infrastructure networks for walking and cycling across the city to enable more active travel; Strategic Policy SP7 Connectivity will support connectivity to and within the city by sustainable transport modes, such as public transport, walking and cycling. The LDP includes policies to promote new transport schemes, including new and improved walking routes. (Chapter 3.1.1) The new Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) (Table 5.1 measure 17) will consider active travel infrastructure across the Belfast Metropolitan area.

Page 232	7	Pedestrianisation of the city centre.	8	BCC (Planning) Dfl	The Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy includes policies to create a green, walkable, cyclable city centre and integrating shared spaces and connectivity throughout the city. Such examples include the development of the Lagan River corridor as a recreational spine for the city. (Chapter 3.1.3) The Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan propose to create a strategic framework for green and blue infrastructure like Greenways, which are dedicated movement corridors free of motor vehicles; Greenways provide a safe environment for walkers, runners and cyclists to move around the city. (Chapter 3.1.4). The measures relating to walking infrastructure are summarised in Table 5.1 (measures 14, 15, 17, 19, 20 and 21) Although pedestrianisation of the city centre is not explicitly addressed within this Air Quality Action Plan, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) is expected to consider substantial management measures to restrict the use of private cars in the city centre and for commuting purposes in particular (Chapter 3.1.2). The measures relevant to walking / pedestrianisation of the city centre are summarised in Table 5.1 (measures 15, 17, 19 and 48)
	The	eme: Public Transport			
	8	More bus routes required, including restructuring of current system of routes (e.g. inclusion of orbital and radial routes).	11	DfI Translink	In relation to additional / amended bus routes, the Air Quality Action Plan highlights that the Department for Infrastructure and Translink are working on the development of Phase 2 of the Belfast Rapid Transit project (BRT Glider) and new integrated Transport Hub for Belfast. (Chapter 3.4.2) Frequency of service is one of the key factors in growing public transport passenger numbers. A balance has however to be achieved between expanding bus routes and maximising frequency on core corridors.

				The new Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) (Table 5.1 measure 17) will consider public transport infrastructure, including bus routes and measures across the Belfast Metropolitan area.
	Use of bus lanes should be restricted to buses and cyclists only (taxis / motorcycles etc. prohibited).	2	DfI Translink	The Department for Infrastructure has no plans to amend the vehicles currently permitted to use bus lanes, unless for a particular safety / operational reason and on a site by site basis.
1	Public transport needs to be more affordable (e.g. subsidies/incentives).	10	DfI Translink	This matter has been mentioned within Chapter 3.4.2 of the Air Quality Action Plan To make public transport more attractive, Translink offers integrated travel solutions that are attractive, sustainable and good value for passengers. Translink initiatives include the introduction of a new integrated, account-based ticketing system and full integration between services, in relation to both journeys and fares. The fares policy (pre Covid-19) involved small annual rises, below the rate of inflation, that over time drove down the real cost of public transport. Allied to this, fare promotions were geared at encouraging people to trial public transport, for example through the promotion of discounted fares to the 16-23 age group through yLink. Measures relating to public transport ticketing system / fees are summarised in Table 5.1 (measure 5)
1	1 Improvements to frequency and reliability of public transport are required.	3	DfI Translink	Translink is working with the Department for Infrastructure to promote and extend bus priority schemes, including bus lanes. (Chapter 3.4.2) The new Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) (Table 5.1 measure 17) will consider public transport infrastructure including public transport frequency and capacity across the Belfast Metropolitan area.

	12	Ensure there is	1	DfI	Bus lanes and other bus priority measures are central to improving the reliability and punctuality of public transport. This has been demonstrated through the success of the BRT Glider system. Translink complies with accessibility standards for all of its new vehicles and
		enough seating for elderly and disabled individuals using public transport.		Translink	infrastructure and engages with relevant stakeholder groups to ensure that accessibility needs are fully considered. Metro and Glider services are operated by 100% low floor accessible vehicles.
	13	Expansion of rail network, including connectivity to Belfast Harbour and airports (reopening old train lines/stops).	4	DfI Translink	Dfl is currently developing the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan and Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, which will consider the potential for expanding the rail network and reopening lines and stops. The rail network is to be considered under the progressing suite of Transport Plans for Northern Ireland. The new Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) Table 5.1 (measure 17) will consider public transport including rail and links to gateways in the Belfast Metropolitan Area.
_	14	Decarbonisation of rail network required.	3	Dfl Translink	The requirement for decarbonisation of rail network is already considered in the Air Quality Action Plan document. Translink is currently working on a feasibility assessment to decarbonise the rail network including the potential roll out of electrification, battery traction and hydrogen technologies - Table 5.1 (measure 5)
	15	Suggested reintroduction of trams in Belfast.	2	DfI Translink	This comment appears to overlook the service provided by the BRT / Glider The strategic business case for the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) System considered the potential for light rail (trams) in Belfast. This concluded that light rail did not offer value for money and that the BRT was a better option. A business case for phase 2 of BRT is currently being developed.

Theme: Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure (including e-scooters and e-bikes)

Ireland Executive's Energy Strategy, the Department for Infrastructure is

considering how to support vehicle electrification and address financial and non-

1	Building Regulations should include a requirement for EV charging points to be installed.	2	BCC (Planning)	financial barriers to the uptake of EVs in Northern Ireland, taking account of wider UK policy, legislative and the funding environment, as part of a wider clean transport strategy. Although amendments to the building regulations, including requirements for EV charging points installation, are not proposed withing this Air Quality Action Plan document, this comment has been forwarded to the relevant authority. Notwithstanding this point, Belfast City Council is attempting to introduce environmental improvements through the planning process. The Belfast City Council Local Development Plan (LDP), through Policy Des 2 and Tran 8, as highlighted within Chapter 3.1.1, should encourage more sustainable development, in order to mitigate and decrease levels of pollution and the predicted impacts of climate change. Under policy DES 2, the LDP suggests that planning permission will be granted for major developments where they deliver energy efficiencies that seek to achieve BREEAM 'excellent' or a comparable standard. Moreover, operational policy TRAN 8, within the LDP states that consideration should, where appropriate, be given to parking provision for electric vehicles with access to charging points in development proposals.
	heme: Vehicle Emission		50	
2	Vehicle idling prevention measures required (to discourage both public transport and private vehicle drivers).	3	DfI Translink	Vehicle idling prevention measures have not been proposed within this Air Quality Action Plan document. At present, there is no anti-idling legislation in place for Northern Ireland. The Council has however, organised several anti-idling public awareness campaigns in the past, reminding vehicle users to turn their engines off when stationary. Regarding public transport, Translink already has an anti-idling policy in place. Moreover, new buses have an auto stop / start function, i.e. if stopped at traffic lights, the vehicle's engine automatically shuts down.

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	21	Through traffic prevention measures (e.g. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and preventing rat running).	2	BCC DfI	Traffic management measures, including Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are considered within this Air Quality Action Plan document. Table 5.1 (measure 22). Moreover, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan is expected to consider substantial demand management measures to restrict the use of single occupancy cars in the city centre and for commuting purposes in particular (Chapter 3.1.2).
	22	Speed reduction measures in residential and school areas (including 20mph zones and speed humps).	4	DfI Sustrans	Traffic management measures, including School Streets and introduction of 20mph speed limits are considered within this Air Quality Action Plan document. Table 5.1 (measure 22).
1	23	Car sharing incentives (e.g. dedicated car sharing lanes).	1	Belfast Harbour Commissioners DfI	A 'Car Sharing Scheme' is to be introduced by Belfast Harbour Commissioners. Table 5.1 (measure 30). Car sharing has been supported by the Department for Infrastructure through the provision of park and ride/car sharing sites which allow users to park free of charge and have access to public transport or to share vehicles to reduce travel costs and emissions. The HSA has advised people to avoid car sharing during COVID-19 and has provided advice to reduce the spread of the virus if car sharing cannot be avoided. Whilst there are no current plans to introduce dedicated car sharing lanes or to allow car sharing schemes access to bus lanes, the benefits of car sharing will be considered as part of a suite of measures designed to decarbonise the transport sector in the development of a local Transport Strategy.
	24	York Street Interchange Project must be prioritised.	1	DfI	Delivery of the York Street Interchange scheme remains a high priority for the Department for Infrastructure. The NI Executive, as part of the NDNA agreement, has committed to the delivery of essential infrastructure projects, including the York Street Interchange. This scheme will address a major bottleneck on the strategic road network, replacing the existing signalised junction at York Street

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7					with direct links between Westlink, M2 and M3, three of the busiest roads in Northern Ireland. In July 2020, the Minister announced an external review into the scheme to provide assurance on how and to what extent the scheme reflects key Ministerial, Executive and Council objectives and priorities. This was conducted in November 2020 and in March 2021 the Minister announced the outcome, accepting the six recommendations from it and outlined proposals to address them, which included further work to be carried out, particularly around place making and to maximise ambition in terms of what can be delivered for communities, connectivity and the wider living places agenda. The commencement of construction for the York Street Interchange will depend on the satisfactory completion of an economic assessment, completion of the statutory process and Ministerial approval of funding being made available in future budget settlements.
,	The	me: Parking Reduction	n		
	25	A reduction in parking provision within the city centre is required (including the removal of government and Local Authority parking spaces and provision of residential only parking zones).	6	BCC DfI	Parking provision within the city centre is considered within this Air Quality Action Plan document. The Belfast City Council Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan, aim to manage the number and type of parking spaces within the city in order to reduce commuting into the city centre in single occupancy private vehicles, thereby encouraging sustainable travel modes (Chapter 3.1.3) In addition, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan is expected to consider substantial demand management measures to restrict the use of private cars in the city centre and for commuting purposes in particular. Table 5.1 (measure 17)
	26	Working from home scheme (including hot desking).	3	Dfl	The Department for Infrastructure is following the NICS Hybrid Working Policy which is Department of Finance led. Belfast City Council's Recovery and Covid-19 management principles include optimising the use of technology and new business processes to deliver remote working and access to services.

The	eme: Scrappage Scher	nes		
27	Introduce scrappage schemes, including incentives for purchase of EVs.	2	Dfl	The Department for Infrastructure has no plans to introduce a diesel or petrol scrappage scheme as an incentive to purchase electric vehicles. Funding is provided by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) to support electric vehicle purchase.
The	me: Low Emissions Z	ones		
28	Introduce Low Emission Zones in Belfast.	5	DAERA DfI	Low Emission Zones have not been proposed as part of this this Air Quality Action Plan. In May 2017, Defra published a document entitled, 'Clean Air Zone Framework - Principles for setting up Clean Air Zones in England'. The government did not at the time extend the low emission zone provisions and requirements to Northern Ireland. However, at the meeting of the People and Communities Committee of 8th October 2019, Members agreed that recommendations regarding the introduction of Clean Air Zone / Low Emission Zone legislation should be formally provided to DAERA and Dfl as part of the Council's consultation response to the DAERA Clean Air Strategy Discussion Document The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has subsequently commented that 'This issue was raised in the DAERA Clean Air Strategy Discussion Document, which was released to a public consultation in November 2020. This consultation closed in spring 2021 and officials are considering responses received. Preliminary findings will be shared with the Minister, with a view to identifying his preferred options for further development. Agreed proposals will then be more fully developed and will be included in a draft Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland. This will be subject to consideration by the Executive and a further public consultation to seek views on the proposals contained therein.'

The	eme: Business and Doi	mestic Emission	ns	
29	Create incentives for businesses / homeowners to switch to more sustainable energy solutions.	6	BCC DfE	Although the Plan does not currently include proposals for additional mitigation measures in relation to domestic and other significant combustion sources, Belfast City Council has commenced a detailed review and assessment for the city for fine particulate matter (PM _{2.5}), which will, where necessary, assist in determining appropriate mitigation policies and measures to reduce ambient fine particulate matter (PM _{2.5}) concentrations, arising principally from domestic combustion sources. Table 5.1 (measure 50). Moreover, the Department for Communities in partnership with Belfast City Council and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive provide grant aid to improve energy efficiency measures through the Affordable Warmth Scheme. The Scheme addresses the effects of fuel poverty and energy inefficiency and is directed at low income households. There are range of other available incentives for homeowners and businesses provided by other organisations like National Energy Action. These consultation comments have been provided to the Department for the Economy (DfE) for their consideration. DfE is principally responsible for the NI Executive's strategies and policies relating to energy.
30	Government bodies should lead by example in implementing sustainable energy sources (e.g. solar/wind power).	1	BCC Translink Belfast Harbour Commissioners.	This recommendation is considered within this Air Quality Action Plan document. Policies set out in the Local Development Plan (Chapter 3.1.1 and Table 5.1 (measure 48) will contribute to achieving national targets for reducing CO ₂ emissions and encouraging the production of energy from renewable resources. Moreover, the Belfast Resilience Strategy (Chapter 3.1.8) advises that Belfast City Council is committed to becoming a carbon-neutral organisation as urgently as possible. Translink has also developed <i>Translink Climate Positive Strategy</i> . The main goal of the Strategy is for Translink to become Climate Positive by 2050, going

71				beyond achieving 'net zero' to create an environmental benefit by removing additional carbon dioxide (CO ₂) (Chapter 3.1.9). Furthermore, the Belfast Harbour is to develop the Air Quality Strategy for the harbour area, which will consider all relevant emissions generated on site, including sustainable energy provisions. Chapter 3.1.10 and Table 5.1 (measure 27).
31	Rigid enforcement of current air quality legislation and Smoke Control Areas.	3	BCC DAERA	There are already statutory measures in place, mentioned within Chapter 5.1 of this Air Quality Action Plan, to regulate emission of smoke from premises. The majority of the Belfast City Council area has been declared as a series of Smoke Control Areas, where households may only burn 'authorised fuels' or use 'exempted appliances' when burning unauthorised fuels. In a Smoke Control Area, it is an offence to emit smoke from a chimney under the Clean Air (NI) Order 1981. Council Environmental Health Officers enforce smoke control provisions. It has however been recognised within UK Clean Air Strategy 2019, that changes may be needed to make smoke control legislation easier to enforce. In the interim, Belfast City Council will undertake greater enforcement within the city's smoke control areas, and it will develop and deliver an awareness campaign to educate Belfast residents of the adverse impact of using polluting fuels within their homes. Table 5.1 (measure 51) DAERA has provided further comments concerning this matter, noting that 'This issue was raised in the DAERA Clean Air Strategy Discussion Document, which was released to a public consultation in November 2020. This consultation closed in spring 2021 and officials are considering responses received. Preliminary findings will be shared with the Minister, with a view to identifying his preferred options for further development. Agreed proposals will then be more fully developed and will be included in a draft Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland. This will be subject to consideration by the Executive and a further public consultation to seek views on the proposals contained therein.'

T	heme: Ambier	nt Air Qua	lity Monitoring		
3		nts to nitoring of matter n oxides me gher and a), ore ocations ools, areas, Harbour	8	BCC Belfast Harbour Commissioners George Best Belfast City Airport DAERA	The requirement for more monitoring of particulate matter and nitrogen oxides is considered within this Air Quality Action Plan document. Currently, Belfast City Council operates five automatic and 60 passive air quality monitoring stations across the city in order to help inform its air quality management processes and to provide real time information to the public in relation to air pollution levels. Our air quality monitoring results and sensor locations are available from the DAERA Northern Ireland Air website via the following weblink: http://www.airqualityni.co.uk/ Moreover, as indicated within the AQAP, the council is installing additional NO2 and PM monitors, using Small Sensors and Diffusion Tube Technologies. Table 5.1 (measures 49 and 50) Belfast Harbour has commenced an air quality monitoring programme within the Belfast Harbour Estate. Table 5.1 (measures 25 and 26). Belfast City Airport currently have no fixed and continuous air quality monitoring in place at the airport. However, they have recently been engaged in a review of current practice and requirements at airports in the UK and Ireland with the aim of introducing a suitable air quality monitoring regime. DAERA have also addressed this query within their Clean Air Strategy Discussion Document which was released to a public consultation in November 2020. They have noted that 'this consultation closed in spring 2021 and officials are considering responses received. Preliminary findings will be shared with the Minister, with a view to identifying his preferred options for further development. Agreed proposals will then be more fully developed and will be included in a draft Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland. This will be subject to consideration by the Executive and a further public consultation to seek views on the proposals contained therein.'
3	More focus monitoring of		3	ВСС	The requirement for more monitoring of particulate matter (PM _{2.5} and PM ₁₀₎ is considered within this Air Quality Action Plan document.

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	particulate matter (PM _{2.5} and PM ₁₀), with analysis of results against health statistics of COPD and asthmatic hospital admissions.			The Council recognises that fine particulate matter (PM _{2.5}) has emerged as an additional ambient air pollutant of concern for the city. The Council and DAERA have therefore decided to undertake a detailed assessment for the city, for particulate matter and NO ₂ pollutants. This project commenced in February 2021 and comprises additional monitoring of particulate matter (PM _{2.5} and PM ₁₀). Table 5.1 (measure 50) Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts; Belfast City Council is therefore committed to reducing the exposure of people in Belfast to poor ambient air quality and to working with medical professionals in order to safeguard and improve health.
34	Analysis of air quality against traffic numbers.	2	BCC DfI DAERA	Extensive analyses of road source emissions / contributions to ambient air pollution levels within Belfast are included within Chapters 3.2 and 3.3 of this Air Quality Action Plan document. Transport emissions have been assessed using road traffic data provided by the Department for Infrastructure (Dfl). DAERA have indicated however that the Department would support the installation by Dfl of additional traffic counters for ambient air quality and noise management purposes.
35	Create and implement legislation based on World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines.	2	DAERA	This recommendation has not been included within this Air Quality Action Plan document. However, the 2019 UK Clean Air Strategy contains a commitment to progressively cut public exposure to particulate matter pollution as suggested by WHO by setting a new, ambitious, long-term target to reduce peoples' exposure to PM _{2.5} . It should be noted that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has recently published revised and refined Global Air Quality Guidelines for particulate matter (PM _{2.5} and PM ₁₀), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide (2021). This matter was addressed within the recent Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs <i>Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland. A Public</i>

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26	Monitoring of oderwa		DOC	Discussion Document, November 2020. We are currently awaiting the Department's decision on WHO guidance implementation. DAERA have previously addressed this query within the Clean Air Strategy Discussion Document which was released to a public consultation in November 2020. They have reiterated that 'This consultation closed in spring 2021 and officials are considering responses received. Preliminary findings will be shared with the Minister, with a view to identifying his preferred options for further development. Agreed proposals will then be more fully developed and will be included in a draft Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland. This will be subject to consideration by the Executive and a further public consultation to seek views on the proposals contained therein.'
36	and air pollution from waste facilities	2	BCC DAERA	Belfast City Council would advise that in Northern Ireland waste facilities, like industrial processes, are regulated by Northern Ireland Environment Agency. Such sites have to be operated in accordance with permit conditions; operators are required to carry out continuous and / or periodic compliance monitoring to demonstrate compliance with air emission limit values.
37	eme: Education / Awar More public	eness 13	BCC	The real-time pollution information on air quality is already available from the
	awareness / education campaigns		DAERA	DAERA Northern Ireland Air website via the following weblink: http://www.airqualityni.co.uk/ ;
	in relation to air quality (including health effects, real-time pollution			There is also a free Northern Ireland Air App, which provides air quality information / health advice for people in Northern Ireland.
	information).			Public awareness / education campaigns are considered in the AQAP document. The aim of campaign like <i>Active School Travel Programme</i> (Chapter 3.4.1) and the Promotion of Public Transport. Table 5.1 (measure 7) is to
				promote active travel / public transport and improve ambient air quality.
				Belfast City Council is committed to supporting public awareness campaigns like Clean Air Day. In addition, the Council will develop and deliver an awareness

The 38	Planning Related Planning policy should prevent suburban sprawl and encourage city living.	Actions 5	BCC Planning	campaign to educate Belfast residents of the adverse impact of using polluting fuels within their homes. Table 5.1 (measure 51) As part of the new Local Development Plan, discussed within Chapter 3.1.1 of this Air Quality Action Plan document, the residential accommodation policies will seek to address current and future residential needs by ensuring sufficient land is made available to meet future housing requirements. The housing policies will aim to promote sustainable housing development within the urban footprint and to facilitate city centre living to grow the residential population of the city centre.
39	All new developments and refurbishments should be more sustainable (sustainable energy provisions and transport)	3	BCC Planning	The new Local Development Plan (LDP), described within Chapter 3.1.1 of the Air Quality Action Plan document, sets out strategic and operational policies as to how sustainable development can be achieved within Belfast city; LDP will support development of an efficient integrated transport network offering travel choice that minimises congestion and air pollution. In addition, the Plan will encourage the expansion of green infrastructure networks for walking and cycling. Moreover, the LDP, through 'Strategic Policy SP6 Environmental Resilience' will support development where such development helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and it is adaptable in a changing climate to build environmental resilience. The LDP includes operational policies that also support renewable energy development like Policy ITU4. Table 5.1 (measure 48).
	eme: Tree Planting	_		
40	Develop a tree protection and planting policy	4	BCC	It is highlighted within Air Quality Action Plan document that the new Local Development Plan (Chapter 3.1.1) will include operational policies like 'OS1 Protection of open space policy' and 'TRE1 Local Development Plan Policy on Trees'. Moreover, the Council is currently working with a range of city partners to plant one million native trees across Belfast by 2035. Belfast One Million Trees was

				inspired by an original idea from the Belfast Metropolitan Residents Group and it is a collaboration between public, private and voluntary sector partners.
Th	eme: Indoor Air Quality	1		
41	Provide further monitoring and education of indoor air quality.	2	BCC DAERA	This Air Quality Action Plan document has been produced as part of our statutory duties required by the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) framework; it outlines the actions that will improve ambient air quality in Belfast; indoor air quality is not currency a component of the LAQM framework. We would however advise that as detailed within <i>UK Clean Air Strategy 2019</i> document, the government's objective is to raise awareness of the potential impacts of air pollution at home to help reduce the harmful build-up of indoor air pollutants. There are already legislative requirements concerning indoor air quality in workplaces covered by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, etc. The Institute of Air Quality Management has recently published Indoor Air Quality Guidance: Assessment, Monitoring, Modelling and Mitigation Version 1.0 September 2021 ⁵³ .
Th	eme: Collaboration witl	h Neighbouring	Councils	
42	Requirement for greater collaboration with neighbouring local authorities to ensure infrastructure is interconnected.	1	BCC Planning DfI	A key challenge within the Local Development Plan is to provide for increased accessibility into and throughout the city and to accommodate projected growth in travel demand, whilst also discouraging single occupancy private car use for commuting purposes. The Plan Strategy will therefore facilitate future transport initiatives for the city, including promoting walking and cycling, modal change and supporting public transport measures through the integration of land use and transportation planning. (Chapter 3.1.1) The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015 is the current extant Transport Plan. It was developed to deliver an integrated transport network, improving opportunities for interchange between different modes of transport and providing

⁵³ Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) Indoor Air Quality Guidance: Assessment, Monitoring, Modelling and Mitigation. Version 1.0 September 2021. https://iaqm.co.uk/guidance/

				real travel choices, particularly in the Belfast Metropolitan Area's main transport corridors (Chapter 3.1.2)
1	heme: Air Quality Fundi	ng		
4	Provide funding to improve air quality monitoring and target areas with exceedances.	1	BCC DAERA	We would advise that the Belfast City Council air quality monitoring programme is currently supported via the DAERA Environment Fund 2019-2023. DAERA also provides funding for environmental projects (including ambient air quality monitoring) through the LAQM grant application process, available to Local Authorities, non-governmental organisations and other similar bodies. This query was again highlighted by DAERA within their Clean Air Strategy Discussion Document. They have reinforced their comments, that 'Preliminary findings will be shared with the Minister, with a view to identifying his preferred options for further development. Agreed proposals will then be more fully developed and will be included in a draft Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland. This will be subject to consideration by the Executive and a further public consultation to seek views on the proposals contained therein.'
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Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Description			
AQAP	Air Quality Action Plan - A detailed description of measures, outcomes, achievement dates and implementation methods, showing how the local authority intends to achieve air quality limit values'			
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area – An area where air pollutant concentrations exceed / are likely to exceed the relevant air quality objectives. AQMAs are declared for specific pollutants and objectives			
AQS	Air Quality Strategy			
ASR	Air quality Annual Status Report			
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs			
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs			
Dfl	Department for Infrastructure			
UK NAEI	United Kingdom National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory			
EU	European Union			
LAQM	Local Air Quality Management			
NO ₂	Nitrogen Dioxide			
NO _x	Nitrogen Oxides			
PM ₁₀	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10μm (micrometres or microns) or less			
PM _{2.5}	Airborne fine particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5µm (micrometres or microns) or less			

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Agenda Item 3c

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Subjec	t:	Belfast City Ambient Air Quality Monitoring)		
Date:		9 th November 2021			
Reporting Officer:		Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services, City & Neighbourhood Services Department			
Vivienne Donnelly, City Protection Man Services Department			er, City & N	leighbourh	ood
Postrio	ted Reports				
Nestric					
Is this report restricted?			Yes	No	X
If	Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?			
After Committee Decision					
After Council Decision					
Sometime in the future					
Never					
Call-in					
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?			Yes	X No	
1.0	Purpose of Repor	t or Summary of main Issues			
	-	•			
1.1	subsequent to consideration by Committee of a local air quality management update report members agreed that a further report would be submitted to a future meeting of				
Committee providing a detailed breakdown of ambient air quality monitorin				ng across	the city,
	including specific d	etail regarding the west and outer west.			
1.2	This report serves therefore to provide a background to the various statutory local air quality				
management requirements for ambient monitoring, established via the 2007 Air C					Quality
	Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland: Volumes 1 and 2, loca				

technical guidance documents such as the April 2021 edition of LAQM.TG(16).

- 1.3 This report also serves to provide an overview of the approach to ambient air quality monitoring employed by Belfast City Council for those pollutants prescribed in the above-mentioned local air quality management documents, together with a detailed breakdown of current ambient air quality monitoring across the city, including specific detail regarding the west and outer west.
- 1.4 Members are reminded that in November 2020, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) undertook a public discussion exercise into a Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland, advising that the discussion document formed part of a two-stage approach to developing the first Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland. The Department further advised that all of the stakeholder responses would be carefully considered and would be used to shape future policies for Ministerial consideration. Options for ambient air quality monitoring, including expansion of the existing monitoring network, targeted monitoring based on population size and the introduction of low-cost air quality monitoring equipment were considered as part of the public discussion exercise.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
 - Note the contents of this local air quality monitoring report.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 The UK Government has previously advised that in relation to ambient air quality, the primary objective is to ensure that all citizens should have access to outdoor air without significant risk to their health, where this is economically and technically feasible.
- 3.2 The 2007 Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland therefore established a series of air quality objectives, which are policy targets, often expressed as a maximum ambient concentrations not to be exceeded, either without exception or with a permitted number of exceedances, within a specified timescale. In setting these objectives to safeguard human health, the UK Government and devolved administrations took account of economic efficiency, practicability, technical feasibility and timescale for achievement. The Strategy document advises that the objectives do not have direct legal force, but their existence and attainment have to be borne in mind in designing and executing mitigation measures.
- 3.3 The Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 do however establish a series of statutory short and longer term air quality objectives for Northern Ireland for those air

pollutants identified within the abovementioned Strategy document, i.e. benzene (C_6H_6), 1,3-butadiene ($CH_2=CH$)₂, carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), sulphur dioxide (SO_2) and particulate matter (PM_{10}). Moreover, Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 places a statutory duty on Northern Ireland councils to periodically review and assess ambient air quality within their districts against these objectives and to work with competent authorities in pursuit of the achievement of air quality standards and the objectives in designated areas of exceedance, i.e. within Air Quality Management Areas.

- The Committee will note that fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) is not included within regulation for the purposes of district council local air quality management. The Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 do however place a duty on Northern Ireland Departments to ensure that all necessary measures not entailing disproportionate costs are taken in relation to Northern Ireland with a view to attaining the PM_{2.5} national exposure reduction target by 2020 and ensuring that the average exposure indicator for 2015 does not exceed 20 mgm⁻³. The Committee will be aware that the council has proactively appointed AECOM Consultants to undertake a detailed review and assessment for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) for Belfast, that is scheduled to be completed in early 2023.
- 3.5 The government's local air quality management technical guidance document LAQM.TG(16), which provides technical guidance as to how review and assessments should be conducted, highlights the principle of public exposure, advising that for the purposes of LAQM, regulations state that exceedances of the objectives should be assessed in relation to "the quality of the air at locations, which are situated outside of buildings or other natural or man-made structures, above or below ground, and where members of the public are regularly present. Accordingly, annual mean objectives are given to apply at the building façades of residential properties, schools, hospitals, care homes, etc. Annual mean objectives do not apply at building façades of offices or other places of work, hotels, gardens of residential properties and kerbside sites. 24 and 8-hour mean objectives apply at all annual mean objective locations, as well as at hotels and in the gardens of residential properties. 24 and 8-hour mean objectives do not however apply at kerbside sites or other locations where public exposure is expected to be short term. 1-hour mean objectives apply at all locations where 24 and 8-hour mean objectives apply, as well as at kerbside sites, car parks, bus stations and railway stations or any outdoor location where members of the public might reasonably expect to spend one hour or longer. 1-hour mean objectives do not apply at kerbside sites, where the public would not be expected to have regular access. 15-minute

mean objectives apply at locations where members of the public might reasonably be exposed for a period of 15 minutes or longer.

- 3.6 The ambient air pollutants detailed within the Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 were considered through a combination of ambient monitoring and atmospheric dispersion modelling during the council's first detailed review and assessment of ambient air quality for Belfast, completed in 2004. At that time, it was concluded that all of the air quality objectives were being achieved for Belfast, with the exception of the annual and hourly mean objectives for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and the annual and 24-hour mean objectives for particulate matter (PM₁₀). These exceedances were noted to be principally associated with road transport and gave subsequent rise to the council's four Air Quality Management Areas, declared along the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor, the Ormeau Road, the Upper Newtownards Road and the area from Cromac Street to the Ravenhill Road and Short Strand. All of the 2004 detailed review and assessment documents were reviewed and accepted by the government's independent technical assessors. It should be noted that exceedances of the particulate matter (PM₁₀) objectives occurred only within the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor and that this AQMA was revoked for particulate matter (PM₁₀) exceedances in 2014, due to the relevant objectives being achieved over a number of preceding years.
- 3.7 The Committee is advised that exceedances of the annual and hourly mean objectives for nitrogen dioxide are commonplace across both the UK and Europe, with most major cities and conurbations now focusing on addressing nitrogen dioxide emissions from road transport sources. Indeed, the DAERA NI Air website highlights that of the 19 active AQMAs declared across Northern Ireland, 17 are associated with exceedances of nitrogen dioxide objectives, associated with road transport sources.
- 3.8 Accordingly, the council's current ambient monitoring programme for the city has been focused primarily on assessing nitrogen dioxide concentrations at, or near to roadside locations. Guidance as to roads of concern is provided in LAQM.TG(16). Given that the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide has to be assessed primarily at the façades of residential properties, LAQM.TG(16) advises that ambient monitoring should take place for:
 - Roads with a high flow of traffic, i.e. at least 10,000 vehicles per day, with public exposure within 10m from the kerb;
 - Roads with significantly increased flows, i.e. a 25% traffic increase in traffic on roads with a flow of at least 10,000 vehicles per day, and with public exposure within 10m of the kerb;

- At road junctions, with a throughput of at least 10,000 vehicles per day, and with public exposure within 10m of the kerb;
- Narrow congested streets with residential properties close to the kerb, at locations with at least 5,000 slow moving vehicles per day, frequent stop / start traffic activity and exposure within 2m of the kerb;
- Roads with a high flow of heavy-duty vehicles, i.e. at least 2,500 HDVs per day and public exposure within 10m from the kerb and;
- At bus or coach stations with at least 2,500 bus or coach movements per day and public exposure within 10m from kerb.
- 3.9 Monitoring for the nitrogen dioxide 1-hour mean objective should additionally take place for those roads and locations meeting the annual mean criteria, and in:
 - Busy streets where people may spend 1-hour or more, close to traffic, the qualifying criteria being 10,000 vehicles per day and public exposure within 5m of the kerb, for a duration of 1-hour or more.
- Government has advised however, that exceedances of the 1-hour mean objective for nitrogen dioxide are unlikely to occur for those roads where the nitrogen dioxide annual mean is less than 60 mgm⁻³.
- The council has consequently developed and implemented its ambient air quality monitoring programme for the city following current and previous versions of the government's technical guidance, dating back to LAQM.TG(03), published in January 2003.
- 3.12 Accordingly, ambient monitoring is currently undertaken at the Belfast Centre site at Lombard Street within the city centre for carbon monoxide (CO), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), ozone (O₃), particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), heavy metals, hydrocarbons and black carbon using a combination of 'real time' automatic reference analysers and passive analysers. Automatic 'real time' reference analysers are highly accurate and able to assess compliance with both short (down to a 15-minute mean in the case of sulphur dioxide (SO₂)) and longer-term (up to an annual mean) air quality objectives.
- The council also operates 'real time' nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) analysers in three of our four Air Quality Management Areas; the Ormeau Road, Upper Newtownbreda Road, and at Stockmans Lane and Roden Street, both located within the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink

corridor AQMA. The Stockmans Lane site is additionally equipped with a 'real time' particulate matter (PM_{10}) analyser.

- 3.14 Data and details for all of our 'real time' analysers are available via the DAERA NI Air website via the following web link: https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/. Locations of our automatic monitoring sites have been presented within **Appendix A** to this report.
- In addition to our 'real time' automatic analysers, we operate a significant number of passive type analysers for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) across the city. Known as diffusion tubes, this type of monitoring equipment can be installed on lampposts or on the façades of homes to assess compliance with the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide. Diffusion tubes are exposed to ambient nitrogen dioxide pollution, typically for successive periods of four weeks, and then returned to an accredited laboratory for analysis. By aggregating successive four-week periods of monitoring data, a nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration can be derived. Even when employing an accredited laboratory however, diffusion tubes have limited accuracy and so we also co-locate them with our automatic 'real time' analysers, enabling a local calibration or bias adjustment factor to be derived. Corrected nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube data for all of our monitoring sites is reported annually via either the council's Updating and Screening Assessment or Progress Reports. These reports, dating back to September 2005, are available on the DAERA NI Air website via this weblink:

https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/laqm/district-council-reports#511

- 3.16 At present, we have installed nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes at some 59 kerbside, roadside or background monitoring locations across the city. Maps of our various diffusion tube monitoring locations have also been presented at **Appendix A** to this report. The Committee is advised however that nitrogen dioxide monitoring using diffusion tubes has been undertaken by the council since significantly before the first formal detailed review and assessment for ambient air quality was completed for the city in 2004. Accordingly, when ambient monitoring data indicates sustained compliance with the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective of 40 mgm⁻³ over a number of years, monitoring at that site may typically be discontinued and the diffusion tube relocated. The council continues to apply this iterative approach to its nitrogen dioxide and other ambient air quality monitoring for the city.
- 3.17 In requesting this report, the Committee has asked for specific detail regarding monitoring in the west and outer west of the city. Accordingly, the Committee is advised that monitoring for nitrogen dioxide is currently undertaken at Ardmore Park, Blacks Road, at the junction of

the Falls and Andersonstown Roads, in Poleglass, at the Royal Victoria Hospital on the Falls Road, at Dunmurry Lane, at Andersonstown Road and at the Monagh By-Pass, the specific monitoring locations having been chosen with regard to the various qualifying and siting criteria detailed within LAQM.TG(16).

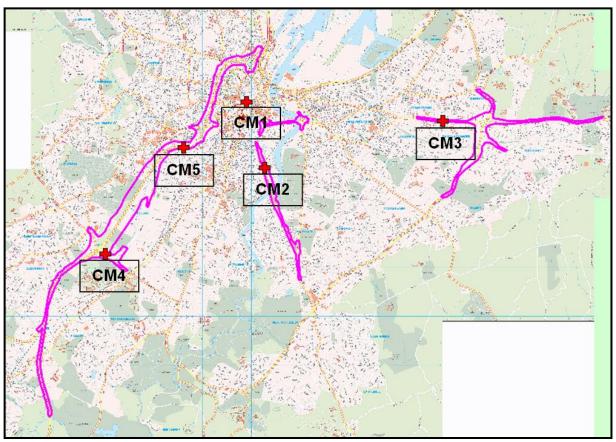
- 3.18 The Committee will be aware that nitrogen dioxide monitoring data has been influenced significantly by the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns. We have consequently noted that 2020 nitrogen dioxide annual mean monitoring concentrations at some locations has been reduced by approximately up to 1/3 when compared to 2019 annual mean data. We have therefore provided 2019 and 2020 corrected nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube annual mean monitoring data for the above-mentioned west and outer west monitoring locations within **Appendix B** to this report. It should be noted that the only recent exceedance of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective for west and outer west sites was recorded at the Blacks Road site during 2019.
- 3.19 Moreover, within Section 3.4 of this report, the Committee has been advised that the council has proactively appointed AECOM Consultants to undertake a detailed review and assessment for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) for Belfast City, scheduled to be completed in early 2023. As part of this project and as highlighted to Members during a presentation by AECOM (Agenda item 13 Presentation on the Air Quality Detailed Assessment work -AECOM in attendance) at the 11th May 2021 Remote Meeting of the People and Communities Committee, a limited number of additional small sensor air quality monitoring systems have been installed by AECOM across the city, in locations reflective of the principal sources of PM_{2.5} emissions for the city. Monitoring data from these additional monitoring systems will be used to augment the council's existing particulate matter and other monitoring data for the city, in the calibration of the atmospheric dispersion modelling component of the detailed assessment project. The Committee is advised that one of these small sensor air quality monitoring systems has been located in the Mount Eagles area in order to characterise local concentrations of fine particulate matter, associated with local domestic and other combustion activities.
- 3.20 The additional small sensor air quality monitoring systems are scheduled to be operated by AECOM for a period one year from their dates of installation as part of the detailed review and assessment project in order to help determine compliance with the annual mean standards and guidelines for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), whereupon the equipment will revert to the council so that, where necessary, it can be relocated to characterise particulate

	matter (PM ₁₀), fine particulate matter (PM _{2.5}) and nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) concentrations in
	other areas of the city. The Committee will be consulted about any revisions to the existing
	monitoring locations or any new monitoring locations via a subsequent paper presented in
	Spring 2022.
	Financial & Resource Implications.
3.21	None
	Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments.
3.22	None
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix A – Locations Maps of Continuous Automatic Monitoring and Nitrogen Dioxide
	Diffusion Tube Monitoring Sites Across Belfast.
	Appendix B – 2019 and 2020 Nitrogen Dioxide Annual Mean Monitoring Data for Sites
	Located in the West and the Outer West of the City
	Located in the West and the Outer West of the City.



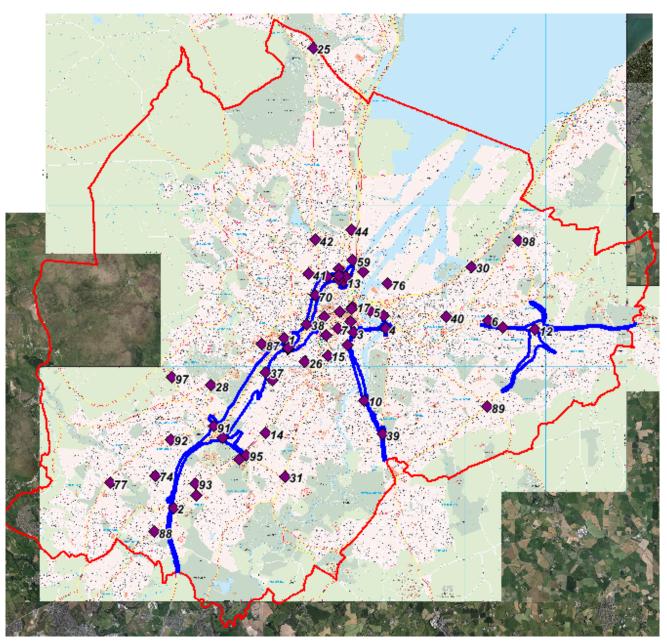
Appendix A – Locations Maps of Continuous Automatic Monitoring and Nitrogen Dioxide Diffusion Tube Monitoring Sites Across Belfast.

Location Map of Continuous Automatic Monitoring Sites across Belfast overlain on Belfast City's Air Quality Management Areas.



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Location Map of Non-Automatic Nitrogen Dioxide Diffusion Tube Monitoring Sites overlain on Belfast City's Air Quality Management Areas.



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4.2 Appendix B – 2019 and 2020 Nitrogen Dioxide Annual Mean Monitoring Data for Sites Located in the West and the Outer West of the City.

Site ID on Map	Site Name	Within an AQMA?	Corrected 2019 nitrogen dioxide annual mean (μgm ⁻³)	Corrected 2020 nitrogen dioxide annual mean (μgm ⁻³)
2	Blacks Road	Υ	42	33
28	Junction of Falls and Andersonstown Roads	N	27	19
74	Ardmore Park	N	30	24
77	Poleglass	N	24	18
87	Royal Victoria Hospital, Falls Road	N	33	24
88	Dunmurry Lane	N	26	18
92	Andersonstown Road	N	-	23
97	Monagh By-Pass	N	-	16

Annual mean data in bold indicate monitored exceedances of the 40 $\mu \rm gm^{-3}$ nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective.



Agenda Item 3d

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



	•				
Subjec	:t:	Food Service Delivery Plan 2021-2	.022		
Date:		9 th November 2021			
Report	ing Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director City Services Department	, , ,		
Contac	ct Officer:	Elizabeth Gilchrist, Senior Environmental Health Officer Helen Morrisey, Senior Environmental Health Officer			
Restric	eted Reports				
Is this	report restricted?		Yes	No.	X
If	Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?			
	After Committe	ee Decision			
	After Council I	Decision			
	Some time in t	he future			
	Never				
Call-in					
Is the c	decision eligible for	Call-in?	Yes	X No	,
1.0	Purpose of Repor	t or Summary of main Issues			
	-	•			
1.1	_	nit works with local businesses to bu	·		
	to ensure that food produced and sold in Belfast is safe and can be trusted. This not only			•	
	protects the consumer it also protects and enhances the reputation of the City, our local businesses and their competitiveness.			locai	
	businesses and the	eir competitiveness.			
1.2	Food related illness	s costs the local economy, individual	businesses and	the consum	ner. It is
	estimated (based o	n N.I. Department of Health statistics	s) that in Belfast a	around 11,2	200
	people may suffer f	rom food poisoning and food related	illness annually,	potentially	
	resulting in 104 hos	spital admissions, 5 deaths and costi	ng the Belfast ec	onomy in th	ne
	region of £19 million				

- 1.3 A reputation for good food hygiene standards can support economic growth. The Food Hygiene Rating Act (NI) 2016 requires businesses to display their food hygiene rating, improving the opportunities for consumers to make informed choices and encouraging improved compliance. It is expected that this enhances the reputation of Belfast as a safe place to visit with at least 95% of food businesses rated as 3, 4 or 5 (broadly compliant or better). (See Appendix 2 for ratings breakdown)
- 1.4 The continuing uncertainties and UK and EU government negotiations on the impacts following BREXIT will continue to pose a major challenge for the service this year with the potential for additional checks on the import and export of foods. We are working closely with the Food Standards Agency, DAERA, government departments, local businesses and other stakeholders to plan for reasonable worst-case scenarios and ensure adequate arrangements are in place to facilitate trade and protect consumers.
- 1.5 It is estimated that around 2 million people living in the UK have a food allergy and officers work to ensure food businesses provide the required (allergen) information to enable consumers to make informed choices. However recent cases of severe allergic reactions, including the tragic death of Natasha Ednan-Laperouse after eating a Pret a Manger sandwich, have highlighted concerns regarding the adequacy of labelling requirements for food that is prepacked for direct sale (PPDS) i.e. food that has been packed on the same premises from which it is being sold. New labelling legislation that came into force on 1st October 2021 requires any business that produces PPDS food to label it with the name of the food and a full ingredients list with allergenic ingredients emphasised within the list. These additional legal requirements will require officer time to support, monitor and ensure compliance. It is likely this work will impact significantly on the unit.
- 1.6 Each year, the Council produces a Food Service Delivery Plan which sets out the activities, techniques and approaches to be taken during the year to support businesses in ensuring food safety, food standards and to promote informed healthy choices. The Plan provides the basis on which the Council's regulatory activities are monitored and audited by the Food Standards Agency and it is a requirement that it is presented to the Council for approval.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
 - Approve the Food Service Delivery Plan 2021-2022

3.0 Main report

	Koy Issues
2.4	Key Issues The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has a key relating expressing lead outhority regulatory.
3.1	The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has a key role in overseeing local authority regulatory
	activities to ensure that official controls are delivered. Powers to enable the FSA to monitor
	and audit local authorities are contained in the Food Standards Act 1999. A detailed
	Framework Agreement on local food law enforcement has been produced by the Agency,
	in conjunction with local authority representative bodies, to provide guidance on how
	regulatory service plans should be structured and what they should contain. Service plans
	developed under these arrangements provide the basis on which local authorities are
	monitored and audited by the Food Standards Agency.
3.2	The Framework Agreement as described above requires that Food Service Delivery Plans
	should be submitted to the relevant Member forum, in this case the People and
	Communities Committee, for approval. This is to ensure local transparency and
	accountability.
3.3	A summary of the key work activities completed in the last year and profiling the work of the
	unit is included for information in Appendix 1. A summary of current food hygiene ratings is
	included in Appendix 2. The Food Service Delivery Plan for 2021-2022 is included in
	Appendix 3.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.4	The resources required for this core service have been included in the City and
	Neighbourhood Services Revenue Estimates for the year and no additional resources are
	anticipated.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments
3.5	None
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1. Summary of the key areas of work undertaken by the Food Safety and Port
	Health Unit 2020-2021
	Appendix 2. Current food hygiene ratings
	Appendix 3. Food Service Delivery Plan 2021-2022



Appendix 1

Food Safety and Port Health

Background Summary

This paper provides a summary of the work carried out by the Council to monitor and ensure food safety during 2020-2021. The Covid 19 pandemic significantly affected the normal working activities of the inland food safety unit. The inland unit was not fully operational until September 2020. In the period from March 2020 - September 2020 it operated on a priority basis and continued to respond to urgent and emergency food safety calls. During this time the unit was also called upon to provide assistance to the PHA contact tracing service and other priority sections within the council. The Food Standards Agency provided direction for all local authorities during the pandemic and has laid out a recovery plan to address the backlog of programmed food hygiene and standards inspections that accumulated as result of the cessation of normal duties. The plan directs all activities until March 2023 and each local authority is expected to meet the specified targets within the designated timelines. Any local authority that is unable to meet the targets is required to inform the FSA to enable them to intervene and direct the delivery of official controls. The food safety management team have a project plan in place to address the FSA's expectations, however it is dependent on having a full complement of appropriately authorised food safety officers.

The Port Health Unit now operates a 24 hours service with 4 teams working 12-hour shifts. The officers carry out statutory documentary and physical checks on incoming food and food materials.

Protecting Consumers and Supporting Businesses

Visits to premises are an integral part of the Service and Council officers use them to help support the food businesses to understand and meet their legal obligations and to ensure that the food they supply is safe and meets compositional and labelling requirements. The visits were planned using a risk-based approach that targets resources to where they are needed most and reduces the inspection burden on better businesses. The support provided on such visits can be vital to sustain and protect businesses, particularly in the current financial climate.

Last year we completed 27% of our planned food hygiene intervention programme. We completed 29% of the food standards intervention programme.

These figures can largely be attributed to the Covid 19 pandemic and clearly some relevant business not being operational for a substantial period and then on the recovery of services the Covid operating procedures that had to be introduced as a result of regulation and guidance. Another factor was the fact that significant resources had to be diverted away from routine activities to implement the NI Protocol at the Border Control Post in our Port Health Unit.

During the year we carried out 1260 visits to premises, took 404 food samples and responded to around 1100 requests for service.

The unit received 463 complaints about food or food premises. 100% of urgent complaints were responded to within the 1 working day target. 83% of food complaints were fully investigated and resolved within 8 weeks.

The Food Hygiene Rating Act (NI) 2016 requires all food businesses within the scope of the scheme to display their food hygiene rating sticker in a prominent position where it can easily be seen by customers at all entrances to the premises. The rating is based on the level of food

hygiene / safety compliance found at the time of the last inspection. The rating is also published on the Food Standards Agency's website: www.food.gov.uk/ratings.

The aim is to enable consumers to make informed choices as to where to eat based on the hygiene rating and the scheme encourages businesses to improve and maintain their hygiene standards. Currently 95% of our premises are rated 5 - very good, 4 - good or 3 - generally satisfactory, with less than 5% requiring improvement (rated 0, 1 or 2).

Support was also offered to specific businesses by making them aware of and encouraging them to attend free FSA and DAERA online training that was tailored to their business needs and included webinars on EU exit.

Within the City Council boundary is the Port of Belfast, which is one of the major ports in the United Kingdom. About 70% of Northern Ireland's seaborne trade and a fifth of the entire island's trade is handled at the port which received over 6,000 ship visits last year. Belfast remains Ireland's busiest ferry port with over 1.2 million passengers and crew and over 0.5 million freight units. The Council supports this industry through the delivery of Port Health services from purpose-built office and inspection facilities located within the harbour estate.

The Port Health facilities are approved by the EU for the importation and clearance of a range of high-risk foodstuffs. Last year we examined 158 consignments and carried out 325 documentary checks of imported foods. Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs used the inspection facility to examine 223 consignments of products of animal origin facilitated by our port health staff. Foods from non-EU countries, including nuts and nut products, confectionary, curry products, fruit, rice and wine were inspected and examined for contaminants such as aflatoxins, excessive or non-permitted additives and pesticides. Many of these products have to be sampled at EU defined levels. The consignments are often detained until an acceptable result is received or in some cases if found to be unsatisfactory rejected (see enforcement below).

The Port Health Unit also validates imports of organic foods from 3rd Countries, involving documentary and identity checks. Last year 84 organic consignments were validated including a number of bulk consignments.

Last year the port was facilitated access to the harbours Port Management Information System which allows staff to monitor all vessels entering Belfast Port and review their Maritime Declaration of health and ship sanitation information. We examined 100% of the Maritime Declarations of Health for all vessels arriving in Belfast Port to ensure compliance with International and UK health and hygiene requirements including food safety and control of infectious diseases. In total 86 Ship Sanitation inspections were carried out and certificates issued to the vessels.

The unit routinely liaise with the Harbour Commission and businesses within the port to manage and to advise on public health nuisance i.e. waste attracting vermin. The Port Health team routinely met with Public Health Agency and Agents to manage COVID cases in vessels, crew changes and ensure agents / visiting vessels are aware of the COVID controls in Northern Ireland.

The port staff also liaise with Agri-Food Biosciences Institute to monitor disease vectors and invasive species such as mosquitos.

Community Engagement and Good Relations

At the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic food safety officers provided advice and assistance to community groups and other local non-statutory bodies involved in the distribution of food to vulnerable members of the community. The team were able to provide verbal and written information with food safety advice specific to the nature of these activities.

Our Food Safety and Port Health team deliver a front-line service interacting with consumers and local businesses to protect our community and respond to any queries related to food safety. The Council carries out a number of initiatives to support ethnic communities and businesses. We continue to work with the large number of ethnic caterers in the city and will always make information available in a language which can be understood and, in accordance with Council policy, will continue to employ the services of interpreters where necessary.

Supporting the Local Economy

Food production, transport and sale at retail and catering establishments play an essential part in our local economy. Food and drink accounts for £672 million of the GVA for Northern Ireland, with the food sector as a major employer having almost 45,000 employees in Northern Ireland. Good quality, local and safe food has a key role to play in developing local tourism. The work of the Council helps to protect the reputation and maintain the standards of our local food industry. It is particularly important to support new businesses and we offer help to anyone thinking about starting a food business. We intend to continue with such supporting activities to assist local businesses in providing safe food.

Prior to the Covid 19 pandemic the City had been successful in attracting a number of high-profile events along with the annual music festivals, Feile, Orangefest, Mela, Christmas Continental Market and council run seasonal events. Whilst these events are vital to promoting the city, tourism and the local economy they do have an impact as new and additional work for the Food safety team . We will continue to work closely with the events team in the council and the event organisers to ensure these events are a success and are safely managed.

The UK's exit from the European Union and the NI Protocol has placed significant additional NEW duties on the Port Health service, applying food import controls on a range of products arriving into Belfast Port from GB. Whilst there are significant challenges in this work, we continue to work with a range of stakeholders to ensure adequate systems are developed and resources put in place to facilitate the monitoring and checking of imports of high risk foods, to health certify high risk food exports to the EU, and to ensure we capture and communicate information relating to unsafe and non-compliant food within the food chain.

Promoting Food Safety

Throughout the year we have used the council's website and social media to support FSA campaigns and to promote the key food safety messages. This has been used particularly to provide Covid advice for food businesses as well as advice on reopening after a period of temporary closure.

Preventing Illness

There are approximately 22,200 cases of food poisoning occurring annually in Northern Ireland. Whilst the majority of these go unreported, some can cause serious illness, permanent disability and in extreme cases death. The elderly and the young are particularly vulnerable. Food poisoning is estimated to cost the UK £1.5 billion each year. As well as ensuring that businesses produce safe food, the Council also investigates cases of food poisoning to identify the source and prevent those who are ill from infecting others. We investigated 74 confirmed cases of food related infectious diseases last year as part of our MOU with the Public Health Agency; these were dealt with within 24 hours in 100% of cases. We also dealt with 94 alleged food poisoning complaints.

We provide advice, often aimed at the elderly and the young, to make the public aware of how to prepare food safely in the home.

Allergens information

In 2017 all 11 councils in NI signed up to a two-year Strategy to improve the provision of allergen information at the point of sale. This strategy was completed March 2019. However, following a review, it was decided to extend the strategy and to continue to prioritise and improve the provision of allergen information thereby ensuring the legally required allergen information is provided with food.

Recent high-profile allergen deaths have raised the public's awareness of this important area of our work. We continue to address any compliance issues raised through complaints or found at routine intervention visits through a graduated approach but did have to take enforcement action in 2019-2020.

The UK government has given a commitment to improve allergen labelling and this has resulted in the new legislation for PPDS foods which came into force on 1 October 2021. This new legislation will require a diversion of Food Safety resources to support businesses and monitor compliance.

Preventing Food Fraud

Food fraud is committed when food is placed on the market with the aim of deliberately misleading the consumer. Food fraud becomes food crime when it is no longer carried out by individuals but becomes an organized activity perpetrated by groups. It is carried out for financial gain and there is evidence that Covid 19 and the current economic situation may be increasing its occurrence. Examples of food fraud that we have dealt with include under declared meat content in various meat products and the substitution of cod with cheaper varieties of white fish which was the discovered during our participation in OPSON VIII. OPSON is an annual Europol INTERPOL joint operation targeting fake and substandard food and beverages. We continue to take surveillance samples for alcohol substitution with cheaper alternatives and the watering down of alcoholic drinks.

We will continue to share intelligence and explore opportunities to work with other agencies to target Food Fraud and Food Crime. Our intelligence led food sampling program will be an essential element of this work.

Promoting a Healthy Diet and Tackling Obesity

In Northern Ireland each year there are around 4,000 deaths from cancer and 3,000 from heart disease. Diet, especially excess saturated fat, salt and sugar is thought to play a role in about one third of all cancer and heart disease cases. In an effort to help tackle obesity and poor diet, officers have worked with local businesses on the Calorie Wise Project as well as product specific reformulation. The Covid 19 pandemic restricted further progress in this area but the Food Safety Unit intends to resume this work when resources allow and will continue to work with our partners in the FSA

Enforcement

Our enforcement approach aims to provide support, advice and guidance to secure compliance. This approach has been successful with 95% of our food businesses found on inspection to be broadly compliant with food hygiene legislation.

However, where businesses consistently fail to comply or present a serious threat to public health, it is important that the Council takes action to protect consumers. Last year the Council issued 101

written warnings requiring action and in 6 more serious cases formal enforcement sanctions were taken.

The team prosecuted 2 business for food safety offences. The Food Business Operators pleaded guilty to a range of food hygiene offences including failure to display a valid Food hygiene rating sticker, failure to protect food from contamination likely to render it unfit for human consumption and failure to put in place adequate procedures to controls pests.

A total of 4 premises agreed to close voluntarily due to conditions that were considered to be an imminent risk to health. In these cases, this was due to pest infestations and risk of contamination of food. As voluntary procedures were used in these cases and there was full co-operation from the food business operators of the premises did not warrant further enforcement action.

In addition, the team is preparing a number of cases for formal enforcement action following investigations which took place in 2020/21. The council's legal team is assisting with these.

In the Port Health Unit,

- 6 Containers were rejected for failing either identity or physical checks on entry e.g. discrepancy in Official certification not matching product.
- 5 Notices were served under Official Feed & Food Controls Regulations (NI) 2009 including detention, destruction and re-dispatch.
- 1 Notice was served under Trade in Animals and Related Products Regulations 2011.



Appendix 2 - Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) 2021

As of 1 April 2021, there were 3839 food businesses operating within the Belfast City Council area; of these businesses approximately 2963 premises were included within the scope of the FHRS. Regulation 3 of the Food Hygiene Rating Regulations (2016) details the categories of establishments that are exempt from the scheme but still require an intervention:

- An establishment where the sale of food is not the primary activity and where the only food sold is shelf stable at ambient temperatures and delivered prepacked and remains sealed at all times e.g. chemist.
- Off licences selling food which is shelf stable at ambient temperatures and delivered prepacked and remains sealed at all times
- An establishment providing caring services but also used as a private dwelling e.g. childminder.

The table below represents a snapshot of the status of premises within the scope of the FHRS at a given point in time (15 September 2021).

Further information is available on the website at

http://ratings.food.gov.uk/authority-search-landing/en-GB/807

Hygiene Rating	Number of Premises	Percentage
		%
5 - Very good	2163	73%
4 - Good	525	18%
3 - Generally satisfactory	139	5%
2 - Improvement required	18	0.6%
1 - Major improvement required	15	0.5%
0 - Urgent improvement required	1	0.03%
Establishments with rating of 3 or better	2827	95%
i.e. broadly compliant		
Establishments awaiting initial inspection	102	3.5%



BELFAST CITY COUNCIL CITY & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT SERVICE PLAN FOR FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT 2021 - 2022

It is estimated (from N.I. Department of Health statistics) that in Belfast around 11200 people will suffer from food poisoning and food related illness annually, potentially resulting in 104 hospital admissions, 5 deaths and costing the Belfast economy an estimated £19 million each year.

This service plan for food law enforcement describes the balance of techniques and approaches to be taken by Belfast City Council during 2021 - 2022 to ensure food safety, food standards and promote informed healthy choices. The Council will mix and balance the four common approaches to enforcement:

- Demand driven
- Education driven
- Inspection driven
- Intelligence driven

Food safety is a priority for the Council's regulatory service, with staff in Food Safety, Port Health and Business Support providing most aspects of the service.

1 - Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 Aims and objectives

The key aims and objectives of the food service are to:

- 1. Protect consumers and ensure food produced, imported through or sold in Belfast is safe to eat and meets the necessary legal standards
- 2. Support the local economy, including the regeneration and investment in the City Centre by minimising the cost of food related illness and supporting individual businesses through clear advice, guidance and good regulation which are effective, risk based and proportionate.
- 3. Respond to all complaints or service requests within target response times and meet the needs of local people through effective delivery of quality and customer centric services.
- 4. Help consumers and businesses understand about safe food and healthy eating and help to ensure that consumers have the information they need to make informed choices whilst promoting food sustainability and helping to reduce food poverty.

1.2 Links to corporate objectives and plans

The Belfast Agenda is Belfast's first community plan and sets out a new vision for Belfast to become a City which will drive a successful economy, a magnet for investment and a great place to live for everyone.

The Food Service has an important contribution to make to the achievement of the Council's vision, particularly through its support to the economy and by creating a safe city. The service also helps the Council in its efforts to stimulate the local economy through its City Centre regeneration and investment plan.

In promoting food safety and healthy choices the Food Service also contributes to delivering the cross-government food strategy, published in January 2010, setting out a joint vision for the UK food system in 2030 and the Food Standards Agency's Strategy for 2020-2025.

The Service, by improving food safety in the City, plays an important role in promoting Belfast to visitors and tourists. This has become more visible since the Food Hygiene Rating Act (NI) 2016 came into operation in October 2016 requiring all relevant food businesses to display their ratings (display was previously voluntary, with only 57% of businesses displaying their rating). The implementation and enforcement of this legislation requires considerable resources.

2. Background

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

The Council is the largest of the 11 Councils in Northern Ireland and, by any definition, is an organization of size, importance and structure. It now serves a population of 334,000 (with a daytime population of 422,500). The area is predominantly urban in nature with the Council offices being located in the city centre. The city is the major centre for both employment and entertainment in Northern Ireland with two thirds of the population of Northern Ireland being within 50 km of the city.

Within the city boundary is the Port of Belfast, Ireland's busiest port and a significant port within the United Kingdom. The area of the Port consists of 1,000 acres of water 2,000 acres of land and over 8,000 linear metres of quays. Around two thirds of Northern Ireland's seaborne trade, and a quarter of that for Ireland as a whole, is handled at the port which receives almost 6000 vessels each year and over 24 million tonnes of cargo.

Belfast is Ireland's busiest ferry port with 1.2 million passengers and over half a million freight units annually and is also the leading dry bulk port with regards to imports of grain, animal feeds, coal, fertilizers and cement. Additionally, over 95% of Northern Ireland's petroleum and oil products are handled at the Port. The City has become one of the main cruise destinations in the UK attracting over 100 cruise ships annually carrying 185,000 passengers and generating around £24.5 million for the local economy.

2.2 Organisational Structure

Following local government reform in April 2015 and the additional powers and responsibilities of the new Council, the organisation has and continues to undergo substantial redesign. This has included new committee structures and restructuring of the various departments.

The new City and Neighbourhood Services Department was formed. Each Department reports to and discharges the functions of one or more Council Committees. The City & Neighbourhood Services Department will mainly report to the People & Communities Committee. The Department comprises of approximately 1,500 staff and brings together many of the main functions that provide services directly to ratepayers across the city. The Department is currently being redesigned and is likely to continue to evolve over time.

Currently there are four senior EHOs designated as lead food officers, for Food Hygiene, Food Standards and Port Health, who have responsibility for the delivery of this Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement. A pool of suitably qualified and authorised Environmental Health Officers and technical officers are employed by the Council, and are allocated to duties across the EH functions, and allocation of staff to each of those functions can be quickly adjusted, should the need arise. The Unit has established an area-based service delivery system.

The Northern Ireland Public Health Laboratory based at Belfast City Hospital, provides specialist services in food microbiology and pathology. The Council has appointed Eurofins Food Testing Ireland Ltd as Public Analysts to provide specialist analysis and advice on food composition, labelling and chemical and physical contaminants of food. The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute

at Newforge Lane, Belfast, is employed for the identification of pests associated with food and food premises.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

Belfast City Council carries out all functions relating to food safety and food standards matters, including the following:

- Registration and approval of food premises
- Inspection of food premises including manufacturing, catering and retail premises in accordance with a range of legislation and guidance, and taking into consideration the Council's Regulation and Enforcement Policy
- Implementation of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme including publication of food hygiene inspection results on the national website
- Dealing with potential food hazards including food alerts
- Inspection of foodstuffs and the formulation and implementation of sampling programmes for analysis in relation to composition and labelling and/or microbiological examination.
- Investigation of complaints relating to food and hygiene of food premises and investigation of cases of suspected food poisoning
- · Providing advice and information on food safety matters
- The provision of specialist food safety education programmes, and signposting to other commercially available training services
- Food safety and nutrition promotional activities, including participation in National Food Safety Week, and the development and promotion of actions to improve nutrition & health and reduce food poverty
- Provision of practical food safety and port health training to environmental health students
- Investigation of incidents of statutorily notifiable food and water related illnesses on behalf of the Director of Public Health of the Public Health Agency
- Inspection of third country (non-EU) imported food of non-animal origin
- In partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs the operation of the Port of Belfast Border Inspection Post and the inspection of Products of Animal Origin.
- Inspection of vessels (ships including passenger ferries) arriving at the Port to ensure compliance with International and United Kingdom health and hygiene requirements including food safety and control of infectious diseases and to issue Ship Sanitation Certificates as required.
- Enforcement of legislation relating to import control of Organic products
- Enforcement of legislation to control illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing in order to ensure food safety and protect marine ecosystems
- The issuing of attestations and export health certificates required for the export of consignments of non-animal foods and fish from NI to third countries

The service is currently provided by members of staff employed by Belfast City Council. All staff involved in the inspection of food and food premises meet the qualification and competency requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice and the FSA competency framework.

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

2.4.1. Food Safety Service

Belfast City Council has 3892 food businesses within the City.

A profile of premises classified in accordance with the FSA monitoring returns are given below.

TYPE OF ESTABLISHMENT	NO. OF PREMISES

Primary Producers	7
Slaughterhouses	0
Manufacturers & Packers	173
Importers/Exporters	37 (includes Import Agents)
Distributors/Transporters	69
Retailers	733
Restaurant/Caterers	2873
Unrated premises awaiting first inspection at 1st April 2021	125

126 premises are considered outside the intervention programme. These are for example head offices with no physical food presence but who have responsibility for food safety matters; market stalls or mobile vendors who are registered and risk rated by another local authority and events that are not including in the risk rating programme.

10 manufacturing premises and 6 cold stores in the city are approved under EC Reg 853/2004.

The majority of food premises in the city are caterers or retailers reflecting the fact that Belfast is a major regional centre for shopping, entertainment, business and tourism. However within the City there are a number of major manufacturers including 2 major bakeries, 2 flour mills, 6 cold stores, 4 meat preparations and other meat products premises, an animal fat rendering plant, and 5 approved fish processors which manufacture and process food for distribution throughout Northern Ireland and Great Britain and export to the Republic of Ireland.

An External Temporary Storage Facilities (ETSF formerly known as Enhanced Remote Transit Shed – ERTS) is a warehouse designated by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), where goods are temporarily stored pending clearance by HMRC, and prior to release into free circulation. ETSFs are examined to ascertain if foods are stored.

As shown above there are a large number of distribution centres located in the city many of which distribute across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Seven of these premises specialise in ethnic foods of non-EU origin and are monitored to ensure imported food controls are being adhered to.

It is estimated that over 5% of Belfast's food businesses, across a range of business types, are owned by people whose first language is not English. These food business operators have traditionally been Asian, however in recent times there has been an influx of Eastern Europeans and Africans. Whilst this adds significantly to diversity and customer choice, it requires particular effort from the service to ensure equal access to advice and information, including the facility for the translation of documents and provision of interpreters for on-site visits and meetings.

The Council's food safety services are delivered from the Cecil Ward Building, 4-10 Linenhall Street, Belfast, usually between the hours of 0830 and 1700, Monday to Thursday, and between 0830 and 1630 on Fridays. During Covid operating procedures, the unit offered the same service hours but with most officers working from home and using the office to collect and return administrative documents. The Port Health services are delivered from the Port Health Unit at

Corry Place, Belfast Harbour Estate, delivering the import food control service on a 24 hour, 7 days a week basis.

Out of hours work is undertaken as necessary, such as for businesses open at night and weekends and for additional Port health work such as ship inspections.

Historically there has been a continued increase in the number of large outdoor events which have significant catering facilities associated with them, such as farmers' and continental markets, festivals and concerts. These events often require evening, weekend and Bank Holiday visits to monitor food hygiene standards. We will continue to strengthen relationships with promoters and organizers this year in order to ensure that adequate attention is given to planning for food safety. Significant events this year include the Christmas Continental Market, The Maritime Weekender, St Patrick's Day, Feile, Vital and Belsonic music festivals.

An Environmental Health Officer is on standby outside normal office hours, to deal with urgent notifications from the FSA and also infectious disease incidents at the discretion of the Public Health Agency (PHA), and a Port Health Officer is on standby out of office hours to deal with issues arising in the Port. This service extends 24 hours per day for 365 days per year.

2.4.2. Port Health Service

Since 31st December 2020, the Port Health service has seen a significant uplift in work volumes arising from additional responsibilities to deliver imported food checks as part of the NI Protocol, which keeps NI in the EU's single market for goods. An additional staff team of 28 officers has been established to deliver this work and depending on the outcome of ongoing discussions at UK Government/EU level, has potential to increase further. This resource is in addition to a pre-existing small team of 5 officers based at the Port who primarily deliver services for imported food controls for goods arriving from other 3rd countries, ship sanitation inspections, other Port Health infectious disease duties, and some food hygiene work within the Port.

Considerable planning and service development work has been delivered over the past year to support the new/additional functions, however continued uncertainties and challenges remain, including recruitment and retention, complexities in multiple IT systems, access to volumetric data and constraints in inspection facilities.

The Port Health Unit is currently located in office and inspection facilities within the harbour estate. These facilities were approved in January 2010 by the Food Standards Agency on behalf of the European Union as a Designated Point of Entry into the EU for the carrying out of official controls on high–risk products of non-animal origin imported from outside the EU. The facility is also approved as a Border Inspection Post for the examination, sampling and clearance of third country imports of products of animal origin and is operated by the Council in conjunction with DAERA (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs). It is also approved as a First Point of Introduction for certain food contact materials. Whilst the Corry Place facility has been sufficient for the Council's service requirements up until now, following introduction of the NI Protocol, capacity limitations at the facility which is relatively small in terms of both staff accommodation and inspection facilities, mean that delivery of increased inspection workloads will require additional accommodation in the future. DAERA are leading work to plan and develop future purpose-built inspection facilities, however this is not expected to be completed until 2023 at the earliest.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The Council has prepared a Regulation and Enforcement Policy which was formally adopted by the Council in December 2011. The purpose of this policy is to secure an efficient and effective approach to all regulatory and enforcement activities carried out by Belfast City Council. The policy is consistent with the principles set out in the Government's Better Regulation Agenda and with the

principles of the Enforcement Concordat and it is also intended to improve compliance with legislation while minimising the burden on businesses, individuals, organisations and the Council. The policy sets out the principles which will enable the Service to ensure consistent and open enforcement and is considered when determining appropriate enforcement action. Management controls are in place to ensure that all decisions on enforcement are consistent with this policy.

In preparing the Policy, the Council has considered the Regulator's Compliance Code and the "Statement of Intent" between the Local Better Regulation Office, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment, and District Councils.

The Regulation and Enforcement Policy is available on the Council's website and can be accessed at www.belfastcity.gov.uk. Businesses are advised of the existence of the policy together with how it can be obtained on all standard letters and reports left following the inspection of premises.

This general policy is supported by unit specific guidance and procedures.

The Council maintains its own Legal Services to provide support to service Departments.

3. Service Delivery

3.1 Food Premises Interventions

The Council plans and delivers a risk-based Food Premises Intervention Programme based on the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice. The frequency and type of intervention planned aims to concentrate resources on the worst offenders and higher risk businesses whilst at the same time reducing the burden on the better businesses.

The Council recognises the importance of a robust intervention programme and will thoroughly inspect all businesses that are higher risk or have poorer compliance levels.

As in the previous year the Council will use a "light touch" Alternative Enforcement Strategy for the very low risk premises. This strategy will negate the need for intervention in many of these premises.

There are a total of 2504 premises due a food hygiene intervention and 1026 premises due a food standards intervention in 2021-2022. The significant increase in the number of premises requiring inspection in this financial year is largely as a result of the cessation of programmed inspections due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The unit did not carry out programmed inspections from the 23rd March 2020 until mid-August 2020. Staff resources were affected during the 2020/2021 year and the usual complement of environmental health officers were not available due to redeployment to priority functions in the council, including the port health unit, staff self-isolating due to vulnerabilities and the inability to recruit suitably qualified staff.

Food Hygiene Intervention Strategy

As per the FSA recovery plan the following premises have been prioritised for inspection in 2021-2022:

Risk category	Inspection planned
A	4
В	53
С	767
Unrated	125

There remains approximately 1600 other non-priority premises that require an intervention or inspection and where the unit resources allow these interventions will be undertaken. Where possible, temporary and agency officers who are not fully authorised will be allocated these interventions until such times as they are deemed competent to carry out priority inspections. The unit currently has two industrial placement students who are assisting in the completion of the alternative enforcement strategy.

Food Standards Intervention Strategy

Food standards interventions aim to ensure that food sold throughout the city complies with relevant compositional and labelling requirements, is properly described and of sound quality. In general food standards inspections are carried out during the same visit to premises to conduct a food hygiene inspection where they fall due within the same timeframe. However, for higher risk premises such as Category A, Approved Premises, Manufacturers and Distributors and some other Category B premises, the standards inspections may be carried out separately in order to facilitate focused attention on food standards.

As per the FSA recovery plan the following premises have been prioritised for inspection in 2021-2022:

Risk category	Inspection planned
Α	13
В	196
Unrated	125

There remains approximately 700 non-priority premises that require an intervention or inspection and where the unit resources allow these interventions will be undertaken.

Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES)

Normally those food businesses which present the lowest risk to public health will be subject to an alternative approach to inspection. This AES consists of a Food Safety Hygiene and Standards Self-Assessment Questionnaire which is posted out to the businesses along with tailored advice and information. Completed questionnaires are reviewed to monitor compliance and confirm that there have been no significant changes to the business or a change in ownership. Premises that do not provide the necessary information or indicate a significant change will be subject to an inspection.

Outline of FSA Recovery Plan



Allergens

Compliance with allergens information requirements shall be assessed during every programmed hygiene and standards intervention (with exception of AES) and appropriate action taken including the provision of advice, toolkits and where necessary enforcement action. A significant change to the labelling requirements for PPDS foods came into force on 1 October 2021. Prior to the introduction of the new requirements additional support including advisory visits, leaflets, webinars etc. was offered to businesses to help them achieve compliance. We will continue to offer support throughout this year as businesses become familiar with the new requirements and escalate to formal action where appropriate.

Revisits

In line with the statutory Food Law Code of Practice all food businesses that fail to comply with significant statutory requirements shall be subject to appropriate enforcement action and revisit to verify compliance. As a minimum they will receive a written warning letter.

However, officers will aim to utilise the wide range of enforcement options available to ensure compliance is achieved in a timely fashion. We shall make appropriate use of all enforcement options which continue to apply to all food businesses, and in accordance with the Council's Regulatory and Enforcement Policy.

For food hygiene a single compliance score of 15 (or higher) or a combined score of 30 is considered significant.

For food standards a compliance score of 40 and/or a confidence in management score of 30 is considered significant.

For lower scores remedial action to secure compliance may be detailed on the post inspection report form and compliance will be verified at next routine visit, however, written warnings shall be issued were it is appropriate to do so, and more formal enforcement options will be considered for persistent non-compliance.

Revisits for rerating

Under the requirements of the Food Hygiene Rating Act (NI) 2016 additional revisits will be carried out on request to rerate an establishment, subject to criteria being met and a fee of £150 being paid.

3.2 Food Complaints

The Council will commence the investigation of all food complaints received from members of the public or food businesses within two working days of receipt. In the case of urgent investigations, we endeavour to make contact within the same working day. Officers will investigate complaints in accordance with the requirements of the NIFMG Food Complaints Investigation Procedure and where necessary the Council will liaise with Originating, Home Authorities and Primary Authorities during the course of its investigation. In determining the appropriate course of action the Council will take into consideration any reports received from the Home, Originating or Primary Authorities and the food business identified as the cause of the complaint and will have regard to the Council's Regulatory and Enforcement Policy. For 2021/22 the Council estimates that it will receive approximately 600 complaints relating to food or the hygiene of food premises.

3.3 Home Authority Principle

The Council supports the Home Authority Principle and, where appropriate, will liaise with the Home Authority of a business trading in the city, on enforcement and other issues which affect the policies of the enterprise. We will take cognisance of any relevant advice given by the Home or Primary Authority, including any published intervention plan.

While the Council has not entered into a formal written home authority partnership with any business, it has established a close liaison with the majority of businesses, including the Education Authority, for whom it could be either Home or Originating Authority to give preventative guidance or advice. Advice is provided during programmed inspections and other visits. On request the Council will investigate all matters referred to it by other local authorities and where appropriate will provide a written response to requests for information. For 2021/2022 the Council estimates that it will receive over 150 requests for information from other Local Authorities.

Where appropriate the Food Safety and Port Health Unit will have cognisance of the contents of the "Statement of Intent" agreed between District Councils, DETI and the Better Regulation Delivery Office (Formally LBRO) for the purposes of providing better regulation of businesses.

The Council will liaise closely with the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for Northern Ireland which has responsibility for the enforcement of Food Hygiene Legislation in E.C. approved fresh meat and liquid milk plants in Northern Ireland.

3.4 Advice to Business

The Council is committed to the improvement of standards in food businesses and advice to businesses is an important dimension of that strategy. Advice is given through site-visits, provision of compliance tools such as the Butchers' HACCP Pack, and the Safe Catering (HACCP) Pack, the Council's web-site, dealing with enquiries and requests for advice, through correspondence, meetings with trade groups, distribution of printed materials, and educational and training programmes. The service will continue to support all businesses with the implementation and maintenance of Food Safety Management Systems based on HACCP principles, in conjunction with a graduated approach to enforcement.

In order to promote a positive image and promote the reputation of the Council the unit plans to publish at least one article in City matters.

The Food Safety Unit invites plans and specifications for all new and refurbished food businesses for review and comment. This proactive approach is taken to help businesses secure compliance before they open thus saving the business and the Council resources by avoiding the need to carry out remedial works. It is estimated that 230 new businesses will receive advice in year.

Our system of recording service requests, response times and actions help plan, improve and monitor this part of the service. It is estimated that in addition to complaints relating to food or premises a further 1200 requests for service will be received this year. There has been a significant increase in such requests over the past year, particularly for information on food safety requirements as existing food businesses attempt to diversify and others want to operate a food business from their own home.

The Port Health Service is an active member of the local shipping community having extensive business contacts with the Marine Coastguard Agency, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, N.I. importers, customs, clearance agents, hauliers, shipping companies, ferry operators and stevedores. Advice is given on Port Health related matters, including food safety, to the shipping community on a regular basis and when requested help and advice is given to local importers and members of the general public on the importation of third country foodstuffs including products of animal origin. The Port Health service has also engaged together with DAERA, FSA and other Councils with trade and businesses to provide advice and assistance in relation to additional requirements resulting from the NI Protocol, and the service continues to receive requests for information and advice in this regard. It is estimated that approximately 200 service requests will be received and responded to by Port Health.

3.5 Food Inspection and Sampling

3.5.1 Food Safety Service

The Food Safety Unit has prepared a Food Sampling Policy outlining its general approach to chemical and microbiological sampling as well its approach in specific situations. This approach recognises the important role of sampling in protecting public health and product quality, detecting fraudulent activities and unhygienic practices and to ensure that food standards are maintained.

Food sampling programmes are produced annually for both chemical and microbiological samples, after consultation with the Public Analyst and the Food Examiner. The programmes are produced in accordance with documented procedures, are risk based and prioritised to focus on foods that are manufactured in the city where there are Home/Originating Authority responsibilities. The programmes also consider the type and risk category of food businesses and imported food. The programme has regard to national, regional and local co-ordinated sampling surveys.

Several areas of intelligence are used to identify priority premises, food products or specific analyses in addition to those collated from the food safety database. Such intelligence may include: Incident reports sent to FSA, Food Alerts, FSA Annual Incident report, RASFFs, Food standards complaints; UK Food Surveillance System annual reports, FSA Imported Food Annual Reports & Food Fraud Database bulletins.

Currently per annum approximately 400 samples are procured for chemical analysis and 1050 samples for microbiological examination. During the Covid 19 Pandemic sampling activities were restricted but the unit is now operating to usual standards.

3.5.2. Port Health Service

The Unit receives a daily shipping list from the Port Authorities and from this list it is able to identify vessels and their cargoes. Cargo manifests are scrutinised and all third country imported foodstuffs are identified. Documentary, identity and physical checks, including sampling, are carried out on all

third country products of animal origin in accordance with the EC veterinary checks regime. Following introduction of the NI Protocol, this has extended to relevant food products arriving from GB, however the number of samples of these products has initially been small – a sampling plan for these products is being put in place and this activity is expected to increase over the coming months. Additional surveillance of manifests to identify non-compliant loads has vastly increased following introduction of the NI Protocol. In addition to containerised shipping cargoes, the service now is required to undertake manifest surveillance checks on all freight entering Belfast Port via Roll On-Roll Off Ferry services – there are up to 52 sailings per week.

EU legislation requires that specified import conditions will apply to certain imported consignments of third country products of non-animal origin. These products all require a documentary check and a proportion will be subject to identity and physical checks (including sampling) at a level laid down in the legislation. Products not subject to the specific legislation will be risk assessed and appropriate checks, including sampling, carried out to ensure compliance with relevant imported food legislation. When possible the Unit carries out imported food sampling programmes devised by the Food Standards Agency or the E.U.

In the period 2021/2022 this is likely to result in the following number of samples:-

- Microbiological 45
- Chemical 50

The International Health Regulations (2005) require that all ships must be inspected at an authorised port such as Belfast and where necessary a Ship Sanitation Certificate issued for the prevention and control of public health risks. Certificates are valid for a period of 6 months. It is anticipated that 140 Ship Sanitation inspections (including large cruise ships) will be carried out during the year. In addition to ship sanitation inspections, ships are routinely boarded to ensure that conditions are satisfactory and there is no infectious disease on board. During these inspections advice is given on food hygiene and other matters.

Food hygiene and food standards inspections of Passenger Ferries registered with and operating out of Belfast are undertaken. Some of these ferries are large food businesses producing up to 7500 meals per day. We will inspect 6 - 10 ferries in 2021-2022.

Cruise ships arriving in the Port are inspected to ensure that no disease is being introduced and that infection control and hygiene conditions on board are of an acceptable standard. It is estimated that 5-10 cruise ship inspections will be carried out.

The unit also regularly inspect External Temporary Storage Facilities (formerly known as ERTS), fishing vessels operating out of Belfast and other vessels in dry dock for repair. Food Hygiene and Standards inspections are also carried out at George Best City Airport as well as ensuring the safety of water delivered to aircraft.

3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related and other Infectious Disease

The Council will attempt to investigate all notifications of infectious disease received from the Public Health Agency (PHA), within one working day of receipt. Specifically trained and competent environmental health officers within the Food Safety and Port Health Unit are authorised by the PHA for the investigation of notifications.

Investigation of outbreaks of food related infectious disease is conducted in liaison with the Consultant in Public Health Medicine of the PHA, and in accordance with the existing Outbreak Control Plans and protocols.

The Council estimates that it will receive 100 notifications of food related infectious disease during the year, with an additional 100 alleged food poisoning complaints from the public.

The Port Health Division will respond immediately it is notified of any complaint or incident of food poisoning or food related infectious disease occurring on board a ship or premises within the Port of Belfast or relating to a passenger using Belfast City Airport.

3.7 Food Safety Incidents

The FSA receives and issues information about foods within the supply chain which have been found to be unsafe or do not meet legal requirements. These include notifications about Product Withdrawals, Product Recalls and Allergy Alerts. Where necessary, the FSA will issue direction to councils to take specific action to protect consumers.

All notifications that require action are recorded on our database with details of the actions taken recorded against the relevant premises.

The Council estimates that it will receive 85 notifications from the FSA during the year and 80% of these will require investigation and further action to protect public safety.

Rapid Alert System for Feed and Food (RASFF).

With EU Exit, the UK has lost access to certain EU information systems including full access the RASFF. The Food Standards Agency has as a result of this developed the Risk Likelihood Dashboard to create a platform to enable more efficient and effective collation and sharing of relevant data for stakeholders involved in protecting public health in relation to imported food and feed. The Risk Likelihood Dashboard provides intelligence from consolidated data sources including historic TRACES data, RASFF Portal, refusals from other 3rd countries; full details are provided below. Local Authorities can still create RASFF notifications but have view only of RASFF notifications. Belfast City Council have access to the Risk Likelihood Dashboard and use it routinely to identify potential risks with imported foods and target surveillance accordingly.

If a consignment/product is to be rejected or destroyed due to a direct or indirect risk to human health, an incident report and rapid alert notification must be completed and forwarded to the FSA Food Incident Branch after consultation with FSA Northern Ireland for onward notification to the European Commission. It is likely that 5-10 notifications will be generated in 2021/2022.

3.8 Liaisons with Other Organisations

The Food Safety and Port Health Unit has extensive liaison in place with a wide range of other organisations:

- FSANI through enforcement stakeholder meetings, the NIFMG, and numerous other formal and informal meetings.
- The Public Health Agency (MOU exists) in relation to the investigation of sporadic cases and outbreaks of food related infectious disease.
 - Northern Ireland Food Managers Group reporting to Environmental Health NI
- Association of Port Health Authorities. The Senior Environmental Health Officer (Port Health) is a member Port Health Liaison Network.
- The Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs in relation to the operation of the Border Inspection Post.
- Merchant Navy Welfare Board (NI)
- HM Customs and Excise nationally and locally in relation to imported food controls.
- Planning Service to review related applications.
- Department for Infrastructure Water Quality Liaison Group.

- Safe Food through projects and working groups on the Island of Ireland
- The Northern Ireland Area Medical Advisory Committee Infectious Disease Sub-Group.
- Belfast Resilience-Harbour Working Group
- Marine Coastguard Agency
- Belfast Harbour Commissioners
- The Education Authority for NI School Meals Service
- NI Takeaway association

Close liaison is maintained with the Council's Building Control Service, Pest Control and Waste Management Service, as well as with the other regulatory units.

3.9 Promotion of Food Safety and Healthy Eating/ Nutrition

The Council carries out educational and promotional activities as an integral part of its food safety duties. In addition to this, specialist promotional activities are carried by the Food Safety & Port Health Unit. Many of these initiatives are designed to promote healthy choices.

The effectiveness of educational programmes and projects will be assessed using delegate evaluation forms, contact by managers and, where possible, by feedback from officers carrying out premises' inspections.

All promotional programmes are evaluated using a number of measures such as customer surveys, checking awareness of key messages, measuring participation or readership and officer debriefing.

Educational and promotional activities planned for 2021/2022 include the following:

Promotional Activity	Estimated Resources
Food Safety Week (including preparation & delivery)	2 hours
Specialised educational programmes on food safety for voluntary groups, charities, schools etc.	40 hours
Maintain and promote and manage the Food Hygiene Rating scheme	500 hours
To identify and work with 5 prominent food businesses to display calories on menus. To work alongside the FSA to pilot work towards the introduction of minimum nutritional standards across Councils food activities including the Atrium staff canteen.	150 hours
To provide an Imported Food/Port Health training day for year 3 Environmental Health students.	50 hours
To participate in relevant service wide business forums	50 hours
To publish at least one article in City Matters	5 hours
To develop relevant advice / information for businesses to assist them to comply with enforcement / legislative requirements	100 hours

4.0 Resources

4.1 Financial allocation

Details of the budget for the delivery of the Council's food service in 2021-2022 are within the City and Neighbourhood Service's revenue estimates and were approved by Council in February 2021.

4.2 Staffing allocation

4.2.1 Food Safety and Port Health Unit

The full staffing compliment in the Food Safety & Port Health Unit has the equivalent of 20.7 full-time staff engaged in food safety work. All officers hold specific qualifications and are assessed for competencies as required by the Code of Practice and are authorised for duties in accordance with the Council's documented procedure. (See table below). Following the retirement and resignation of 3 Principal EHO's, 4 senior EHO's are carrying out additional work under honorariums.

Position	Name	Hours (Full or Part Time)	Authorisation	FTE
City Protection Manager	Vivienne Donnelly	FT	None	0.1
Senior EHO	Christina McErlean	FT	Full including Approvals inc Port Health	1.0
Senior EHO	Elizabeth Gilchrist	FT	Full including Approvals	1.0
Senior EHO	Helen Morrissey	FT	Full	1.0
Senior EHO	Stacey Dallas- Thompson	FT	Full with Approvals inc Port Health	1.0
Senior EHO	Bridin Mulvenna- Crinion	FT	Full including Approvals	1.0
Senior EHO	Catherine Treche	FT	Full inc Port Health	1.0
Senior EHO	Clare Dolan	PT	Full including Approvals – Coldstores only	0.8
Senior EHO	Kara McMillan	FT	Full including Approvals	0.8
Senior EHO	Niall Convery	FT	Full inc Port Health	1.0
Senior EHO	Vacant	PT		0.5
EHO	Tony McKinless	FT	Full including Approvals	1.0
EHO	Riona Flynn	FT	Full including Approvals	1.0
EHO	Helen Sloan	FT	Full	1.0
EHO	Paula Bleakley	FT	Full including Approvals	1.0
EHO	Gareth Houston	FT	Full with approvals inc Port Health	1.0
EHO	Emma Duffy	FT	Full	1.0
EHO	Stephanie Rock	FT	Full	1.0
EHO	Kellie Harris	PT	Full	0.5
Technical Officer	Tanya Cooke	FT	Full	1.0
Technical Officer	Lauren Martin	FT	Full	1.0
Technical Officer	Julie Mulrine	FT	Full	1.0
Technical Officer	Naomi McCullagh	FT	Part Authorised	1.0

Current short-term vacancies that cannot be covered by temporary contracts are on occasion covered by agency staff.

An additional number of staff have been recruited on a temporary basis for Port Health in order to carry out required official controls on goods from GB.

Full Authorisation: authorised by Belfast City Council to enforce the provisions of The Food Safety Order (Northern Ireland) 1991 and any Orders or Regulations made thereunder or relating to the foregoing or having effect by virtue of the European Communities Act 1972.

4.2.1a Estimate of Resource (Time) Requirements (based on pre Covid-19 data)

Activity	No Tasks	Time/task	Total Hours
Cat A inspections Hygiene	4	5.5	22
Cat B inspections Hygiene	53	5	265
Cat C inspections Hygiene	767	4	3068
Cat D inspections Hygiene	1120	4	4480
Cat E inspections Hygiene	435	1.5	652.5
Unrated and unplanned events	400	5	2000
(Hygiene)			
Cat A inspections Standards	13	3	39
Cat B inspections Standards	196	1.5	294
Cat C inspections Standards	691	1	691
Unrated and unplanned events	400	1.5	600
(Standards)			
Revisits	400	1	400
Advisory and other visits	125	1	125
Micro sampling	1100	1.2	1320
Chemical sampling	400	2	800
Food Complaints	600	7	4200
ID investigations	100	2.5	250
Food Alerts For action	60	50	3000
Prosecutions	10	74	740
Planning reviews		1	910
Other Service Requests	800	7	5600
Staff Development	24	30	720
Working groups and initiatives with	-	-	2000
other external partners and			
stakeholders including NIFMG and			
Sub-Groups, FSA, APHA			

Activity	No Tasks	Time/task	Total Hours
Management of service and staff	-	-	2,500
Staff meetings	-	-	1000
Projects e.g. web development, procedures, campaigns	-	-	1000
Mandatory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme	-	-	1000
Inspect all shipping Manifests	100%	-	750
Documentary & phys. Checks, including sampling, of foodstuffs imported from outside EU.	250	5	1250
To inspect vessels to monitor compliance with International Health Regulations, Food Safety and Public Health Legislation.	600	2.00	1200
To inspect vessels for the issue of Ship Sanitation Certificates.	84	6.00	504

4.3 Staff Development Plan

The development needs of the Food Safety and Port Health Unit are identified as part of the Council's business planning process, competency assessment and through personal development planning. Relevant local training is identified by the Northern Ireland Food Managers Group and subgroups, the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland and the Public Health Agency. Training needs are also reviewed during the year to take into account staff changes and other issues identified. In-house briefing sessions are delivered regularly as part of monthly Unit meetings.

Competency requirements required by the Food Law Code of Practice are re assessed for all Officers annually and all deficiencies addressed in year.

Specific training planned for 2021/21 is included at the end of this document.

5.0 Quality Assessment

The following arrangements are in place to ensure the quality of services provided by the Food Safety and Port Health Unit:

5.1 Internal Monitoring Arrangements

Procedures have been drawn up and implemented to monitor the quality of work of officers assigned to the Food Safety & Port Health Unit which cover all aspects of the Standard and help ensure procedures are fully implemented. Current procedures include:

- Regular individual meetings with lead officers
- Use of procedure notes
- Use of standardised inspection report forms, letters and phrases
- Review of post-inspection paperwork
- Monitoring of inspections, visits and actions by documentation checks and accompanied visits
- Post complaint investigation monitoring
- · Approved premises file review and monitoring
- Internal auditing of adherence to procedures
- Monthly meetings of the Food Safety and Port Health Unit and daily briefings
- Seminars / exercises and training as required
- Fortnightly unit management team meetings and fortnightly mini-meetings of sub-sections (Port Health and area teams)

5.2 External monitoring and verification

The Border Inspection Post is audited annually by DAERA and the food service is periodically subject to both FSA and EU audits.

6.0 Review

6.1 Review against the Service Plan

Performance against the unit's business plan is reviewed periodically. This includes a quarterly review by the Unit Management Team. Summary performance information on the previous years' service plan will be reported with each Food Service Delivery Plan. The report shall also identify any variance together with areas of improvement.

Performance report on Food Service Delivery Plan for 2020-2021

1. Departmental Plan Targets

Performance Indicator	Target 2020-2021	Achieved 2020-2021
% Premises deemed broadly compliant	95%	95%

2. Other relevant performance Information update for 20/21

Performance Indicator	Target 2020/2021	Achieved % 2020/2021	Explanation of variance and improvements for 2020/2021
Number of Ships inspected	600	62%	Staff changes and operational issues including additional CED's and strip-outs and implementation of the NI protocol
Number of imported food consignments examined	250	89%	Examination determined by nature of foods imported.
% of manifests examined for imported food stuffs	100%	100%	Target Met
% of the food hygiene programme complete	100%	27%	Covid 19 pandemic and covid operating procedures. Staffing resources diverted to BCP port health unit and limited availability of suitably qualified officers
% of food complaints resolved within 8 weeks	75%	83%	Target exceeded
% of food standards Programme Completed	95%	29%	Covid 19 pandemic and covid operating procedures. Staffing resources diverted to BCP port health unit and limited availability of suitably qualified officers
	T		
Micro Samples Taken	1050	27%	No industrial placement student recruited in 2020/21.
Chemical Samples Taken	400	29%	Covid 19 pandemic and covid operating procedures. Staffing resources diverted to BCP port health unit and limited availability of suitably qualified officers.
% of urgent food complaints responded to within target (1 working day)	100%	100%	Target met
To investigate notifications of gastrointestinal illness	90% returned within target	100%	Exceeded Target
within 24 hours and report to PHA within 24 hours.	90% contacted within target	100%	Exceeded Target

Food Safety & Port Health Training Plan 2021-2022

The priority training areas agreed between NIFMG and FSA and shall be provided as low-cost training. The key areas have been identified as follows:

The following courses are available as online training:

Fera Sampling and Analysis Requirements Training Imported foods: Sampling Introduction to imported food and official controls Food allergy and intolerance training Food labelling Root cause analysis Traceability Vacuum packing and modified atmosphere packing Official Fish Inspector course (theory) Port health: health and safety

Scheduled training and training to be developed:

Competency Framework
Approvals training
Pre-packed for direct sale webinar
FHRS national consistency exercise
RASFF for Port Health authorities
Menucal refresher training
CBD/novel food familiarisation training
Better Training for Safer Food
Campden BRI HACCP – Advanced (level 4)
Seafish bivalve purification- shellfish hygiene programme
Fish identification training

Agenda Item 3e



PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Subje	Community Development & Capacity Building Support					
Date:	yte: 9 th November 2021					
Repo	Reporting Officer: Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager Contact Officer: Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer – Community Provision					
Postr	Restricted Reports					
Restr	ictea Reports					
Is this	s report restricted?		Yes	No	L X	
	If Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?	•			
	·	•				
	After Committe After Council I					
	Some time in t					
	Never					
Call-i	n 					
Is the	decision eligible for	Call-in?	Yes	X No		
1.0	Purpose of Report	or Summary of main Issues				
1.1	The purpose of this	report is to update members o	n the types of support	available fi	rom within	
	the Community Prov	vision section it the City & Neig	ghbourhood Services I	Directorate	in Council	
	which local groups c	an avail of, and members can p	romote, to groups that	they are wo	orking with	
	or who approach the	em for advice or assistance.				
2.0	Recommendations					
	The Committee is as	sked to:				
	Note the con	tents of the report.				
3.0	Main report					
	<u>Background</u>					
3.1	Following an amend	ment to the minutes of the P&C	Committee meeting he	eld in Septer	nber 2021	
	at the full Council n	neeting held on 4th October 20	21. Members had ask	ked for a re	port to be	
	brought to the next P	&C committee meeting which or	utlined <i>'capacity buildin</i>	ng and poten	itial further	
	funding for other gro	oups.' In response, officers hav	e outlined within this u	update the c	community	
	development and capacity support services that are currently provided by Belfast City Council's					

Community Services Unit as well as several other service areas within Community Provision. It is however worth noting that staff within Community Provision can, and often do, link in with wider Council services both within City & Neighbourhood Services Directorate (e.g. Environmental Health/Open Spaces and Street Scene/Wase Collection) as well as in other Departments across Council who can also offer a range of support services to groups and individuals.

3.2 The Community Services Unit

Council's Community Services unit sits within the wider Community Provision team. The Unit continues to provide a range of services to support community activity and community development across the city. Many groups and organisations require support to plan and deliver programmes, particularly in the context of Covid recovery. Council has 27 community centres with dedicated staff attached to them who will support groups to access for bookings and programmes.

Staff within the CSU are able to support groups via three main areas outlined in more detail below.

1. Direct financial support through grant aid

Funding of approximately £2 million is made available annually to 100+ Belfast-based community and voluntary organisations under two main funding streams – Community Capacity and Facilities Support. Members agreed at October Council meeting that awards for 21/22 would be rolled over into the 22/23 financial year. Officers will develop a new multi annual bid that will open for applications in Autumn 2022.

During the Covid response and recovery period, a number of previous funding streams were combined to create a more accessible, less bureaucratic process to access support with smaller micro and medium grants of up £1,500 and £5,000 respectively allocated to community projects and events. Council allocated almost £1million to 350 projects in August/September 2021 for delivery until 31 March 22. Applications for both these funding streams will open again in January/February 2022.

2. Advice and information

Council officers in the Unit can provide specialist support in relation not only to funding but also in relation to issues such as safeguarding, volunteering and child/youth development. They will also act as conduit and facilitate access to other council and external services (statutory and voluntary).

3. Capacity building – training and development

Community Development Officers can provide training and mentoring in a range of development areas. There are 3 hard copy toolkits which can be accessed by groups; *Running a Community*

Organisation, Facilities Management and Collaborative Working. Community Development Officers can also provide group facilitation support to develop business and project plans.

Those in need of assistance should contact their local community development officer in the first instance. Groups can be directed to community@belfastcity.gov.uk with requests for support in relation to any of the areas of work listed below.

3.3 Community Awareness & Resource Education & Promotions Team

The Community Awareness Team works to discourage litter, dog fouling and graffiti in the city through campaigns, school visits and programmes, and competitions. The Resource Education and Promotions Team promotes waste and resource awareness including waste reduction, reuse and recycling to the public, schools and businesses in the city.

3.4 **Community Safety Team**

Officers within the Community Safety Team work with Elected Members, Statutory Agencies and Independent Representatives to identify and take forward local and citywide priority actions within the Policing and Community Safety Partnership structure. Within the Team there are also a number Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and Safer Neighbourhood Officers. ASB Officers can engage with local communities, partner agencies and via multi-agency forums to address issues of ASB, they link in with the relevant PCSP and can host community surgeries in priority areas to allow residents to report issues directly.

Safer Neighbourhood Officers offer guidance, support and advice on community safety issues. They can challenge low-level antisocial behaviour, enforce laws relating to on-street drinking and environmental crime. They work alongside Police, Youth Workers and BCC park wardens to address low level ASB mainly in BCC parks and open spaces and hotspot areas across the city including the City centre.

3.5 **Good Relations Team**

Good Relations officers provide advice and support for groups throughout Belfast in the application process for Council grants as well as for funding from other bodies such as The Executive Office's Central Good Relations Fund, Heritage Lottery, Community Relations Council, NI Housing Executive, among others. Staff within the team can provide support to local community organisations to develop relationships, networks and partnerships on an intercommunity basis in order to promote the development of Good Relations at the local level. Members can direct queries to goodrelations@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.6 Open Spaces and Active Living (OSAL) Unit

The OSAL Unit can offer advice and assistance to groups wishing to run events or programmes in our parks and open spaces – assisting them through the application process. They also organise Council-led events and activities in our outdoor spaces throughout the year as well as administering Council's allotments allocation scheme. In addition, our Parks Outreach team works at a more area level to assist local groups and communities to make better use of, and support improvements to our local parks and public spaces and to organise, promote and deliver events, etc. The Unit can be contacted at outdoorleisure@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.7 **Sports/Leisure Development Unit**

The Sports/Leisure Development Unit can provide information, advice and support on a range of issues and initiatives such as coach education and sports development planning for clubs. The team offers funding under the 'Support for Sport' theme such as development grants for small interventions as well as larger club programmes, grants for small scale international events, and financial support for talented individuals. The team also co-funds, alongside PHA, the Active Belfast Grants administered and managed by the Belfast Health Development Unit. They work with governing bodies and clubs at local/community level to take forward priorities and actions under BCC's Boxing Strategy, the GAA Joint Management Partnership and the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative (in partnership with GAA & IFA). They work with local clubs to ensure that partner and facilities management agreements in place with Council are achieving their aims and objectives. Please contact the team at leisure@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.8 Belfast Health Development Unit (BHDU)

Belfast Health Development Unit is co-located team comprising staff from BCC, BHSCT and the Public Health Agency based in Council. The focus of their work is on addressing health inequalities across a number of areas – currently drugs and alcohol and mental health, physical activity and nutrition, healthy ageing and lifelong learning. Staff work closely with the funding partners, Community Planning and key multi-agency partnerships and forums to identify and take forward key priorities and actions within these work areas. The Unit can be contacted by emailing mlbt@bhdu.org

3.9 **Community Infrastructure Pilots**

Members will recall that Council is also developing a Community Infrastructure Pilot that will work in identified areas across the city. Recent experience shows that communities require support and resources from a range of services within Council and other organisations/agencies. The development of the community infrastructure pilot will be an opportunity to take an integrated

	approach to identifying and responding to area needs. Further detail will be provided the next
	round of Area Working Groups when areas will be selected.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.10	None.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment
3.11	The majority of the support provided in relation to advice, training, capacity building and financial
	aid provided by the services with Community Provision is aimed at addressing inequalities,
	fostering good relations and promoting equal access to services (internal and external to
	Council).
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None



Agenda Item 4a



Subject:

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Coláiste Feirste: Review of Public Access to Sports Facilities

Date:	9 th November, 2021					
Repo	rting Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services				
Conta	act Officer:	Alison Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager (West)				
Restr	Restricted Reports					
Is thi	s report restricted?	Yes No X				
	If Yes, when will the re	port become unrestricted?				
	After Committee	Decision				
	After Council Dec					
	Some time in the Never	tuture				
	110101					
Call-i	n					
Is the	Is the decision eligible for Call-in?					
1.0	Durnose of Bonort or 6	Summary of main Issues				
1.1		ort is to advise Committee of a request to provide financial support to An				
	•	ste to enable the continued provision of leisure and recreational services on				
		eechmount Leisure Centre, Falls Rd and ask for Members' consideration in				
		detailed in the unexecuted SLA.				
2.0 2.1	Recommendations	onsider if they wish to give authority for the post first year of operating review				
۷.۱		it An Spórtlann, Coláiste Feirste (in the spirit of the unexecuted SLA) to take				
	·	cope of any financial consequences arising from public use provision at the				
	•	ommendations to the Council as to the legal liability of the Council for those				
	consequences.	of the Council ac to the logal hability of the Council for those				
3.0	Main report					
0.0	Background					
3.1	In 2009, following a str	rategic review of Council indoor leisure facilities, completed in 2004, the eechmount Leisure Centre to Coláiste Feirste/Fobairt Feirste was agreed,				

subject to detailed terms, which included public use. The transfer was initially to be at no charge, but officers subsequently negotiated a price of £2.325 million subject to appropriate terms to be included in a legal agreement to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services and agreement on the detailed terms of a service level agreement also to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services. The proposal was developed on the basis that the Council would not incur operating costs following transfer.

3.2

The terms of a service level agreement (SLA) in respect of the public use were negotiated with the trustees at the time, to provide for the provision of public use by the trustees at the agreed times, however, that SLA was not signed by either party meaning it has not been legally executed. Following concerns about the financial viability of sustaining the public use expressed by the trustees at the time, Committee agreed the SLA should include a clause providing for a review after the first year of operating, and every three years after. The SLA was drafted to provide that should the public use prove to be uneconomical for the trustees after the review, the Council would have the option to either provide financial support to the trustees to safeguard the public use, or to release the trustees from their obligation to provide it. It did not commit the Council to the provision of any funding. The SLA was not signed by either the Council or the trustees and has not, therefore, been legally executed.

Despite early discussions in relation to an SLA, sale of the site was only agreed in 2011, with redevelopment commencing in 2017 and completing in 2018. The sporting facilities comprise of:

- one full sized 3G GAA floodlit pitch;
- one 3G floodlit pitch for soccer and GAA sports;
- 3 no. MUGA [multi use] areas, suitable for 7 a side soccer and basketball, etc.
- Two indoor handball courts with changing room facilities;
- One large indoor hall, suitable for basketball, indoor soccer, indoor hurling, etc
- One minor hall, suitable for group exercise sessions: Pilates, circuit training, etc
- One equipped gym
- One lecture room for video analysis, etc.
- Male and female changing facilities

3.4 Coláiste Feirste state that the facilities are open to the public for a total of 48 hours per week over the year as follows:

Mon – Friday 4.00 – 10.00 pm

Saturday 9.00 – 5.00 pm

Sunday 9.00 – 3.00 pm

3.5

They have provided a list of groups who use the facilities on a regular basis, which includes 24 GAA groups, 9 handball bodies, 11 soccer groups and 10 community initiatives.

Coláiste Feirste wrote to the Council on March 5th, 2019 (six months after the site became operational) seeking financial support to assist with the provision of public use of the Spórtlann

	facilities, which, it was stated, was being carried on at an unsustainable cost to Coláiste Feirste.
	Progress to resolve matters was delayed by the COVID pandemic and in October 2020,
	representatives of the Coláiste Feirste advised that the annual deficit associated with running the
	sporting facilities was estimated at £53,000 per annum.
	Key Issues
3.6	As stated in 3.2 above, the unexecuted SLA as drafted, provides that, should the provision of public
	use be financially uneconomical to the trustees, the Council will have the option to either provide
	financial support to the trustees to safeguard the public use or to release the trustees from their
	obligation to provide that public use. Coláiste Feirste's letter of 2019 and subsequent
	correspondence confirms that this point has now been reached.
3.7	Members are asked to consider whether they wish to give authority for the first review to take place
3.7	as detailed in the unexecuted SLA.
	<u>Financial implications</u>
3.8	The cost of undertaking the review can be met from existing departmental budgets.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications
3.9	Officers will engage with colleagues to take forward any Equality or Good Relations implications.
4.0	Appendices – Document Attached
	None



Agenda Item 4b



PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Sub	pject: Blanchflower Preferential Use Agreement								
Date):		09 November 2021						
Rep	porting Officer: Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services								
Con	Contact Officer: Cormac McCann, Lead Officer Community Provision								
Rest	ricted	Reports							
Is th	Is this report restricted?					X			
	If Yes	s, when will th	e report bec	ome unres	tricted?				
		After Commit	tee Decisior	1					
		After Council	Decision						
		Some time in	the future						
		Never							
0-11	•								
Call-	in								
Is th	Is the decision eligible for Call-in?								
	_								
1.0	-	ose of Report						01-	
1.1	-	•	•		to offer a Prefer		•		
			nchilower Pla	ayıng Fields	s for limited acc	cess to the s	site for a	perioa	of two
	years								
2.0		mmendations							
2.1		Committee is as							
	(i) Grant approval for a preferential use agreement to be developed with Glentoran Footbal Club, for a term of two years, in relation to the synthetic surface pitch at Blanchflower								
		•	•	ears, in rela	tion to the synt	hetic surface	e pitch at	Blanc	nflower
		Playing Field							
	(ii)	Agree to affor	ord priority us	se of the pit	tch, at limited ti	mes, as det	ailed in tl	ne rep	ort and
		subject to GI	entoran FC o	ontinually p	providing a prog	ramme of us	se which	demon	strates
		significant in	clusive use o	f the facility	specifically for	women and	girls and	people	with a
	disability								

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 Strategic Policy and Resources committee of March 2018 directed officers to undertake research into the provision of suitable and convenient pitch facilities for Glentoran Football Club, including its youth academy. Committee further accepted the East Areas Working Group recommendation that a proposed capital programme to install a 3G pitch with floodlighting at King George V playing fields be replaced on the capital programme with a 3G pitch at Blanchflower playing fields.
- 3.2 People and Communities committee of March 2019 agreed to upgrade the facilities at King George V Playing Fields and offer a Preferential Use Agreement for five years to Glentoran Youth Academy.
- 3.3 King George V Playing Fields are subject to a Deed of Covenant with Fields in Trust. Council is advised that local residents have written to Fields in Trust in opposition to the planned development of the site and management of bookings. Local residents have approached council officers both formally and informally protesting the proposal on a number of grounds including traffic management, Fields in Trust requirements and floodlighting. Northern Ireland Water also have advised that they will require a section of the site for a prolonged period in relation to works on their water treatment plant nearby.
- 3.4 Significant investment in the football facilities in east Belfast has taken place over this time. In particular at Blanchflower Playing Fields where Council has developed two full size floodlit synthetic surface football pitches. Committee will be aware that one of these sites will be directly managed by Harland and Wolff Welders Football Club and one of these pitches will be managed by Council.
- 3.5 The committee decision of March 2019 regarding the upgrade works at King George V Playing Fields has not yet been fulfilled. The availability of a new synthetic surface pitch at Blanchflower is imminent. Glentoran FC have written to Council seeking approval for the previously approved Preferential Use Agreement at King George V Playing Fields to be transferred to Blanchflower PF. Members are reminded that in March 2018 officers were directed to present research into the provision of suitable and convenient pitch facilities for Glentoran Football Club, including its youth academy. This report presents an option which was not available to officers at that time and can be considered on that basis.
- 3.6 Council is currently completing development of synthetic surface pitches in east Belfast including the pitches at Blanchflower playing fields and Avoniel Leisure Centre. It will likely take

two years to understand the impact of these developments and how demand will be balanced across greater east Belfast. For this reason the proposed preferential use agreement should be of an interim nature and restricted to a maximum term of two years.

3.7 Officers negotiated with Glentoran Football Club representatives to agree a proposed timetable of priority use at limited times for Glentoran Football Club for the duration of the agreement. The pitch will be available for booking at all other times. This timetable is reflective of Glentoran Football Club's commitment to growing the game in an inclusive way with significant usage by groups under-represented in sport.

Day	Times
Monday	6:00pm – 7:00pm
	7:00pm – 8:00pm
Tuesday	6:00pm – 7:00pm
	7:00pm – 8:00pm
Wednesday	6:00pm – 7:00pm
	7:00pm – 8:00pm
Thursday	6:00pm – 7:00pm
	7:00pm – 8:00pm
Friday	n/a
Saturday	n/a
Sunday	n/a

Table 1. Timetable of priority use for Glentoran Football Club

Financial & Resource Implications

There are no additional resource implications from this decision.

3.8

Equality Impact/Rural Needs Assessment

The recommendation within this report will likely increase usage by two groups which are reported to be underrepresented in sport, specifically women and girls and people with a disability.

4.0 | Appendices – Documents Attached

None



Agenda Item 4c



PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Subjec	t:	Community Asset Management Framework Sites	- Pilot Commu	ınity Be	enefit
Date:		9 th November 2021			
Date.		Ryan Black, Director City & Neighbourhood	Convions		
Report	ing Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director Physical Programn	•		
Keport	ing Onicer.	Jacqui Stewart Asset Co-ordinator,	1165		
Contac	ct Officer:	Pamela Davison, Estates Manager			
		Trainia Barroon, Botatoo manago.			
Restric	ted Reports				
Is this	report restricted?		Yes	No	X
If	Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?			
	After Committe	ee Decision			
	After Council I	Decision			
	Some time in t				
	Never	ine ruture			
	Never				
Call-in					
	lecision eligible for	r Call-in?	Yes X	No	
Is the c			Yes X	No	
1.0	Purpose of Repor	t or Summary of main Issues			droft
Is the c	Purpose of Repor	t or Summary of main Issues e approval for a number of pilot projects ac	cross the city	using a	
1.0	Purpose of Repor	t or Summary of main Issues	cross the city	using a	
1.0	Purpose of Repor To seek committee community asset m	t or Summary of main Issues e approval for a number of pilot projects ac	cross the city	using a	nodels
1.0	Purpose of Repor To seek committee community asset m to maximise comm	et or Summary of main Issues e approval for a number of pilot projects ach	cross the city	using a	nodels
1.0	Purpose of Repor To seek committee community asset m to maximise comm	et or Summary of main Issues e approval for a number of pilot projects act nanagement framework and toolkit to identify to nunity benefits and ensure community management	cross the city	using a	nodels
1.0	Purpose of Repor To seek committee community asset m to maximise comm deliver on the outcome	e approval for a number of pilot projects ach nanagement framework and toolkit to identify nunity benefits and ensure community managemes of the Belfast Agenda.	cross the city future manage	using a ment m facilitie	nodels es can
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1.0	Purpose of Repor To seek committee community asset m to maximise comm deliver on the outcome	e approval for a number of pilot projects ach nanagement framework and toolkit to identify nunity benefits and ensure community managemes of the Belfast Agenda.	cross the city future manage	using a ment m facilitie	nodels es can
1.0	Purpose of Repor To seek committee community asset m to maximise comm deliver on the outcommunity The sites identified	e approval for a number of pilot projects ach nanagement framework and toolkit to identify nunity benefits and ensure community managemes of the Belfast Agenda.	cross the city future manage	using a ment m facilitie	nodels es can
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- Tullycarnet Park Boxing Club;
- Former Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre;

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

• Approve pilot projects at the 6 proposed sites and move forward with the agreed work streams under our draft Community Asset Framework, working with the existing groups and through a procured partner to support the development of community benefit plans and business case proposals to determine the most appropriate future management model for each of the sites. The outcomes of this will be used to update our draft framework and the development of a new Community Asset Management policy. Committee will be kept updated at all stages and any next steps will be subject to Committee sign-off.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council has a long history of supporting community groups and third sector organisations to deliver services, doing so by permitting community management of council assets. It is believed that communities benefit not only from overall outcomes achieved but also through their direct involvement in the management and programming of community facilities. The community benefit is generally considered to be greater when achieved via this model than when the council is the direct delivery agent, however community benefit remains unmeasured in most instances. The ambition of Members in this area is also recognised and therefore it is proposed to conduct a series of pilot projects to measure and evaluate that community benefit. The pilots will cover a range of asset types with differing functions, management models and end user demographics.
- 3.2 The pilot projects will utilise a previously untested draft framework and assessment toolkit developed for Council by DTNI. Learning achieved through the application of this work to live examples will inform a future Community Asset Management Policy. It is recognised that with increasing emphasis on inclusive growth, resilience and wealth building in communities, requests for long term access to council assets will only grow in number. There is now a strong impetus to test the previous work and assess it value as a decision-making tool.
- 3.3 Pilot sites have been chosen to reflect the existing variety of management models specifically, Leases, Facility Management Agreements and Partner Agreements. The scope includes assets already managed within the community and new or vacant assets. The range

of functionality includes community programming, sports development and youth and community support.

The Proposed Pilot sites

Ulidia and Clarendon Playing Fields

- Ouncil is currently in receipt of requests for the transfer of the sites at Ulidia and Clarendon Playing Fields, to long term management within the community. Facilities at these sites are used to deliver community development outcomes through and alongside sports outcomes. The requests from Rosario FC and Clarendon Development Agency respectively have been the subject of ongoing engagement between officers, elected members and the organisations for some time as the organisations already have a management agreement at the sites. In the case of Ulidia PF the current Partner Agreement is approaching its final year and at Clarendon PF the Facility Management Agreement is overholding on a month to month basis.
- 3.5 In both cases the applicants are proposing that their long-term management of the site would have greater community benefit than a reversion to council management at the termination point of the current legal agreement. They also propose opportunities for capital development at both sites using external investment but neither have the security of tenure required to be successful in a funding application.
- 3.6 Officers are proposing the pilot deliver for each asset the following outputs, to inform decision making.
 - A community benefits realisation plan
 - A business case to demonstrate the organisations long term sustainability
 - Recommended mechanism for of the transfer of the asset to community management assessed against the draft framework.

Willowbank Park and Hammer 3G pitch.

3.7 The Willowbank site is managed under an FMA of 2008 by Willowbank Multi Sports Club (Ais Spoirt Bhruach na Saileoige), the Hammer site by Shankill United FC under a complex variety of agreements including a 10 year lease awarded in 2012. The primary feature of each site is a pitch which the clubs manage and maintain on council's behalf. The clubs are

paid a fee for their operational management and retain income from the booking of the pitches.

- 3.8 Both sites have benefitted historically from improvements financed by external capital drawn down by the managing clubs and both sites have the potential for further enhancement but are not currently on the council's capital programme. A project to upgrade the changing facilities at Willowbank has recently completed, jointly funded by council and DFC. The club is keen to see an increase in the size of the pitch at the site from the current three quarter size pitch to full size in order to drive income but has no immediate opportunity to draw funding from an external source for this as a moratorium on future FMAs has made their tenure insecure. Capital opportunities at the Hammer site are limited similarly by the approaching lease termination date.
- 3.9 The pilot presents the opportunity to evaluate what is being delivered from the sites under the current community management and quantify any benefit to the council and to the community. The pilot will use the draft framework to test options for the future vehicle by which these sites might be managed and to test the capacity of the current agreement holders to continue in a managing role under a new mechanism. Any decision on the future management option will need to take account of the financial benefit the clubs currently derive from council and consider how any future agreement for their management of the site might be sustained.
- 3.10 Officers are proposing outputs of the pilot for these sites will be:

3.11

- Evaluation of current community management arrangements and development of a community benefits realisation plan;
- Review of community management options and a recommended mechanism for the future management of the sites
- A business case exploring the financial sustainability of the current agreement holders against the proposed management model

The Former Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre and TAGIT Boxing Club at Tullycarnet Park

The Council, as landowner, took possession of the former Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre in 2017 on the dissolution of the company which had built it. The building had been funded by Urban II through the former North Belfast Partnership. It is located on the boundary of

Ballysillan park. An expression of interest exercise for a tenant was unsuccessful and the building has been vacant for some time and the council recently carried out required work to the mechanical and electrical systems. A community organisation, *Rcity*, with a proven track record of delivering cross community outcomes in North Belfast has now expressed an interest in using the building as a hub from which to deliver youth and community programming.

- 3.12 Ballysillan Park is the site of an Urban Villages funded environmental improvement project.

 UV are supportive of the installation of Rcity as anchor tenants at the facility and have awarded funding specific to the upgrade of the external spaces at the former youth centre as part of the overall project.
- 3.13 Tullycarnet Action Group Initiative Trust, (TAGIT) Boxing Club, were awarded BIF funding in 2018 for the construction of a new boxing club facility on an area of open land in Tullycarnet Park. The project aims to significantly increase the delivery of sport focused outcomes in the park and programme community activity from the building. The building has recently been completed and the club, under a condition of the funding agreement have been granted a Lease for the land.
- 3.14 Including both these facilities in the pilot presents the opportunity to explore how the DTNI framework can be used to evaluate those proposals whereby a community group or third sector organisation intends using a council facility offering community focused programme development. Whilst the BIF funding and due diligence includes assessment of project outcomes against Belfast Agenda objectives and has therefore established a baseline for the TAGIT facility no similar process has been undergone by RCity.

Officers are proposing outputs of the pilot for these sites will include:

- A community benefit plan aligned to the core specialism of the organisation
- A benefits realisation and monitoring plan
- Review of current community management arrangements and recommendations for the future management options.

Financial & Resource Implications

3.15 A budget for this work will come from existing resources within City & Neighbourhood Services and Physical Programmes.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
The final Community Asset Management policy will be screen in line with Council policy.
Appendices – Documents Attached
None.

Agenda Item 5a



Subject:

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date:		9 November 2021				
Repo	rting Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood	Services			
	Contact Officer: Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager					
Restr	Restricted Reports					
Is this	Is this report restricted?					
	If Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?				
	After Committe	ee Decision				
	After Council I	Decision				
	Some time in t	he future				
	Never					
Call-ii	n					
Is the	decision eligible for	· Call-in?	Yes X No			
1.0		or Summary of main Issues				
1.1		report is to update members on the outco	•			
		en completed by Copius Advisory Services				
	provided annually by	Belfast City Council, Belfast Health and	Social Care Trust, Northern Ireland			
		and the Public Health Agency to Belfast				
	agreed that this rev	view would be undertaken separate to	the broader Partnership Funding			
	Evaluation Review g	iven the 4-way partnership funding and r	monitoring arrangements.			
2.0	Recommendations		and the manner and an electronic field			
2.1		ns of the review outlined in section 3, alo				
		s for Belfast to 2026, it is recommended the				
		ciple to fund Belfast Healthy Cities at the s				
		4), subject to the completion of the 2022/	·			
	Agree for council officers and partner organisation representatives to undertake a series					
	of facilitated discussions between Nov 21-Mar 2022 namely with BHDU staff, BHC staff					
		discussions between Nov 21-Mar 2022 r longside key health and community plan	•			

Belfast Healthy Cities Value for Money Review

- health priorities for Belfast to be progressed as part of the Belfast Agenda Refresh, Belfast's Phase VII plan and the emerging ICP structure and planning process for Belfast;
- Note that this process will include agreeing the governance structure and resources anticipated/required to progress the priority actions and will therefore take account of, and incorporate, the review's recommendations in relation to BHC in terms of being one of the key resources/delivery agents;
- Note a further report to be brought to Committee, as well as via the Belfast Community Planning Partnership structures, for consideration and approval.

Main report

3.0

3.1 **Background**

Belfast's membership to the WHO European Healthy Cities Network is facilitated by Belfast Healthy Cities (BHC), an independent partnership organisation, recognised as having charitable status by The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. Belfast Healthy Cities is governed by a Board of Directors, elected annually and representing the public, university, voluntary and community sectors.

Members approved the completion of an Expression of Interest for Belfast to re-designate as a WHO Healthy City and participate in Phase VII of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 17th August 2018. Members then approved the application for submission in September 2020. On 21st May 2021 Belfast Healthy Cities confirmed that the City of Belfast had been successful in its application, has been designated in Phase VII, and thereby extended to April 2026.

Council are one of four core funders to Belfast Healthy Cities, along with the Public Health Agency (PHA), Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) and Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). Annual funding amounts to over 300k of which BCC contributes £89,586.

Officers engaged with the other funding organisations to outline the decision of Council and in the spirit of 'collaborative gain' as set within the Belfast Agenda, it was then agreed to widen the scope of the review of Council's partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities, to also include the agreements of the other core funders.

A collective specification was agreed and, following a quotation exercise led by BCC, and Copius Advisory Services/Consulting was appointed to undertake a 'value for money' review of the partnership agreements with Belfast Healthy Cities, taking account of the direct and indirect benefits brought to the city.

Due to Covid the value for money review exercise was significantly delayed and as a result there have been several submissions to committee in 20/21 and 21/22 to extend the current funding arrangements with BHC (each partner organisation has also extended via their approval processes) – the most recent request was approved at the P&C committee's June 21 meeting and ensures funding is in place until end of March 2022. BHC has continued to provide services throughout the review period albeit the provider did raise concerns that ongoing uncertainty around funding and future intentions did have a negative impact on staffing levels/retention at times.

3.2 Partnership Funding Review Terms of Reference

As per the agreed TORS, Copius were tasked with undertaking a value for money review based on the Challenge, Compare and Consult components of the 4 C's of Best Value.

- 1. Challenge to challenge the need for continuing the contracted services;
- 2. Compare to compare the levels of contracted services being provided against the best available, from public, private, voluntary and community sectors;
- 3. Consult to consult with local partners, in order to give them a voice in determining the quality and type of services required.

The contractor consulted with a wide range of stakeholders including each of the funding partners, the Board of BHC, members of external partnerships where BHC are represented, providers BHC had worked in partnership with or provided services to, elected members and providers offering similar services across other cities in the UK and Ireland.

The contractor reviewed existing funding agreements and monitoring arrangements including progress monitoring returns submitted during the review period.

3.3 Summary findings following Challenge, Compare and Consult analysis

Challenge – 'In summary therefore BHC is found to comfortably clear the 'challenge' tests, demonstrating that it operates in an area of growing importance, extends rather than duplicates and informs rather than copies, and does not fail any mandatory requirements. Its future alignment with those strategic drivers [Programme for Government, Belfast Agenda, Making Life Better, etc.] is considered later within considerations as to the way forward.'

Compare – 'The review considers regional, national and international best practice around evaluation and assesses the performance in Belfast, concluding that innovation and learning from the wider network is clearly demonstrated, that the quality of planning, operation and communication is very high and staff are exceptionally highly regarded. Particular strengths were noted in working at the community level and in developing effective partnerships.'

'A number of commentators, familiar with the working of the wider HC network, have identified Belfast as a leader amongst its peers and one that acts as a role model to others. There is no directly comparable alternative, the HC network being global and backed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), an entity brought into being by the United Nations and the prime international body concerned with developing health across the world, working with a range of stakeholders from governments to NGOs.'

Consult – 'From a governance perspective there was a sense that whilst flexible and agile the service level agreements which provide a framework for performance and delivery between the funders and BHC could be strengthened with the introduction of a dedicated consistent jointly managed process to agree annual activity and resulting reporting.'

'At times, with multiple 'touch points' at various organisational levels between BHC and the funders created challenges to ensure consistent messaging and communication. Given the size and sometimes complex internal operations of the organisations involved this would require some consideration to resolve.'

3.4 Summary

'Overall then the review strongly endorses the role that Belfast Healthy Cities can play in fostering a community wide and holistic approach to health promotion in Belfast. There is strong evidence of its ability to deliver practical impacts for Belfast residents across many priority issues, including for example, Health Literacy, Health Equity, Healthy Urban Environments, Older People / Healthy Ageing, etc.

The formative aspect of this review points at areas where development is likely to further increase effectiveness:

 Greater clarity and accountability embedded into the process by which funders and BHC agree annual delivery targets and activity.

- The continued ability of BHC to introduce best practice health delivery from elsewhere and implement effectively within the Belfast context in conjunction with the funding organisations – underpinned by good governance.
- Clarity and agreement regarding the role and involvement of BHC within the Community
 Planning structure / any other health improvement / public health arena / structure
- Wider consultation and engagement of stakeholders, including in particular, political representatives.
- Greater geographical spread across the Belfast area.

These insights should be shared beyond the funder group, facilitating a dialogue with all relevant parties to enhance future operation within a Belfast context and contributing to the global literature on best practice in health promotion.'

Partnership Funding Review Conclusions

3.5

Ultimately the review concluded that the funding provided to BHC by each of the partner organisations represented good value for money based on return for investment. Chapter 5 outlines the Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations and is included in its entirety at Appendix 1 for Members information. Within this section several work areas have been identified for the funding bodies to consider and progress, namely:

- 1. Ensuring BHC investment is strategically aligned to policy drivers including the Programme for Government, Making Life Better and the Belfast Agenda.
- 2. Moving performance analysis to an outcomes focused / based approach (away from output measures).
- 3. Establishing a clearly defined role for Belfast Healthy Cities with consistency of service across Belfast.
- 4. The removal of duplication in planning and reporting between Belfast Healthy Cities and the various funders involved in this process.

The funders, particularly BCC, BHSCT and PHA (who also provide joint funding to the Belfast Health Development Unit (BHDU) based within Council) have been having ongoing discussions over the past two years in relation to how the population health/health inequalities agenda could be better coordinated and resourced in light of the Belfast Agenda Refresh and taking account of the emerging Integrated Care Planning model. Preliminary discussions have also taken place with staff within the BHDU, with the Board and CEO of BHC and with community planning leads.

Leads within each of the funding bodies are proposing to have a number of facilitated sessions between now and the end of March 2022 to inform how we identify and agree our health-focussed priorities, to agree the structure (linked to the Community Planning Partnership at a city level and to the local structures already in existence or planned), the resources (staffing & financial) that we need to have in place to take these actions forward over the next 5-year period.

Better alignment of existing resources and streamlining of oversight and accountability processes to include addressing the governance concerns and duplication issues identified within this review will form a key part of this exercise. It is hoped that we will have a new proposed operating model for approval which will then be initiated as early as possible in 2022/23.

Financial & Resource Implications

3.6 The total financial allocation from Belfast City Council to Belfast Healthy City is £81,294 which has been included in the planned budget for 2022/23, however remains subject to agreement through the 2022/23 estimates process.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None identified at this stage but kept under continuous review. It should be noted that much of the work undertaken by BHC is to address, or promote awareness of, health inequalities and best practice whole population of targeted approaches to mitigate or prevent these.

4.0 Appendices – Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions & Recommendations

Appendix 1

Funding Arrangements with Belfast Healthy Cities for Phase VI (2014-18) of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network: A Value for Money Review conducted by Copius Consulting

Extract - Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Key Findings

The consideration of evaluation practice (section 1) highlights the challenge in carrying out this review. There is no counterfactual or comparator that would allow for an easy benchmarking. There is also not the budget for a full-scale evaluation.

The general picture is unarguably positive with high, often very high, praise being directed against BHC and its staff and operations. Many areas are singled out as exceptional, including working with communities, hosting events, networking and partnering.

This section is presented in three clear sub sections – where we are now (summary); where we want to be (conclusions); and how we will get there (recommendations).

These recommendations are informed by all relevant evaluation findings, analysis and information gleaned from the process.

5.2 Where We Are Now?

Analysis of the evaluation findings indicates a number of key considerations reflecting the current position, including:

Positives	Considerations
 BHC support represents a value for money investment for each of the supporters. BHC is viewed as an exemplar within the Healthy Cities Network. 	The core governance concern – that a funder may also be represented on the Board – has not been properly addressed, and this needs to be clarified for the future.
 BHC has very strong community connections in some areas of Belfast. Good level of flexibility to funding 	 There is a wide recognition of an inherent tension between level of control placed on BHC by funders versus the level of flexibility permitted to respond to changing needs and varying circumstances
 arrangement and outcomes. BHC has been seen as very effective in introducing health promotion tools from elsewhere and / or in stimulating their take-up. 	 and the need to strike a balance between each to maximise delivery. Similarly, there appears to be potential duplication within the funding / funder process, planning
 There is strong evidence of mature relationships across a range of sectors and personal connections. 	and reporting for BHC.

- Extensive range of services provided by BHC for a relatively low resource investment.
- BHC achievements are recognised nationally and internationally, and this confers benefits to Belfast.
- There is a value in the European and global connection and indeed branding, helping to attract interest and support.
- There are some opportunities that are not yet being pursued, perhaps working with the development sector or more generally involving other groups, notably the private sector.
- The introduction of community planning has transformed the context for BHC and accordingly change is necessary (in terms of positioning within this structure as well as clarity of role and function), and that therefore this is a good time to be discussing change.
- There needs to be agreement around core principles, even definitions to permit co-working which is seen as essential to maximise impact.
- There is a need to place greater emphasis on using outcomes as a source of performance measurement, whilst recognising this can be difficult to implement.
- There is also an issue around geographical reach, particularly as the funders have differing territories (citywide versus area focus).

5.3 Where we want to be?

Emerging from the summary position are a number of logical work areas which represent ambitions for the further development of the relationship and funding arrangements between the current funders, Belfast Healthy Cities and importantly its delivery. This includes:

- 1. Ensuring BHC investment is strategically aligned to policy drivers including the Programme for Government, MLB and the Belfast Agenda
- 2. Moving performance analysis to an outcomes focused / based approach (away from output measures).
- 3. Establishing a clearly defined role for Belfast Healthy Cities with consistency of service across Belfast.
- 4. The removal of duplication in planning and reporting between Belfast Healthy Cities and the various funders involve in this process.

5.4 How we will get there?

Central to the achievement of these ambitions is the development and successful implementation of a series of actions and timelines which act, for the purposes of this report, as recommendations for consideration by the funding partners:

Thematic Area	Action	Timeframe
Process / planning	Funders to collectively agree an integrated annual focus for BHC within the context of Phase VII priorities encapsulating all areas of the City.	By January 2022
	Review governance arrangements to ensure there is an appropriate role for funders to be represented on the BHC Board.	By March 2022
	Identify areas for joint working and set out a framework that defines the work delivered as part of the anticipated future funding arrangements, which also importantly outlines each partner's roles and responsibilities.	By January 2022 and reviewed annually
Service	A collective specification of services to be agreed and delivered ensuring geographical spread across Belfast.	By January 2022 and reviewed annually
	Agree oversight service mechanism for funders which includes individual officers and potential funders group.	By March 2022 and reviewed annually
Monitoring	Amend the funding monitoring template to allow for outcomes based measurements.	By January 2022 and reviewed annually
	Agree data collection and reporting process to monitor and report on all funding related delivery.	By January 2022 and reviewed annually

5.5 Dissemination: Audience and Core Message

This review is intended solely to meet the purposes for which it was commissioned. The unique situation in Belfast, notably the introduction of community planning, makes it unlikely that it will provide a guide to others.

Accordingly, this report should be considered in full be by the current funders prior to being more widely the dissemination disseminated to others (i.e. summarised version to the BHC Board).



Agenda Item 5b



PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Subje	ct:	Update on Review of Partnerships Evaluation	on		
Date:		9 November 2021			
Repoi	rting Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Ser	vices		
Conta	ect Officer:	Alison Allen, Neighbourhood Services Mana	ager		
Restri	cted Reports				
Is this	report restricted?		Yes No X		
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?					
	After Commit	tee Decision			
	After Council	Decision			
	Some time in	the future			
	Never				
Call-ir	1				
Odii ii	<u> </u>				
Is the	decision eligible fo	or Call-in?	Yes X No		
1.0	•	t or Summary of main Issues report is to update members on the outcome	e of the review of partnership		
1		agreed by Committee and to conside	·		
		n scope of the review.	ratare randing for those		
2.0	Recommendation	·			
2.1		ons of the review of partnership funding arran	ngements, it is recommended		
	that Committee agi	ree to:			
	- Agree in pri	nciple to fund each of the partners at the san	ne level for the 22/23		
		ar (£200,109 in total), subject to the completi			
	estimates p	rocess			
	•	targets and an increased focus on outcome	s in all contracts		
	 Link deliver 	ables to Belfast Agenda and other funding pa	artners in all contracts		
		ables to Belfast Agenda and other funding paromotion of partnership efforts to increase pul			

3.0	Main report			
	Background			
3.1	Members are aware that City and Neighbourhood Services works in par	tnership with a		
	number of organisations that share common strategic objectives and that some of this wo			
	has developed through the provision of annual financial support to delive			
	outcomes.	g		
3.2	Many of the partnership funding arrangements are historical and have b	een rolled on fror		
	year to year and not as part of a mainstreamed open call or other funding	g process.		
3.3	As such, Members agreed in June 2019, that these funding arrangements would be			
	reviewed with a focus on alignment with the Council's Corporate Plan, the Belfast Agenda			
	and overall value for money.			
3.4	Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 completion of this review was delayed s	significantly and i		
	February 2021, Members agreed to carry forward funding at the same le			
	to the organisations within scope of the review. This included:	·		
3.5	Project	Funding		
	Belfast Hills Partnership	£36,900		
	Lagan Valley Regional Park	£67,000		
	Lagan Valley Regional Park Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails)	£67,000 £5,000		
		· ·		
	Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails)	£5,000		
	Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails) Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project)	£5,000 £55,000		
	Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails) Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project) Mary Peters Trust	£5,000 £55,000 £5,000		
	Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails) Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project) Mary Peters Trust Bryson Energy (previously Play Resource)* TOTAL	£5,000 £55,000 £5,000 £31,209 £200,109		
	Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails) Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project) Mary Peters Trust Bryson Energy (previously Play Resource)* TOTAL * Note – Play Resource Warehouse is no longer in existence and instead	£5,000 £55,000 £5,000 £31,209 £200,109		
	Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails) Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project) Mary Peters Trust Bryson Energy (previously Play Resource)* TOTAL	£5,000 £55,000 £5,000 £31,209 £200,109		
3.6	Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails) Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project) Mary Peters Trust Bryson Energy (previously Play Resource)* TOTAL * Note – Play Resource Warehouse is no longer in existence and instead Bryson Energy.	£5,000 £55,000 £5,000 £31,209 £200,109		
3.6	Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails) Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project) Mary Peters Trust Bryson Energy (previously Play Resource)* TOTAL * Note – Play Resource Warehouse is no longer in existence and instead	£5,000 £55,000 £5,000 £31,209 £200,109		
3.6	Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails) Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project) Mary Peters Trust Bryson Energy (previously Play Resource)* TOTAL * Note – Play Resource Warehouse is no longer in existence and instead Bryson Energy.	£5,000 £55,000 £5,000 £31,209 £200,109 d have merged w		
3.6	Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails) Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project) Mary Peters Trust Bryson Energy (previously Play Resource)* TOTAL * Note – Play Resource Warehouse is no longer in existence and instead Bryson Energy. Partnership Funding Review Terms of Reference	£5,000 £55,000 £5,000 £31,209 £200,109 d have merged w		
3.6	Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails) Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project) Mary Peters Trust Bryson Energy (previously Play Resource)* TOTAL * Note – Play Resource Warehouse is no longer in existence and instead Bryson Energy. Partnership Funding Review Terms of Reference An extensive review has been undertaken of all of the above partnership arrangements. The review specifically examined the following in detail:	£5,000 £55,000 £5,000 £31,209 £200,109 d have merged w		
3.6	Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails) Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project) Mary Peters Trust Bryson Energy (previously Play Resource)* TOTAL * Note – Play Resource Warehouse is no longer in existence and instead Bryson Energy. Partnership Funding Review Terms of Reference An extensive review has been undertaken of all of the above partnership	£5,000 £55,000 £5,000 £31,209 £200,109 d have merged w		

- The extent to which the funding arrangement successfully delivers on its stated intended outcomes
- The strategic fit with the Belfast Agenda and Council strategic frameworks and plans

- Any added value the Council/city is benefitting from by being part of a wider partnership funding arrangement
- Review the value for money of the funding arrangement, specifically examining:
 - o The underpinning rationale or case including value for money assessment
 - Whether partnership funding is the most appropriate, efficient and effective delivery mechanisms
- Assess the ongoing and future relevant/appropriateness of the partnership funding arrangement, considering any changes that may be required to enhance the relevance/appropriateness
- 3.7 All organisations within scope were involved in providing information for the review.

Partnership Funding Review Conclusions

3.8 Summary tables of the outcome of the review against the above specification are provided at appendix 1 for Members information.

The main recommendations of the review are as follows:

3.9 1. Continue funding

3.11

Given the evidence of strategic alignment, added value and value for money, it is recommended that all of the partnership funding arrangements are agreed in principle at the same level for 22/23, subject to the completion of the 22/23 revenue estimates process. It is further recommended that any future review of these arrangements should be tied to the Council's overall review of community provision (which will include funding arrangements).

3.10 2. Set SMART targets and an increased focus on outcomes

Funded partnerships should work with Council to design up-to-date targets/deliverables and mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting purposes. This would include SMART targets, increased focus on outcomes and a standardisation of the contractual arrangements. All of this will improve future measurement of impact.

3. Link deliverables to Belfast Agenda and other funding partners

It is important, that future deliverables/ targets aligned to the funding arrangements are explicit in their link to the Belfast Agenda. This will ensure that collective successes of the various funded partnerships build on the Community Plan aspirations to the benefit of all Belfast City Council residents. It is also advised, for the higher value contracts, that the Council liaise with other funders of the partnerships to collectively

agree deliverables that are aligned to common priorities, thereby generating better results and outcomes from the funding. 3.12 4. Enhance promotion of partnership efforts The review found extensive evidence that a lot of benefits are derived from the funded partnerships, and it is important that the Council allocate resources to better promote their relationship with the various partnerships – so that residents understand the collective efforts of the Council, co-funders, partnerships, and beneficiaries in achievi the Council's priorities under the Belfast Agenda and other key policy frameworks. 5. Longer-term funding cycle to facilitate planning 3.13 The review recognised the annual nature of budgeting within local government, however, made reference to the improved forward planning and service delivery if a longer term funding cycle could be provided to these partner funding arrangements. Whilst this is recognised as desirable, given the wider financial support provided to the community/voluntary sector on an annual basis and the Council's wider review community provision (including financial support), it is **NOT** recommended that funding is allocated beyond the 22/23 financial year at present to these partners. Financial implications 3.14 The total financial allocation for these arrangements is £200,109 and this will be considered as part the 22/23 departmental revenue estimates. Equality or Good Relations Implications 3.15 None identified at this stage but kept under continuous review <u>Abbreviations</u> LVRP (Lagan Valley Regional Park) KNIB – LHLH (Keep NI Beautiful Live Here Love Here) BHP (Belfast Hills Partnership) PRW (Play Resource Warehouse)

KNIB – Eco Schools (Keep NI Beautiful Eco Schools)

ORNI (Outdoor Recreation NI)

MPT (Mary Peters Trust)

4.0 Appendices – Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Review of Partner Funding Conclusions Summary Tables

Appendix 1 – Review of Partner Funding Arrangements Conclusions Summary Tables

1. Alignment to the Belfast Agenda

Partnership	Belfast Agenda Priorities					
Relevant issues within priorities	Growing Economy Increase tourism spend. Attract investment into Belfast.	Living Here Improve neighbourhoods. Improve the city living experience. Enable active, healthy, and empowered citizens, Provide fit for purpose city services. Support younger and older people.	 Develop the city's infrastructure and improve connectivity locally, nationally, and internationally. Drive the physical and cultural regeneration of the city centre. Develop the city's infrastructure and improve connectivity locally, nationally, and internationally. Drive the physical and cultural regeneration of the city centre. Deliver key strategic physical 			
LVRP	✓	→	>	>		
KNIB - LHLH		→	>			
BHP		~	>	>		
PRW	~	~	>	>		
KNIB - Eco Schools		•	~	~		
ORNI		~	>			
MPT		✓				

2. Alignment to other Council strategies/policy frameworks

Name of Strategy/Plan		KNIB - LHLH	ВНР	PRW	Eco- Schools	ORNI	MPT
Belfast: Our Recovery (2020)	>	>	>	>	>	>	~
Belfast Resilience Strategy (2020)	>	>	>	>	~	\	>
Draft Local Development Plan (2020)	>	>	>	>	~	\	>
Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (2020)	>	>	>		~	\	
Draft Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (2019-2023)	>	>	>		~	~	
Waste Agenda Framework (2017-2025)		>		>	~		
Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy (2015-2020)	~		~				
Belfast Physical Activity and Sports						*	~
Development Strategy (2009-2012)							
Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2007)	>	>	>				•

3. Added value to the Council/city

Added Value	LVRP	KNIB - LHLH	ВНР	PRC	Eco- Schools	ORNI	MPT
Cost savings /Levering Additional Funds	.	~	<	~	•	~	>
Volunteer in-kind Resources/Support	>	~	~		~	~	
Access to Expert Advice/Knowledge	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
Marketing Platform/ Positive Publicity/ Enhanced Branding Recognition	*	~	>	~	~	~	~
Strategic Leadership/Influence /Advisor	<	~	\				
Enhanced ability to deliver to influence change	<	~	\	Y	~		
Partnership Collaborative Advantage/Economies of Scale		~	*		~	~	
Health/Wellbeing benefits for Children/Young People		~	~	~	~	~	~
Supporting Central Government plans/strategies	>	~	~		~	~	~
Responsiveness to anti-social behaviour		~	~	~			
Responsiveness to public hazards			~			~	
Evidence based approach to supporting environmental quality standards/responding to local and national consultations	,	~	•				

Environmental Education Support leading to Positive Behaviour Change	>	~	>	
Improved Council-School Relationships			>	
Financial Incentives for Belfast Schools			>	
Council involvement in an International/Global Environmental Eco-Programme			>	

4. Value for Money

Partnership	Council Funding	Council's proportion of total partnership budget	Deliverables Achieved – Rag Rating
LVRP	£67,000	50%	6 deliverables – 100% fully achieved.
KNIB – LHLH Programme	£41,000	7.3%	 3 deliverables - 67% fully achieved (2 out of 3). 33% partially achieved – due to Covid-19 restrictions (1 out of 8)
ВНР	£36,900	12.5%	 8 deliverables – 87.5% fully achieved (7 out of 8). 12.5% partially achieved – due to Covid-19 restrictions (1 out of 8)
PRW	£31,209	8%	 8 deliverables – 62.5% fully achieved (5 out of 8). 12.5% partially achieved – due to Covid-19 restrictions (1 out of 8) 25% deliverables not achieved – due to COVID-19 restrictions and organisational change (2 out of 8)
KNIB – Eco- Schools Programme	£14,000	9%	 15 indicators - 53% fully achieved (8 out of 15). 40% partially achieved (6 out of 15) – due to Covid-19 restrictions 0.7% not achieved due to Covid-19 restrictions (1 out of 15)
ORNI	£5,000	1.75%	 5 deliverables - 60% fully achieved (3 out of 5). 40% partially achieved - due to Covid-19 restrictions (2 out of 5)
MPT	£5,000	1.9%	1 deliverable – 100% fully achieved.
Total	£200,109		46 deliverables 32 (70%) achieved 11 (24%) partially achieved 3 (6%) not achieved

Note – In all circumstances during the value for money assessment, the review concluded that the main barrier to full achievement for the majority was the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was outside the control of the respective partnerships. The review also concluded that it was highly likely in 'normal' circumstances further deliverables would have been fully achieved.

Agenda Item 6a





Subjec	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) BCC & Cavehill Mountainbikers Club							
Date:		9 th November 2021						
Report	orting Officer: Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services							
Contac	Contact Officer: Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager, North							
Restric	Restricted Reports							
	•		Vaa Na V					
is this i	report restricted?		Yes No X					
lf	Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?						
	After Committee							
	After Council D Some time in the							
	Never							
Call-in								
Is the d	lecision eligible for	Call-in?	Yes X No					
1.0		t or Summary of Main Issues g Group had previously instructed officers in	2010 to proceed with a					
1.1		n relation to taking forward a mountainbiking pil	•					
		Cavehill Mountainbikers Club. In December	•					
	services/support of Outdoor Recreation NI via a quotation exercise to assist them in							
	developing and implementing the pilot project. A Project Oversight Group has been							
	established and a number of key actions have been achieved over the past ten-month period							
	- including the drafting of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) document included at							
	Appendix 1 – which	ch if agreed by Committee/Council will enable	e the pilot to proceed as					
	planned.							
2.0	Recommendations							
2.1	The Committee is a	sked to:						

- 1. Note the contents of the proposed MOU document which has been drawn up following a series of focussed discussions and engagement with lead officers in CNS and Legal Services, with specialist advice provided by Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland, and input from Cavehill Mountainbikers Club re. same. The document has also been shared with the Cavehill MTB Project Oversight Group which also includes membership from Belfast Hills Partnership and Cavehill Conservation Group.
- 2. Agree the terms of the MOU.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 At a meeting of the North Area Working Group in March 2019, members agreed that Council officers should take forward a number of actions in relation to mountain biking on Cavehill.
- 3.2 At the reconvened North Area Working Group meeting held on 29 January 2020 members were updated in terms of progress to date against each of these actions outlined in the table below.

Agreed action Statu	us Update
Identification and mapping of mountain bike club proposed trails	Lead officers externally commissioned commercial trail designers and mountain bikers identified and mapped trails currently in use at Cave Hill.
	The Council's Outdoor Recreation 8 Education Officer completed a desktop survey and mapping exercise. This was compiled into a report reflecting the extens of mountain biking and cycling at Cave Hill. The trails identified through the report were confirmed by the mountain bikers.
	Field visit held with Outdoor Recreation N (ORNI) 10 th January 2020. ORNI have provided advice to Council in relation to potential next steps.
Externally facilitated Computations with residents group	A meeting between senior CNS officers and those residents opposed to mountain biking on Cave Hill was facilitated by an external consultant.
	oleted for the Allen and Mellon Environmenta Assessment completed for the Middle Trail — no significant environmental risks identified.
Engagement with key Ongo stakeholders	ing Engagement to date has included: Cavehill Conservation Group Cavehill Mountainbikers Club Cycling Ireland/Ulster Local residents

	Recommendation accepted at NAWG meeting on 29 Jan 20	NB Proposal is to proceed with adopting 'The Middle Trail' as an initial pilot – with work to be overseen by an external agency.
Public consultation – if	Can be undertaken as part of project initiation and evalu	
required	processes if approv	val given.

- 3.3 In September 2020, Finance Oversight gave approval for non-recurrent funding of £30k to be allocated to cover the costs of securing the services of an independent consultant to assist council officers in developing and implementing The Middle Trail pilot and to cover the signage and trail adaptations/modifications costs on-site re. same.
- 3.4 Following a quotation exercise, Outdoor Recreation NI were appointed in December 2020 and a Project Oversight Group (POG) comprising of relevant council officers, ORNI, Cavehill Mountain Bikers Group as well as representation from Belfast Hills Partnership and Cavehill Conservation Group was established and has been meeting regularly throughout 2021.
- 3.5 Between January 2021 to date a number of pieces of work have been taken forward:
 - Series of site visits to The Middle Trail and wider site with POG members
 - Review and development of trail signage and a trail management plan;
 - Engagement (ORNI-led) with key stakeholders;
 - Development of MOU in consultation with Legal (version for consideration/approval included in Appendix 1)
- 3.6 ORNI also provided an update, by way of presentation, to the May 2021 meeting of the North Area Working Group.
- ORNI liaised with the Project Oversight Group to identify organisations/individuals to participate in a series of one to one consultations during March/April 2021 as part of the stakeholder engagement process in order to provide further information on the project and gain initial feedback on project proposals. Stakeholders identified included Cycling Ulster, Grass Roots Mountain Biking, IMBA Europe, NI Orienteering / Lagan Valley Orienteers, North Belfast Harriers, UFRC (walking club), Farmer with Grazing Rights on Cavehill and a number of local residents/regular park users.
- ORNI is currently working on an Evaluation Framework which will then be used by officers and the Project Oversight Group to monitor and evaluate the pilot.

3.9	Formal adoption of the MOU by committee/council will enable officers/the POG to finalise
	the other required elements such as the trail management plan, the new signage
	requirements, agreed amendments to the Middle Trail and to initiate the evaluation
	framework to enable the pilot to formally commence.
3.10	As per the MOU, the Project Oversight Group will continue to meet throughout the pilot
	period and the intention would be to bring a final project evaluation report through to
	committee/council Nov/Dec 2022.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.10	None
3.10	None <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.10	
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.11	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment None

Appendix 1

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Purpose	This Memorandum of understanding ("this MOU") is an overarching and legally enforceable agreement which sets the context and relationship between Belfast City Council and the Cavehill Mountainbikers Club regarding the pilot use of a mountain bike trail in Cave Hill Country Park.
Version	10
Date	12/10/2021
Parties	Belfast City Council ("BCC") Belfast City Council is the local government authority with responsibility for the city of Belfast, the capital and largest city of Northern Ireland. The Council serves an estimated population of 333,871 (2011), the largest of any district council in Northern Ireland, while also being the fourth smallest by area. A number of informal, ridden in, mountain bike trails exist across Cave Hill Country Park. As the landowner Belfast City Council is seeking to manage its responsibility under the Occupier's Liability (NI) Act 1957 whereby it has a duty of care to all users of the Country Park. Elected members representing North Belfast have agreed to test a pilot approach to the management of natural trails based on a model previously implemented by Forestry and Land Scotland. The pilot will focus on the 'The Middle' trail (see Appendix 1) and will identify and test an approach for the mechanism for the management, inspection and maintenance of such mountain bike trails.
	Bernard McClure, Simon Johnston, John O'Neill and Steven Rainey, whose addresses are known to BCC, on behalf of Cavehill Mountainbikers Club ("CMC"). BCC will not disclose these addresses to any third party, unless compelled by law to do so. CMC is dedicated to the advocacy, stewardship and development of a Cave Hill Mountain bike trail network on behalf of its users. CMC work to facilitate an independent voice for mountain bike trail users, promote a culture of responsible stewardship of a trail network, and to generate funds to put back into the trails and community. The charity aims to manage trail maintenance, improvement and development in partnership with local landowners and managers.

Background

- 1. Mountain biking has seen significant growth in participation in Great Britain and Ireland. This has been reflected in both the development of purpose-built mountain bike trail centres and an increase in the use of unauthorised mountain bike trails developed without permission from the landowner. The latter are primarily natural trails or desire lines.
- 2. Unauthorised or natural mountain bike trails are viewed by mountain bikers as an important contribution to local economies, providing physical and mental health benefits, offering sporting challenges, providing a connection with nature, and giving people opportunities to test their skills.
- 3. While the vast majority of mountain bikers who access land do so responsibly, there are more and more examples of situations in which land managers are experiencing problems relating to unauthorised trail building. In summary, these include potential risks to other users, conflict with other users, disruption to land management practices, negative impacts on the natural and or built environment.
- 4. Many public land managers across Great Britain and Ireland (e.g. Coillte, Natural Resources Wales and Forestry and Land Scotland) have proactively engaged with the mountain bike community to develop new ways of working through appropriate agreements that reflect their aspirations and capacity. In Scotland, the National Access Forum has engaged with landowners and the mountain bike community to develop solutions and guidance. "Unauthorised Mountain Bike Trails A guide for managers and riders" was published in 2018. Both parties believe that this publication provides an underlying approach suitable for adoption in the context of trail management in Cave Hill Country Park.

Developing shared understanding and solutions

- 5. CMC is one of the first formed in Northern Ireland specifically to engage with BCC regarding a formal approach to developing mountain bike trails in Cave Hill Country Park. The initial focus is 'The Middle' trail pilot. This will benefit both the Council and users while establishing and embedding a culture of responsibility and sustainability.
- 6. BCC has been working to ensure they operate within legislation such as Occupier's Liability (NI) Act 1957 and to reflect best practice for the management of outdoor recreation whilst ensuring that the Cave Hill Country Park site remains both safe and appealing to a wide range of users.
- 7. Both BCC and CMC are committed to follow the guiding principles of the Visitor Safety Group and adopting good practice in relation to the development of natural mountain bike trails
- 8. The aim is to develop mutual respect for the rights and responsibilities of mountain bikers, all other park users and the landowner (BCC). Achieved through joint working such as that proposed in this MOU.

Duration and Review of the Agreement

- 9. The agreement will commence on xx/xx/21 and will be for 2 years.
- 10. Any extension of this MOU is strictly subject to successful conclusion (in the opinion of the Council) of the pilot focusing on 'The Middle' trail, satisfactory review and evaluation and internal Council committee approval. Notwithstanding any other provision of this MOU, the parties agree that this MOU constitutes a legal, valid and binding agreement of each party, and is enforceable against each party in accordance with its terms.

Individual aims of the parties

Aims of CMC

- 11. CMC's mission is to manage, sustain and improve a natural trail network in Cave Hill Country Park through a programme of trail adoption and sustainable stewardship in partnership with BCC.
- 12. To ensure successful conclusion of the 'The Middle' Trail' pilot. To pilot a new approach to community of interest and place led trail management and establish best working practices and operating methods for the future.
- 13. Promote sustainable stewardship, safety, and best practice for trail maintenance work.
- 14. Be community interest led and ensure riders' voices are heard by decision makers.
- 15. Generate independent funds to invest in trail maintenance and trail development, with prior agreement with landowners and managers.

Aims of BCC

- 16. To promote Cave Hill Country Park as a first-class natural visitor attraction for a wide range of outdoor recreation pursuits within North Belfast (and the City and Region as a whole) ensuring that those who visit are adequately informed about the activities available/permissible on the site and any associated risks/guidance re. same.
- 17. To work in partnership with CMC to manage mountain biking on Cave Hill Country Park focusing on one trail on a pilot basis, taking account of health and safety and legislative requirements to respect the needs of all users, current and potential, who visit the Country Park.
- 18. To practice regular and ongoing community engagement in line with statutory requirements and responsible management.

Collective aims of parties

- 19. To promote the benefits of Cave Hill Country Park with opportunities for mountain biking forming a component part.
- 20. To undertake the pilot project confined to 'The Middle' trail only and to identify and test a mechanism for the management, inspection and maintenance of 'The Middle' Trail.
- 21. In the event of a successful pilot, engage in a process to identify a number of potential additional natural trails for adoption.
- 22. Respect the need to integrate outdoor recreation as part of the sustainable management of Cave Hill Country Park which provides benefits to wide range of users.
- 23. To take collaborative action to try to prevent the development of additional natural trails within Cave Hill Country Park and deter deliberate sabotage of 'The Middle' Trail. CMC to undertake proactive ongoing engagement and advocacy with the mountain bike community. Where satisfactory evidence is available to BCC demonstrating that any individual has been responsible for causing deliberate damage to 'The Middle Trail', BCC will use reasonable endeavours to use its existing power to pursue the expulsion of any such individual from Cave Hill Country Park for a reasonable (in the opinion of BCC) period. BCC to be responsible for the removal of any new additional trails and where possible will engage with CMC prior to undertaking action.
- 24. Compliance with planning, environmental, health and safety and occupier's liability legislation, ensuring all undertakings by CMC, contractors, third parties and developers take place in a safe environment.

Delivering the aims of the agreement

Both Parties (BBC & CMC)

- 25. During the pilot of 'The Middle' Trail, both parties will engage with a Project Oversight Group (see separate Terms of Reference Appendix 2) which will provide direction and leadership on the Cave Hill Mountain Bike Trail pilot project.
- 26. In addition, for the duration of the agreement, a contract group will meet 4 times per year. Membership shall consist of a delegated lead from each party and co-opted attendees as required. Frequency of meetings can be revised by agreement of all parties. Standard agenda items will include:
 - Health & Safety
 - Known planned operations within Cave Hill Country Park in the next 6 months

- Complaints, accidents and general feedback
- Route review of the pilot 'The Middle' Trail
- Diversion Plans
- Inspections what has been highlighted
- Plans for CMC works for next six months.
- Process for investigating and dealing with trail sabotage on 'The Middle' Trail
- 27. To ensure best practice as set out within the National Access Forum (Scotland) guidance on the management of unauthorised trails, is adopted and implemented.
- 28. Agree route description and produce detailed map (s). This should include routes to access the start of defined trail. This initial focus will be the pilot of 'The Middle.'
- 29. BCC will provide landowner information to meet its responsibilities under occupier's liability.

CMC

- 30. CMC to manage the agreed route with named competent trail managers. Recorded evidence of trail managers' experience to be provided to BCC prior to the signing of this MOU. Evidence is in the form of experience of mountain biking, competition and wide cycling industry as there are no recognised qualifications available.
- 31. At all times CMC must comprise a properly constituted (in the opinion of BCC) and regulated club, with a written constitution, elected office bearers, provision for regular minuted meetings and a minuted annual general meeting, and a designated bank account. CMC at all times must also be affiliated to a regulatory mountain biking body (to be approved of in advance and in writing by BCC) and must produce written evidence of such affiliation to BCC prior to the signing of this MOU and on each anniversary of this MOU. If CMC should fail to comply with this clause 31 in any respect, BCC will be at liberty to terminate this MOU and withdraw any permission given hereunder on giving 7 days' written notice to CMC.
- 32. Prior to the signing of this MOU, CMC will submit to the Council a Trail Management Plan with regard to its proposed activities in Cave Hill Country Park, and this Trail Management Plan must be approved in writing, by the Council, before CMC can begin any of the activities in Cave Hill Country Park which are permitted by this MOU. The Trail Management Plan will include
 - Key Responsibilities of CMC & BCC
 - Risk Assessment for 'The Middle' Trail
 - Risk Assessment for trail maintenance and inspection
 - Inspection procedure
 - Random Fault Reporting Procedure
 - Process for Identification and reporting of hazards
 - Maintenance Procedure
 - Accident Reporting Procedure

- 33. CMC acknowledges that BCC gives no representation or assurance as to the suitability, or otherwise, of the pilot Middle Trail for the purpose for which CMC wishes to use it. Accordingly, before using the pilot Middle Trail pursuant to this MOU, CMC will carry out a full and independent survey and assessment of the pilot Middle Trail in order to determine its suitability, or otherwise. CMC will provide a copy of this independent survey report to BCC prior to any use of the pilot Middle Trail.
- 34. At all times CMC is to provide adequate and satisfactory (in the opinion of the Council) trail management, inspection and maintenance through an agreed schedule (to be agreed in writing prior to the signing of this MOU) of management, inspection and maintenance ("the permitted activities") with regard to the Middle Trail pilot route.
- 35. CMC shall ensure that adequate insurance cover in the form of public liability insurance and employer's liability insurance (with a level of cover in respect of each type of policy of at least £5M in respect of any one claim) is in place with regard to the carrying on by it of the permitted activities, before carrying out any of the permitted activities CMC shall produce satisfactory written evidence of such insurances to BCC prior to the signing of this MOU and on each anniversary of this MOU. In addition, CMC will provide a copy of this MOU to all of its insurers, before carrying out any permitted activities.
- 36. CMC hereby indemnifies BCC in respect of any claims, actions, demands, proceedings, injury, loss or damages arising from its permitted activities in Cave Hill Country Park.
- 37. At all times CMC will ensure that its members and their invitees and licencees will comply with BCC byelaws and, in particular, Byelaw 12(d) of the Bye-Laws for the Regulation of Open Parks, 1st March 1994, which states that
 - "A person shall not ride any bicycle in a manner which is unsafe or likely to give reasonable cause for annoyance or alarm to other persons resorting to the Park."
- 38. CMC to undertake a minimum of 4 formal inspections per year (or more as may be required by the risk assessments referred to at clause 31). The inspection records must be kept by CMC for 6 years and be provided to BCC on a quarterly basis.
- 39. CMC will ensure that at all times appropriate warnings and signage are in place so as to warn other park users that CMC are using 'The Middle' Trail for mountain biking.
- 40. CMC expressly acknowledges and agrees that all of its members using 'The Middle' Trail do so having willingly accepted the risks in doing so, pursuant to S2(5) of the Occupiers' Liability Act (NI) 1957. CMC will ensure that all members sign a declaration (the content of which is to be approved in advance by the Council) explicitly confirming acceptance before they are allowed to use 'The Middle Trail'. The declaration will state that the member willingly accepts the risks in using the Middle Trail, pursuant to S2(5) of the Occupiers' Liability Act (NI) 1957. Any breach of

this clause shall be considered to be a fundamental breach of this MOU, which would permit the Council immediately to terminate this MOU by giving 2 days' written notice to CMC.

41. CMC to develop a communication plan including up to date route information, complaints / issues recording and handling and feedback. This will include proactive engagement with mountain bikers to encourage participation on the pilot Middle Trail and to cease unauthorised trail building in other parts of Cave Hill Country Park. CMC will work with BCC and use its best endeavours to try to involve other mountain bikers, who use other trails in Cave Hill Country Park, and CMC and will encourage them to join CMC and comply with CMC code of conduct.

BCC

- 42. To lead on an evaluation process to assess the outcome of the pilot.
- 43. Create a template for facilitating risk assessment.
- 44. Share audience research/visitor surveys.
- 45. Provide additional resource to implement physical interventions required to address health & safety concerns.
- 46. Provide in-house design and installation of initial signage diversions / closures will be managed via CMC temporary signage.
- 47. Make park users aware of the existence of the pilot Middle Trail and agreement with CMC.
- 48. Make stakeholders aware via existing channels e.g. elected members via North Area Working Group and wider public via relationships with Belfast Hills Partnership and Cavehill Conservation Campaign and via the BCC website and social media channels
- 49. Provide info on upcoming planned operations which may affect the pilot Middle Trail on a quarterly basis.
- 50. Advise of short notice operations which may affect the pilot Middle Trail as soon as reasonably possible.
- 51. Investigate accidents / incidents (including trail sabotage) that are reported to BCC, and where relevant share findings with CMC for risk assessment review.

- 52. BCC has responsibility for agreeing and implementing other projects affecting Cave Hill Country Park and when doing so will act reasonably and according to BCC priorities, operational requirements and use of Cave Hill Country Park by third parties and visitors.
- 53. BCC gives no representation or assurance as to the suitability, or otherwise, of the pilot Middle Trail for the purpose for which CMC wishes to use it.

Supplementary Issues

- 54. The Middle Trail maintenance by CMC is restricted to the use of hand tools and materials from the site as outlined in Trail Management Plan .
- 55. The pilot Middle Trail must not have constructed wooden structures.
- 56. Trail construction by CMC is prohibited.
- 57. The pilot Middle Trail can only be used for CMC organised events each with prior approval from BCC.

Health and Safety

- 58. Health & Safety is paramount and both parties agree to share knowledge and experience of legislation, best practice, and lessons learned from incidents / accidents as far as legal processes permit.
- 59. Health and safety will be a standing item on the agenda for meetings of the contact group.
- 60. The discussion on health and safety should cover new developments, roles and responsibilities, and review any incidents. Examples of topics to cover include:
 - Preparation and review of Risk Assessments
 - Learning from and reviewing any incidents or accidents.
- 61. Accidents and incidents must be reported to BCC by CMC in line with BCC protocols and procedures. Serious accidents should be reported to the BCC OSS Manager (North) as soon as possible after the fact.

Press, Publicity and Communications

62. Media and promotion relating to this MOU pilot will be the responsibility of the BCC OSS Manager (North) and by a designated member of the CMC board.

- 63. The development and handling of communications, press and media arrangements arising from activities implemented under this MOU, will be subject to a communication plan which will be initially developed by both parties and reviewed on an ongoing basis.
- 64. Both parties acknowledge the freedom of the other to comment on issues out with the scope of this MOU but relating to the strategic aims of each party. CMC may express opinions on public policy matters that depart from stated BCC policy. In these instances, CMC will endeavor to inform BCC in advance where this may be the case.

Resolutions

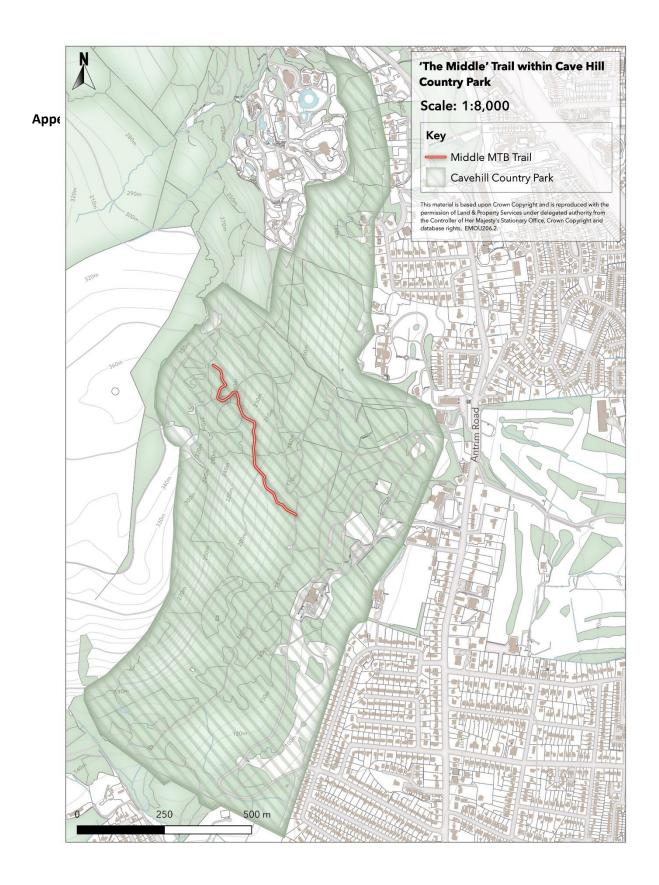
- 65. In the event that the parties are in dispute regarding an issue arising out of this MOU the following procedures will apply.
- 66. Reconsideration in the first instance will be between the BCC Neighbourhood Services Manager (North) and the delegated representative of CMC i.e. CMC Chairperson.
- 67. Industry best practice will be used as the benchmark to aid resolution.
- 68. Every effort will be made to reach a solution. In the event that a solution is not reached, BCC's decision will be final acting reasonably.

Termination

- 69. CMC may terminate this agreement if, in its reasonable opinion, the aims of this MOU are no longer relevant and/or the constitution of CMC is no longer relevant and/or its constitution becomes incompatible with the aims and terms of this MOU.
- 70. BCC may terminate this agreement if in its reasonable opinion the aims of this MOU are no longer relevant and / or its duties as a public body change to become incompatible with the aims and terms of this MOU, or if it considers that operation of the pilot with regard to the Middle Trail in its opinion has become unsatisfactory, unacceptable, or dangerous in any way.
- 71. Any party may terminate this agreement by notice in writing to the other party if any party has committed any material breach of this agreement and that breach (if remediable) has not been remedied within 30 days' notice from an innocent party identifying the breach and requiring its remedy.

Signed:

On behalf of Belfast City Council	
Signature	
Print Name	
Position	
Date	
On behalf of Cavehill Mountainbikers Club	
Signature	
Print Name SIMON JOHNSTON	
Position	
Date	
On behalf of Cavehill Mountainbikers Club	
Signature	
Print Name BERNARD McCLURE	
Position	
Date	
On behalf of Cavehill Mountainbikers Club	
Signature	
Print Name JOHN O'NEILL	
Position	
Date	
On behalf of Cavehill Mountainbikers Club	
Signature	
Print Name STEVEN RAINEY	
Position	
Date	
	<u> </u>



Appendix 2 – Project Oversight Group – Terms of Reference

Project Oversight Group for Cave Hill Mountain Bike Trail Pilot

Purpose

The Project Oversight Group will provide direction and leadership on the Cave Hill Mountain Bike Trail pilot project. It will provide direction, as required, to the contractor procured by Belfast City Council to deliver the key outputs/deliverables of the project. These are:

- Physical completion of a fit for purpose mountain bike trail based on the route of the current "ridden in" trail known to local mountain bikers as "the Middle Trail."
- Development of mutually acceptable terms for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BCC and Cavehill Mountain Bike Club on the future management, maintenance and operation of the trail. The MOU to be formally approved by BCC via the standard committee process.
- Development and implementation of a communications plan to include engagement, communications, and signage requirements.
- Development of an evaluation framework to monitor and report on project success.
- Development of a final project evaluation report for submission to BCC through the relevant committee process.

Term

This Terms of Reference is effective from 04.02.21 and continues until the oversight group is in a position to approve a final project evaluation report which is then approved by committee/full Council. It is anticipated this will be a period of one year from the signing of this MOU.

Membership

The Project Oversight Group will comprise:

Organisation	Name	Role if applicable
BCC	Kelly Gilliland	Chair
	 Margaret Higgins 	Co-Chair
	 David Salters 	
	Michael Grant/ Kevin	
	McKee	
	 Jacqui Stewart 	
	 Duane Fitzsimons 	
	 Orla Maguire 	
Cavehill Conservation Group	Cormac Hamill	
Cavehill Mountain Bike Club	Bern McClure	
	Simon Johnston	
Belfast Hills Partnership	Jim Bradley	
Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI)	Chris Scott	Contractor
	Sarah Noble	
	Philip Weston	

The represented organisations are permitted to provide a suitable replacement in the event a named representative (above) is unable to attend. This should be declared in advance of the relevant meeting(s).

Other internal and/or external stakeholders can be invited to attend oversight meetings, as and when required, following on from previous discussion and agreement by the group.

Roles and Responsibilities

The membership of the oversight group will commit to:

- fostering collaboration in the interest of the timely and successful delivery of the project outputs;
- attending all Oversight Group meetings;
- sharing communications and information across Steering Group members to support timely decision making;
- participating in open and honest discussions during meetings, subgroup meetings, engagement sessions.

Those participating on the oversight group can expect that members will be:

- provided with complete, relevant and accurate information in a timely manner;
- given reasonable time to make fully informed decisions taking advice from subgroups or from internal or external advisors where relevant;
- alerted to potential risks and issues that could impact on the project deliverables, as they arise.

Meetings

Meetings will be chaired by Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager (North) BCC and in instances when Kelly is not available Margaret Higgins, Neighbourhood Integration Manager (North) will take on the chairing role.

A meeting quorum will be considered to have been achieved if representatives of 4 out of the 5 constituent organisations are present.

Decisions will be made by consensus (i.e. members are satisfied with the decision even though it may not be their first choice preference). If consensus is not possible the chair will propose a compromise option.

Should the Project Oversight Group come to a position where agreement cannot be reached matters can be escalated for consideration by BCC Director of Neighbourhood Services and or the CNS Departmental Management team.

Meeting invitations, agendas and action notes will be coordinated by ORNI.

Meetings will be held monthly unless key decisions are required urgently in order for work to progress. Given current Northern Ireland Executive Guidance on Covid-19 Project Oversight Group meetings will be virtual with invitations being issued by BCC using MS TEAMS.

If required subgroup meetings will be arranged outside of the normal schedule at a time convenient to subgroup members. Potential subgroups include:

- Trail design (inc H&S and biodiversity)
- Communications (inc engagement and signage requirements)
- Evaluation

Should site visits be required for subgroup members these will be carried out in line with current NI Exec Covid-19 regulations/restrictions.

Variation

These Terms of Reference may only be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by all five member organisations of the Project Oversight Group.

Cave Hill Mountain Biking Trail Pilot

Chris Scott





Page 354

'A more active and healthy society appreciating the outdoors.'

















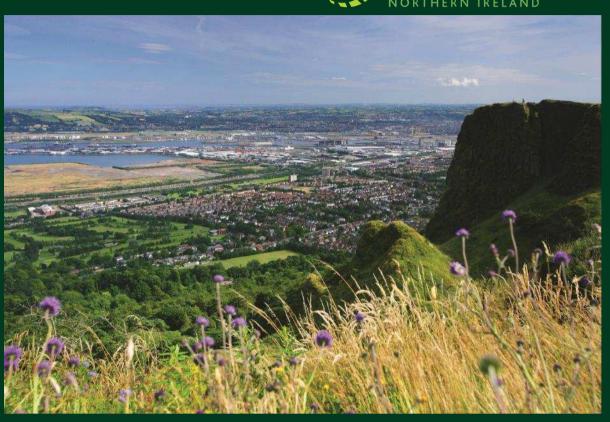




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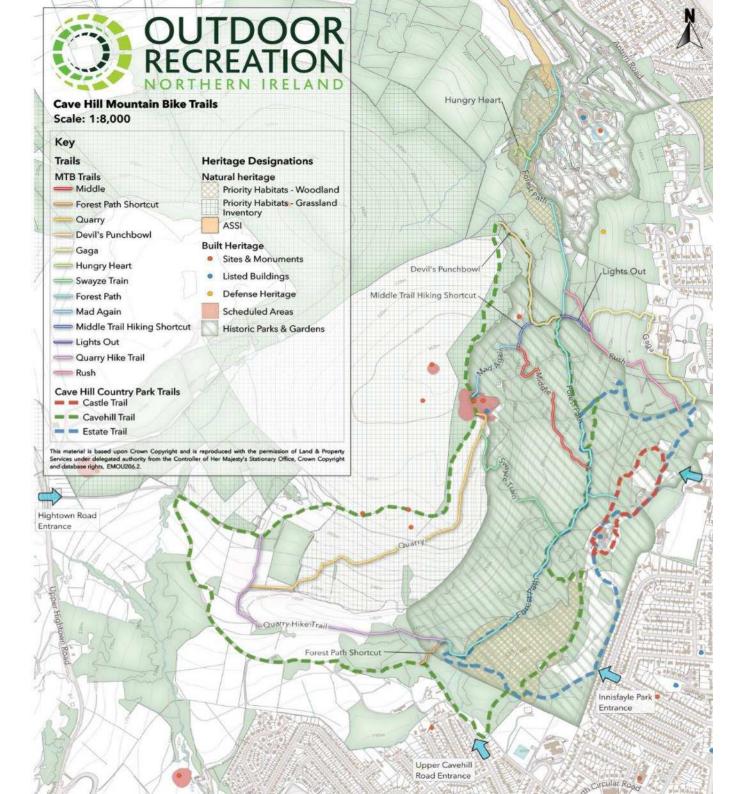


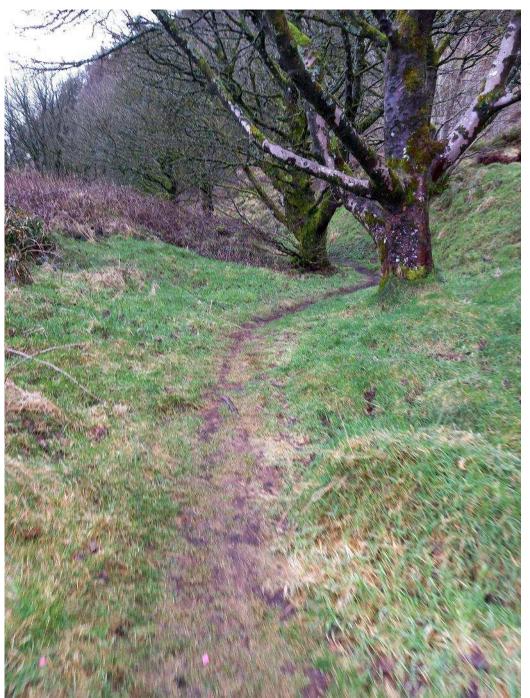
- MTB Trails on Cave Hill
- Brief Key Elements
- Approach
- Next Steps
- Q&A



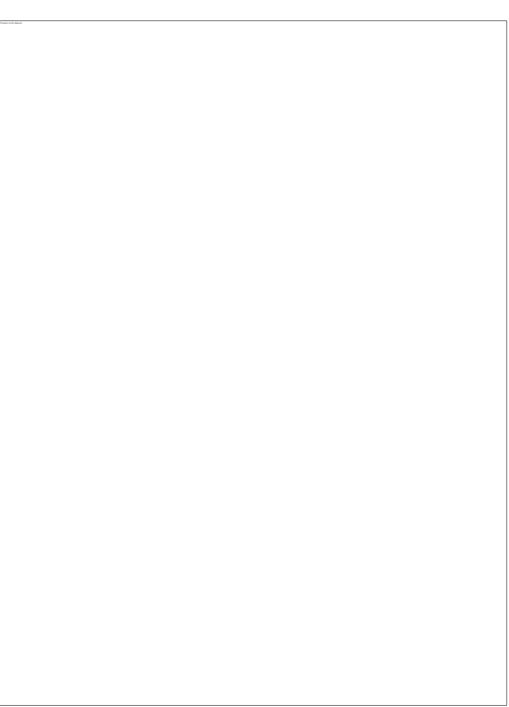








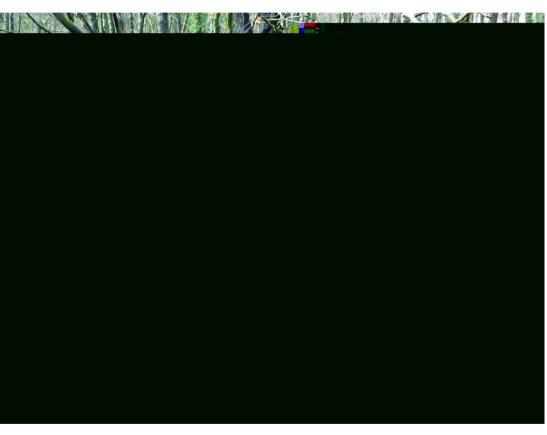


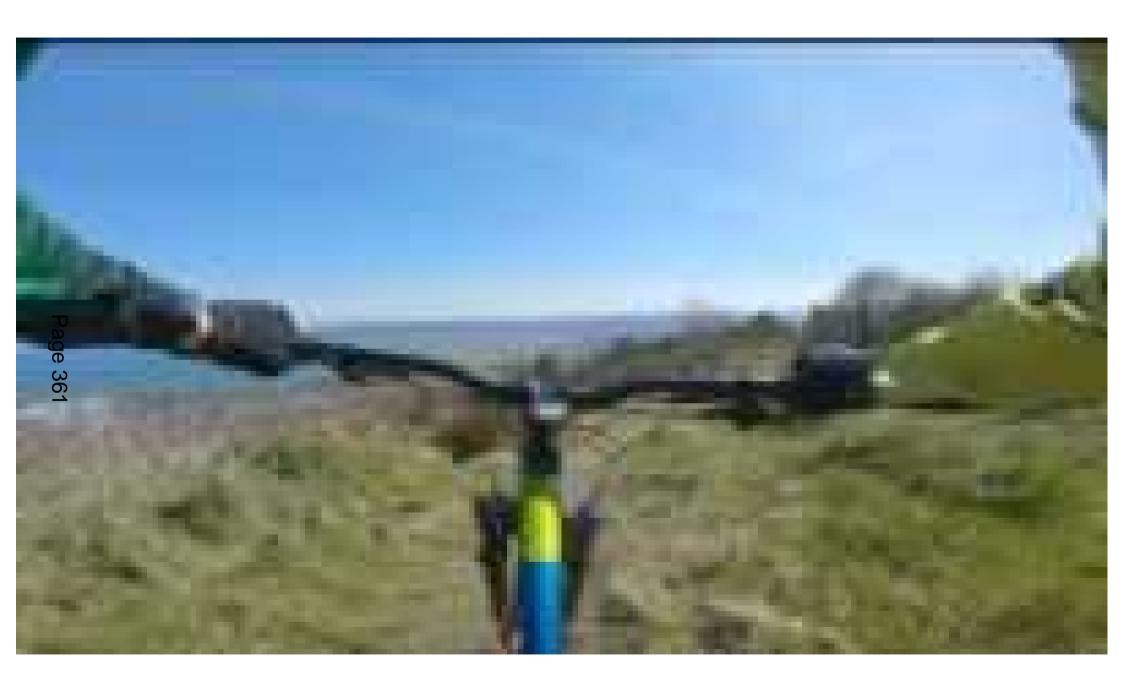












Brief



Desk

Existing
Studies and
Data

Best Practice Establishing Foundation

Consultation

Evaluation Framework

MOU

Evaluation Framework

> Online Survey

> > Data



Brief



Visitor Information Strategy

Audit

Action Plan

The Middle

Risk Assess

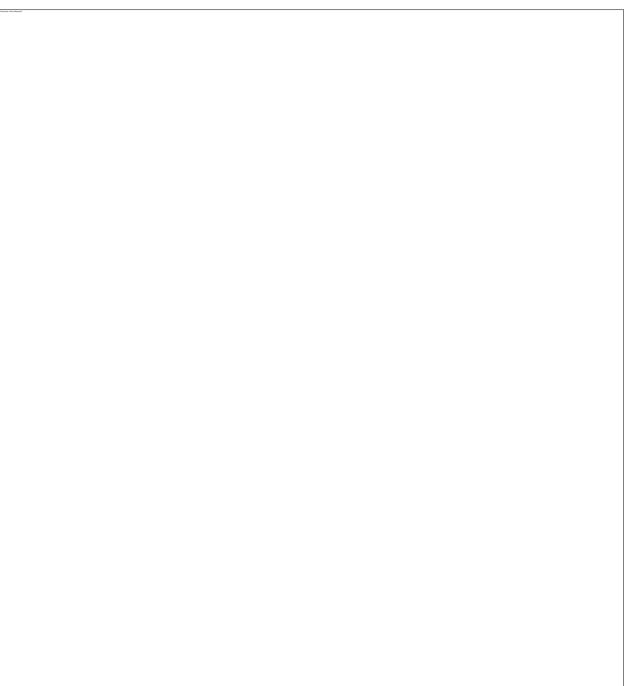
Trail
Management
Guidance



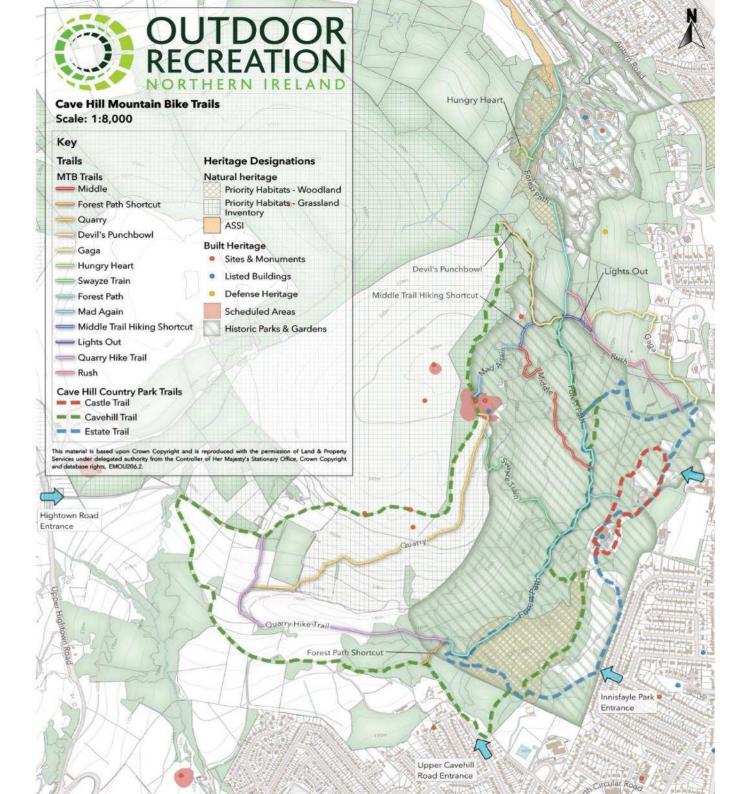
Case Study – Tweed Valley



Page 364

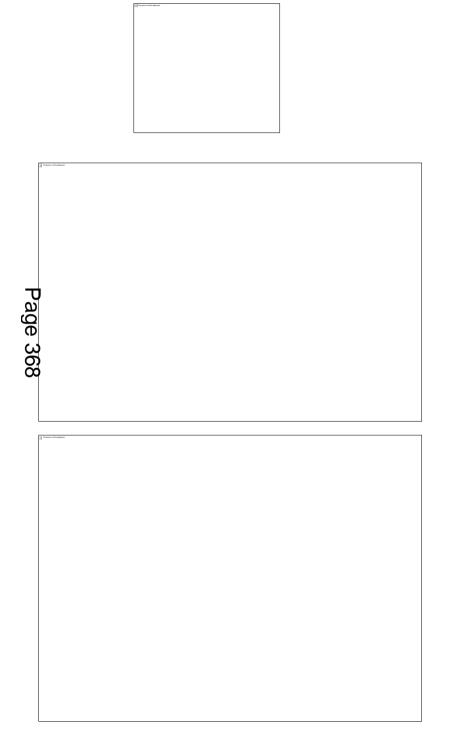






Key Roles

- Management
- Inspection
- Maintenance
- ទី• Insurance
- Volunteer (Club Member) Management
- Advocacy / Engagement





- Pre dig inspections by Cycling UK qualified volunteers defining worksites and daily goals to provide clear guidance to on the day leader
- Field note system (pre and post dig) in place to permanently record all work done on trails and communicate work brief to volunteers during the session
- Online risk assessments created to allow standardised process for leaders to perform on the day risk assessments for each dig
- Method of work statements defining working practices and equipment usage
- Checklist and on / off the hill procedures
- Volunteers Cycling UK trained in volunteer management and first aid qualified.

Shout out to the Innerleithen kids! (And parents...!)

We've noticed a few "micro trails" appearing in the Pirn Woods area over the festive season (between Leithen Water and Pirn Fort). Awesome to see little rippers keen to get into trail building, but because they cut across multiple paths and T-bone them as well, and the huge amount of walkers, dogs, young families and horses on these multi use paths, Pirn Woods just isn't a good location for new bike trails.

We've been looking at ways to work with local kids clubs, DMBinS and FLS to deliver specific dig days for under 18s this year, so hopefully we can put your enthusiasm to good use soon, but it would be great if we can all keep Pirn Woods as a safe and friendly forest area for all users.

Forestry and Land Scotland DMBinS Innerleithen Cycle Club





Next Steps

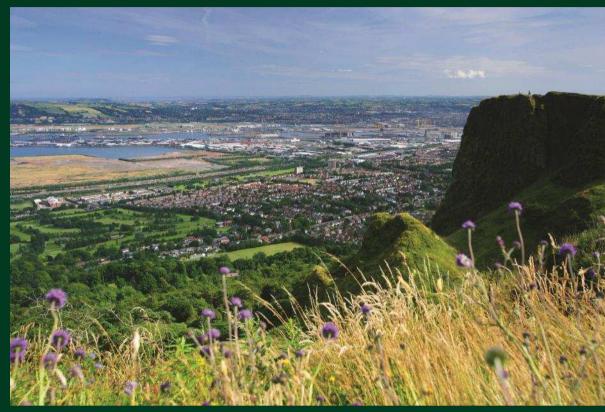


- MOU Sign Off
- Trail Management Approach
- Evaluation Framework

Monitor / Evaluate



Discussion



Chris Scott 02890 303930

chris@outdoorrecreationni.com

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Agenda Item 6b

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Subje	Proposal for naming new streets and the continuation of existing streets					
Date:	9th November 2021					
Repor	Reporting Officer: Ian Harper, Building Control Manager					
Conta	Contact Officer: Roisin Adams, Business Coordinator					
Restri	cted Reports					
Is this	report restricted?	Yes		No	X	
ı	If Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?				
	After Committee After Council I Some time in t Never	Decision				
Call-in						
Call-III	<u> </u>			 1		
Is the	decision eligible for	Call-in? Yes	X	No		
1.0	Purpose of Repor	t or Summary of main Issues				
1.1	To consider applica	tions for the naming of new streets and the continua	ition of	existir	ng	
	streets in the City.					
2.0	Recommendation	S				
2.1	Based on the information presented, the Committee is required to make a recommendation			ndation		
	in respect of applications for naming new streets in the City. The Committee may either:					
	Grant the applications, or					
	Refuse the applications and request that the applicants submit other names for					
2.0	consideration	n.				
3.0	Main report					
	Key Issues					
3.1	•	Council to name streets is contained in Article 11 of th	e Loca	ıl Gove	rnment	
	(Miscellaneous Pro	visions) (NI) Order 1995.				

3.2 Members are asked to consider the following applications for naming new streets in the City and the continuation of existing streets. The application particulars are in order and the Royal Mail has no objections to the proposed names. The proposed new names are not contained in the Council's Streets Register and do not duplicate existing approved street names in the City.

Proposed Name	Location	Applicant
Hazel Link	Off Hazel Close, BT17	Toland House
		Properties
Hazel Pass	Off Hazel Close, BT17	Toland House
		Properties

Proposed Continuation	Location	Applicant
of Existing Street		
Hazel Drive	Off Lagmore Avenue,	Toland House
	BT17	Properties
Hazel Close	Off Lagmore Avenue,	Toland House
	BT17	Properties
Cairnmartin Crescent	Off Cairnmartin Road,	Choice Housing
	BT13	

- Toland House Properties have proposed Hazel Link, as their first choice as the new street is located directly off Hazel Close with Hazel Way and Hazel Grove proposed as the second and third choice. Hazel Pass has been proposed as the new name for the second new street with Hazel Gardens and Hazel Court as the second and third choice. The proposed new street names are in keeping with the existing names in the area.
- Toland House Properties have proposed Hazel Drive for the continuation of an existing street that is being extended to accommodate the development of 12 new dwellings and the continuation of Hazel Close which will include an additional 19 dwellings in the street.
- Choice Housing have proposed Cairnmartin Crescent for the continuation of the existing Cairnmartin Crescent as they are developing vacant land to build an additional 26 new dwellings in the street.

	Financial & Resource Implications
3.6	There are no Financial, Human Resources, Assets and other implications in this report.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.7	There are no direct Equality implications.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None



Agenda Item 6c

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Subjec	ct: Winter preparedness update					
Date:	ate: 9 th November 2021					
Reporting Officer: Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services						
Contac	Contact Officer: Seamus McBride, Emergency Coordination Officer					
Restric	Restricted Reports					
Is this	report restricted?			Yes [No	X
If	f Yes, when will the	report become unrestricte	ed?			
	After Committe After Council I Some time in t Never	ecision				
0.11.1						
Call-in						
Is the c	decision eligible for	Call-in?		Yes	X N	lo
1.0			es	Yes	X N	0
1.0	Purpose of Repor	or Summary of main Issu				
	Purpose of Repor The purpose of this partners to suppor		on measures taken	by BC(C and mu	ıltiagenc
1.0	Purpose of Repor The purpose of this partners to suppor	or Summary of main Issument of the people of Belfast over and Age-friendly Belfast.	on measures taken	by BC(C and mu	ıltiagenc
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1.0	Purpose of Repor The purpose of this partners to suppor emergency plannin Recommendation The Committee is a	or Summary of main Issuereport is to update members the people of Belfast over and Age-friendly Belfast.	on measures taken r the winter period	by BC0	C and mu	ıltiagenc
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1.0 1.1 2.0 2.1	Purpose of Repor The purpose of this partners to suppor emergency plannin Recommendation The Committee is a Consider ar Main report Key Issues Emergency Plann	report is to update members the people of Belfast over and Age-friendly Belfast. sked to: d note the arrangements in	on measures taken r the winter period	by BC0 speci	C and mu fically in ess.	ıltiagenc

severe weather plan is a multiagency approach to planning for, responding to and recovering from severe weather. These plans enable partner agencies to co-ordinate their response to and recovery from any severe winter weather.

Regional Community Resilience Group

- 3.2 All local community resilience groups in Belfast have been re-engaged with over the summer months updating residents contacts details and refreshing existing community emergency plans. Re-engagement has included awareness raising within these communities on existing resources including sandbag containers and equipment to help assist during adverse weather, particularly flash flooding.
- In preparation for COP26 in Glasgow, Belfast City Council's Emergency Planning team participated in a regional film production to raise awareness on the work of the Regional Community Resilience Group. Interviews were conducted with local multiagency Emergency Planners and community volunteers in Belfast, Dromore Co. Down and Eglinton. This regional piece will highlight community resilience best practice demonstrating how multiagency partners have worked together engaging with local communities, empowering local people to improve their resilience and capability to deal with adverse weather.
- 3.4 Sandbag containers continue to be replenished by multiagency partners including NIW, Dfl Roads and Dfl Rivers in preparation for winter. The sandbag containers have combination locks to improve speed of access by BCC staff or community volunteers when required. Locations of the sandbag containers are published on the Council website. https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Community/Community-Safety-and-Advice/Emergency-planning/Flooding-advice

Snow clearance and salting

3.5 Dfl Roads are in the process of restocking community grit boxes in preparation for winter. An agreement is in place between Dfl Roads and Belfast City Council in which council resources can be used to treat predefined areas when prolonged severe icy conditions are forecast. This protocol is triggered when a prolonged cold period is expected or experienced. The areas agreed include arterial routes into the city and streets in and around the city centre.

3.6 Members may recall a report agreed at People and Communities committee in February 2019 (Appendix 1) regarding the provision of salt for Members use in communities during prolonged severe winter weather. Small quantities of salt will be made available in council owned premises this winter, for Members' use in the community during prolonged, severe, high impact cold weather. Existing stocks of salt (25kg bags) will be made available at appropriate council community/leisure centres or other council sites. Higher elevations residential areas will be prioritised where icy conditions are more prevalent, and impacts are greater.

Information and Outreach

- 3.7 Links are in place with Age-friendly Belfast's multiagency group and homeless support groups to raise awareness when weather warnings are issued.
- 3.8 A briefing paper, 'Elected Member Information on Major Emergencies' will be emailed to all members which includes a Hotline number for members use during an emergency.
- 3.9 There is winter emergency information on our BCC website which also contains a link to the NI Direct page: https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/community/community-safety-and-advice/advice/emergency-advice#495-2 Corporate Communications also have specific winter advice pages, which can be highlighted on the website and via BCC social media channels as required.

Age-friendly Belfast

- 3.10 Age-friendly Belfast hosts two interagency winter planning meetings in August and November each year. Partners from community, voluntary and statutory organisations share their plans for the winter, raise any issues of concern and update contacts for communication of information in extreme weather. Some of the key projects to support older people over the winter are outlined below.
- 3.11 National Energy Action (NEA) are co-ordinating winter warmth packs provided by the Public Health Agency for Belfast. Referrals can be made for those at risk of fuel poverty, a particular concern this year with rising energy costs by calling National Energy Action on **028 9023009909.** Appendix 2 provides an outline of this 'Warm and Well' project.
- 3.12 Community and voluntary groups are hosting walks and other small-scale face-to-face activities with older people in Autumn/Winter 2021 whilst it is safe to do so. The ongoing

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PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Subjec	Provision of salt in communities during prolonged severe winter weather					
Date:	12 February 2019					
Report	eporting Officer: Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City & Neighbourhood Services					
Contac	contact Officer: Davy Neill, Emergency Coordination Officer					
Restric	ted Reports					
Is this	report restricted?		Yes		No	X
If	Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?				
	After Committe	ee Decision				
	After Council D	Decision				
	Some time in the future					
	Never					
Call-in						
Is the d	Is the decision eligible for Call-in?					
1.0	Purpose of Repor	t or Summary of main Issues				
1.1		Is for a way forward on the supply and accessil	bility of	salt fo	r local	
	communities during prolonged extreme weather conditions.					
2.0	Recommendation	s				
2.1	The Committee is a	asked to				
	Note the iss	ues set out in this report and agree the interim	arrang	ement	s and	
	proposal for	a more sustainable solution.				

3.0	Main report
3.1	Further to a report to Committee in March 2018 regarding the provision of grit for communities during prolonged severe weather conditions Members requested a legal opinion on the Council's position on supplying grit boxes for community use.
3.2	The report from Legal Services in December 2018 (attached) is clear that the statutory duty to treat roads and public places in snow and ice conditions falls to the Department for Infrastructure (Dfl). The legislation provides Dfl with an immunity if it fails to take action under the relevant statutory order. However, as there is no statutory requirement for the Council to treat roads or to provide grit boxes for public use, the Council would not have similar immunity.
3.3	The provision of grit boxes had been suggested as a means of improving resilience in local areas during prolonged extreme weather conditions, but as this is not a viable option. Officers are continuing to liaise with Dfl to consider alternative solutions.
3.4	Consideration was given to storing bags of salt in some of the sandbag containers located throughout the City. However, these containers, supplied by Dfl, are primarily for flood risk and resilience; they are made of steel and any leakage of salt would cause serious, corrosive damage rendering the containers useless for sandbag storage. There would also be an issue of managing the logistics of two different products out of the one container.
3.5	The current proposal under consideration is to store the salt in council owned premises giving priority to high risk locations, i.e. elevated areas more prone to snow and ice. Given the legal opinion we are not considering public access, these resources would be for Members to direct for use in the community. There are a number of options to be considered, for example, suitable locations, space, cost, weight of the bags, access arrangements, etc. However, Members are asked to agree the direction of travel and the interim arrangements set out below.
3.6	It is proposed that in the meantime during prolonged severe, high impact cold weather, existing stocks of salt (25kg bags) are made available for Members' use in the community, at appropriate council community/leisure centres or other council Sites. Higher elevation residential areas would be prioritised where icy conditions are more prevalent and there's more impact. Additional lower lying areas can also receive stocks of salt as appropriate depending on severity and impact.

- 3.7 Suggested higher elevation areas and centres for salt bags could include:
 - Whitewell Salt bags delivered to Finlay Park, Whitewell Road (storage container required)
 - Ballysillan Salt bags delivered to Ballysillan Leisure Centre
 - Ligoniel Salt bags delivered to Ligoniel Community Centre
 - Glencairn/Highfield Salt bags delivered to Highfield Community Centre
 - Whiterock Salt bags delivered to Whiterock Community Centre
 - Lenadoon Salt bags delivered to Glen Community Centre
 - Lagmore/Mount Eagles Salt bags delivered to store at Mount Eagles Playground
- 3.8 Suggested salt bag centres for lower elevation areas could include:

East Belfast

- Short Strand Community Centre (not a Council Centre but would likely be needed –
 perhaps an agreement around liability could be provided)
- Avoniel Leisure Centre (closing Sep/Oct 2019)
- Dee Street Community Centre
- Cregagh Community Centre
- Braniel Community Centre

South Belfast

- Olympia Leisure Centre
- Malone House
- Markets Community Centre
- Belvoir Activity Centre

North Belfast

- Ardoyne Community Centre
- Loughside Leisure Centre
- plus continued deliveries to Finlay Park, Ballysillan, Ligoniel, Highfield (as above)

West Belfast

- Suffolk Community Centre
- Sally Gardens Community Centre (owned by the Council but independently managed)
- Brook Activity Centre

	Hammer Community Centre
	 plus continued deliveries to Whiterock, Glen, Lagmore/Mount Eagles (as above)
3.9	These are only suggested locations and other options will be considered. If Members agree, salt could be delivered to these locations in advance of further severe weather.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.10	We currently have sufficient stocks of 25Kg bags to cover this winter but should we move to a more permanent solution we would consider purchasing 20Kg bags, which are much easier and safer to handle. For twenty two sites the cost of this would work out at approximately £3,300 per delivery. Dfl cannot provide bagged salt but we are exploring the possibility of getting some of the costs covered through the Regional Community Resilience work.
	The cost of deliveries of salt to the various locations could be absorbed within existing budgets.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.11	None
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Legal report dated 11 th December 2018



Belfast Warm and Well

The Belfast Warm and Well Project aims to help local people struggling to keep their home warm this winter, by offering advice and practical support to stay warm and well.

The project is available to vulnerable people who are finding it difficult to keep their home warm. Vulnerable refers to a number of different groups including:

- People aged 65 years or older
- People living with disability or long term physical or mental health condition
- Pregnant women
- Households with young child (from new-born to school age)
- People on a low income.

Signs that a person may be finding it difficult to keep their home warm could be, for example:

- The home is cold you may have to keep your coat on when inside
- There is condensation on the windows
- There are signs of damp on the walls or ceilings.

Belfast Warm and Well, will be coordinated by National Energy Action (NEA) who will work with local community and voluntary groups, to provide helpful independent and confidential advice and practical support.

If you are vulnerable and finding it difficult to keep your home warm, contact NEA on 028 9023 9909 or warmandwell@nea.org.uk to see if they can help.

If you are concerned that someone you know is vulnerable and finding it difficult to keep their home warm, ask them if they would like to speak with NEA and if they do, contact NEA on 028 9023 9909 or warm are not speak with NEA and if they do,

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Top tips for staying warm and well this winter

Stay Warm

- Heat the main living area of your home to at least 18°C
- Heat your bedroom to at least 16°C and keep your bedroom window closed during the night
- Set your heating to come on before you get up and to go off when you go to bed
- Have your heating system checked yearly and check if you are entitled to any financial support for home improvement grants
- Eat at least one hot meal each day and regularly have hot drinks throughout the day.

(Speak to a member of the NEA team to see how they can help you to stay warm this winter)

Stay Well

- Get your free flu jab
- Make sure you get your prescription medicines before your pharmacy or GP Practice closes for the holidays
- Try to keep to your routine and stay in contact with family and friends
- Try to eat plenty of fruit and vegetables

 stews and soups are a great way to
 do this
- Keep active around the house and try not to sit in the one place for too long.

(Speak to your local Pharmacist or GP Practice to see how they can help you to stay well this winter.)

For further information please visit: www.nea.org.uk/northernireland

Belfast Warm and Well is coordinated by National Energy Action (NEA) and is supported by Community Planning Partners from across Belfast Page 386





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Agenda Item 6d

PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



		Т						
Subje	ect:	Communitie	s Committee	NIA - Privata Ta	nancies Rill			
Cubje	Subject: Communities Committee NIA - Private Tenancies Bill							
Date:	Date: 9 th November 2021							
Reno	rting Officer:	Siobhan To	land, Director	of City Services				
IXCPO	Reporting Officer:							
Contact Officer: Claire O'Neill, Principal Environmental Health Officer								
Restri	icted Reports							
Is this	report restricted	d?			Yes		No	X
	If Yes, when will	the report b	ecome unres	stricted?				
	After Comr	nittee Decisi	ion					
	After Coun	cil Decision						
	Some time	in the future	•					
	Never							
Call-ir	า							
Is the	decision eligible	for Call-in?			Yes	X	No	
1.0	Purpose of Rep	ort or Sumn	nary of main	Issues				
1.1	To provide an u	pdate to me	mbers regard	ding the Departm	nent for Com	munities	s draf	t Private
	Tenancies Bill v	vhich was in	troduced by t	he Minister for (Communities	on 6 J	uly 20	21. The
	Department for Communities Committee has indicated that they are keen to receive a write				a written			
	submission from Belfast City Council before the end of November. (Appendix 1)							
2.0	Recommendations							
2.1	The Committee	is asked to:						
	Note the	draft proposa	als and comm	ents and agree t	o submit the r	espons	e, inc	luding a
	request f	or the resour	ce implication	s for District Cou	ıncils to be ev	aluated	, to th	е
		ee for Comm	•					
				the deadline of	30 th Novembe	ar as a <i>d</i>	draft a	nd will
		•	incil approval.		OO INOVOITIDE	, us a (aruit a	iia wiii
	Telliali S	abject to COU	inon approval.					

3.0	Main report
0.0	Key issues
3.1	The Bill has now reached its Committee Stage, and the Committee for Communities has
	responsibility for the Committee Stage of the Bill.
3.2	The Committee has issued its call for written evidence and views on the Bill, which is due to
	close on Friday 29 th of October 2021. The Bill consists of 11 substantive clauses and three schedules. The stated aim of the Bill is to make the private rented sector a safer and more
	secure housing option for a wider range of households. The Bill introduces a series of
	amendments to The Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, which is the main legislative framework for the private rented sector in Northern Ireland.
3.3	Belfast City Council has a very long tradition of involvement in the private rented sector,
	primarily through its role as a regulator of housing standards but also in respect of its statutory duties under the Public Health Acts. The enhanced powers recently devolved to district councils under the Private Tenancies (NI) Order 2006 (PTO) along with the transfer of the
	regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in 2018, confirms the importance of the
	evolving role that district councils have in regulating the private rented sector. The Council therefore has been seen as a key consultee in this process.
3.4	Following on from this Committees call for evidence, the decisions taken by the Department
	relating to areas that impact in the development of a long term strategy for the private rented
	sector, will have a significant impact on the existing and evolving regulatory and advisory roles of the Council and other stakeholder in relation to its statutory housing functions.
3.5	The Department's landlord registration database has indicated that one third of the privately
	rented sector properties in Northern Ireland are located in the Belfast City Council area. Belfast
	City Council also has 70% of all HMOs in Northern Ireland and Belfast City Council coordinates the delivery of the HMO function for all 11 district Councils.
	In summary the Bill contains the following provisions:
	Re-introduction of a written statement of tenancy terms for tenants
	Tenants to be provide with rent receipt if payment in cash
	Tenancy deposit to be limited to one month's rent
	Increase time limit for landlord to secure a deposit
	Continuing offence for tenancy deposits Dept increases to be restricted to once per year.
	 Rent increases to be restricted to once per year Landlords must maintain fire, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
	Landiolds must maintain me, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors

- The power to make energy efficiency regulations
- The power to make regulations concerning electrical safety standards
- Changes to the notice to quit period and process
- Therefore, whilst the additional regulation of the privately rented sector is to be welcomed, the resourcing of these additional powers, potentially being granted to Councils, will require to be evaluated in advance by the Department before commencement. There is no indication from the Department than any additional funding will be made available to Councils and that the introduction of the ability to issues fixed penalty notices is an appropriate model to adequately resource the monitoring and resourcing of these powers. There will be additional and new work for Councils if they are required to undertake this role. A properly evaluated analysis impact on Councils would need to be undertaken and a suitable funding model identified and agreed before theses can be facilitated and commenced so that there is no impact on the rate payers due to additional burdens to DCs.
- 3.7 Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has advocated on previous occasions for a review to the statutory fitness standard which would have encompassed some of these matters. Thus we, are waiting on the Department's proposals to introduce a new standard which has been in in the planning stage for a considerable period of time. The current Fitness standard dates from 1981 and is considered outdated. Therefore whilst he Council welcomes the introduction of some tenancy management standards, as the regime for assessing the suitability of the property as a whole is outdated, our concern is that Bill will only address the electrical installation, energy efficiency(at a later date, yet to be determined) and a working fire, smoke and carbon monoxide alarm.
- 3.8 The Bill is currently at the second stage of the Bill process which involves the Department for Social Development Committee requesting written submissions by interested parties on the content of the Bill. The Council has been asked by the Committee to provide a written submission. Officers have prepared a draft submission, attached as Appendix 2 for consideration by the People and Communities Committee. Responses were due on 29th October however we have written to the assembly committee and sought an extension on Councils behalf. (see appendix 1)
- 3.9 Each of the clauses and our draft comments to the consultation are contained in Appendix 2. We would ask the committee to review and agree this as the BCC response.
- 3.10 The details of the Private Tenancy Bill are contained in Appendix 3 for members information.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.11 The Private Tenancies Bill when enacted will give local councils additional enforcement powers to deal with issues in the Private Rented sector. These additional new powers will mean more enforcement officers will be required to deal with the additional workload. There will be fixed penalties introduced for some of the offences, but fixed penalty income will not cover the additional staffing and administrative resources required to manage this new function. Members will note the resource implications for District Councils to be evaluated will be requested in our submission to DFC.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

3.12 None associated with this report.

4.0 Appendices – Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Request from the Department for Communities Committee for a written response from Belfast City Council

Appendix 2- Clauses and Comments

Appendix 3 – Private Tenancies Bill



COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

Room 430 Parliament Buildings BELFAST BT4 3XX

22 October 2021

Siobhan Toland
Director of City Service
City and Neighbourhood Services
Belfast City Council
Cecil Ward Building
4-10 Linenhall Street
Belfast BT2 8BP

TolandS@BelfastCity.gov.uk

Dear Siobhan

Private Tenancies Bill - Call for Evidence

At its meeting on 21 October 2021, the Committee considered your correspondence seeking an extension to the Call for Evidence on the Private Tenancies Bill, in order for the December Council to ratify a response.

The Committee are, at present, under immense pressure to complete the Committee Stages of a number of Bills under time constraints imposed by the limited time remaining in the current mandate.

The Committee agreed to write to you to advise that they will commence oral evidence sessions on the 2nd of November and aim to start deliberations on the Bill by the end of November.

In response to your request, the Committee agreed to offer the extension, as the Members are very keen to receive a written submission from BCC. However, Members wished to ensure that it is understood that they may be close to the completion of their considerations of the Bill by early December 2021.

Yours sincerely

Janice Thompson

Dr Janice Thompson Clerk to the Committee

Teresa Gallen

From:

Teresa Gallen on behalf of Siobhan Toland

Sent:

15 October 2021 09:25

To:

'Committee.Communities@niassembly.gov.uk'

Cc:

Vivienne Donnelly; Claire O'Neill (Public Health); Emma Kearney

Subject:

FW: consultation

Dear Committee Members

It has been brought to my attention than on the 12th October that the Department have issued a call for evidence for the Private Tenacies Bill <u>Call for Evidence - Private Tenancies Bill - Northern Ireland Assembly - Citizen Space (nia-yourassembly.org.uk)</u>.

Unfortunately the time scale for submission by 29th October precludes Council members and committee input into these important proposals. This is disappointing as the members are very keen to see and discuss the new legislative proposals for the private rented sector

Therefore Belfast City Council is unable to submit a formal response to this exercise within this timeframe as any draft response would need to be considered by the members at the November People and Communities Committee with formal ratification of a response by the December Council. Can the department give consideration of an extension to the timeframe.

Regards

Siobhan

Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services City and Neighbourhood Services

Belfast City Council | Cer || Ward Building | 4-10 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BP Tel: (028) 9027 0428 ext 3 f t | tolands@belfastcity.gov.uk

www.belfastcity.gov.uk | www.facebook.com/belfastcitycouncil | www.twitter.com/belfastcc

From: +Communications Public Email < Communications@niassembly.gov.uk >

Sent: 05 October 2021 12:35

Subject: PRESS RELEASE: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE LAUNCHES CALL FOR VIEWS ON THE

PRIVATE TENANCIES BILL 051021

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A11

Please see attached and below, a press release from the Assembly Committee for Communities re: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE LAUNCHES CALL FOR VIEWS ON THE PRIVATE TENANCIES BILL.

Kind Regards

Communications Office



Northern Ireland Assembly

PRESS RELEASE

05 October 2021

CFC 07/20/21

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE LAUNCHES CALL FOR VIEWS ON THE PRIVATE TENANCIES BILL

The Assembly's Committee for Communities has today launched its 'Call for Views' on the new Private Tenancies Bill, which focuses on the role and regulation of the private rented housing sector.

If passed, this new Bill will provide tenants with better protection by ensuring landlords and agents meet regulations about the quality and safety of the accommodation offered. It also seeks to safeguard tenants by ensuring a legislative requirement for written tenancy agreements, restrictions on rent increases and an increase in the eviction notice period.

Speaking after today's launch, the Committee Chairperson, Paula Bradley MLA said: "The private rental sector has grown considerably over the past decade, particularly for the 25 - 34 age group. It now accounts for more than 17% of housing stock in Northern Ireland. This growth is likely to continue if first time buyers are priced out of the market due to rising house prices and the potential shortage of accessible and affordable mortgage products.

"While rogue landlords continue to be in the minority, the fact remains that they do exist, and with many of our citizens facing economic uncertainty and hardship, regulating this sector to better protect the vulnerable is a priority for the Committee"

Ms. Bradley continued: "My Committee is generally supportive of the key principals of the Bill. However, while it is a good starting point, we are aware that it may not address all of the issues within the sector and that there are longer term issues still to be considered. We will carefully scrutinise all aspects of this Bill, and if in doing so, we uncover any gaps in the proposals or crucial areas that we feel have been overlooked, we will not hesitate to seek clarification and propose amendments."

Ms. Bradley concluded: "It is vital that as many people as possible, including the key organisations within the sector, advocates and importantly tenants themselves take this opportunity to provide their views on this important Bill.

"All of our local people deserve the basic right to live in a safe, secure and healthy home. We hope that the final Bill will be a first step towards bringing that aspiration closer to a reality for many within the private rental sector."

The Committee's 'Call for Views' and further information on how to respond can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Assembly website via http://nia1.me/4pc The closing date for responses is Friday 29 October 2021.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Further information on the detail of the Private Tenancies Bill can be found here:

The Committee for Communities membership is:

Paula Bradley MLA (Chairperson)

Kellie Armstrong MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Andy Allen MLA

Stephen Dunne MLA

Mark H Durkan MLA

Ciara Ferguson MLA

Paul Frew MLA

Fra McCann MLA

Áine Murphy MLA

Media enquiries to:

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Deputy Communications Officer

Northern Ireland Assembly

Phone: 028 9052 5938

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Email: sinead.murphy@niassembly.gov.uk



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COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE CALL FOR VIEWS ON THE PRIVATE TENANCIES BILL

Response By Belfast City Council

November 2021

Key comments

Belfast City Council has a very long tradition of involvement in the private rented sector, primarily through its role as a regulator of housing standards but also in respect of its statutory duties under the Public Health Acts. The enhanced powers recently devolved to district councils under the Private Tenancies (NI) Order 2006 (PTO) along with the transfer of the regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in 2018, confirms the importance of the evolving role that district councils have in regulating the private rented sector. The Council therefore welcomes that is has been seen as a key consultee in this process

Following on from this Committees call for evidence, the decisions taken by the Department relating to areas that impact in the development of a long term strategy for the private rented sector, will have a significant impact on the existing and evolving regulatory and advisory roles of the Council and other stakeholder in relation to its statutory housing functions

Therefore whilst the additional regulation of the privately rented sector is to be welcomed, the resourcing of these additional powers, potentially being granted to Councils, will require to be evaluated in advance by the Department before commencement. There is no indication from the Department than any additional funding will be made available to Councils and that the introduction of some fixed penalty offences is not an adequate model, or sufficiently evidenced to fund the additional resources required. There will be additional and new work for Councils if they are required to undertake this role. A properly evaluated analysis impact on Councils would need to be undertaken and a suitable funding model identified and agreed before theses can be facilitated and commenced so that there is no impact on the rate payers due to additional burdens to DCs.

Clauses 1 and 2:

Tenant to be given notice regarding certain matters; grant of tenancy:

This introduces a requirement for the landlord of a private tenancy to provide the tenant, free of charge, with a written statement of the main terms of the tenancy within 28 days of the granting of the tenancy. The information and details of the tenancy required to be included

in the notices provided by landlords will be prescribed in regulations made by the Department. This clause will apply to all new tenancies.

Tenant to be given notice regarding certain matters; variation of certain terms:

Tenant to be given notice regarding certain past matters

This clause enables any tenant where the tenancy was granted on or after 30 June 2011 (date that previous Article 4 was repealed) but before the date on which the Bill comes into operation to be provided, free of charge, with a written statement of the main terms of the tenancy or any alterations to said agreement.

Comment: These provisions are to be welcomed as all tenants should be provided with the necessary information in respect of their tenancy. There may be significant resources required from landlords and Councils as the enforcing authority, following the 29th day after the retrospective clause is commenced due to every existing tenancy granted on or after 30 June 2011 potentially having to be provided prescribed information in prescribed format sent to their tenants. The Council would be interested in exactly what terms the landlord will have to provide to the tenant and how tenants will be made aware of their right to a retrospective statement. In Scotland and England, landlord are also obliged to issue tenants with an "easy read" guide to assist the tenants in understanding the terms of their agreement. Model tenancy terms have also been issued by these devolved governments to assist landlord and letting agents. There will be an opportunity for Council officers to discharge this offence through the fixed penalty regime.

The Council would like to know what the Department's plans are for the Tenancy Terms Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 which that at the time prescribed the information required. What is the current status of these regulations as they were made under Article 4(1) and 72(1) of the PTO2006? https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2007/87/made

This Bill will reintroduce Article 4 into the PTO. The above-named regulations as written could be considered outdated and will need reviewed and changed.

The regulations giving the 'prescribed' information should be in place before commencement.

The Council considers that a longer lead-in time or time required to comply would be needed for landlords of retrospective tenancies to help manage this change in requirement.

Clause 3: Tenant to be provided with a rent receipt for payment in cash

The substitution will remove the requirement for landlords to provide tenants with a rent book. However, Clause 3 aims to provide safeguards for tenants by requiring that the landlord provides the tenant, free of charge, with a receipt for rent paid in cash. The receipt must contain certain prescribed information. Paragraph (8) provides for the offence to be a continuing offence and allows for punishment where a landlord is deemed to commit a further offence.

Comment: This is change is welcomed to bring receipting of rent payment in line with current practices. The requirement states as soon as reasonably possible so guidance will be to be issued to define this. The Department may want to consider introducing a requirement for landlords to provide a receipt for cash tenancy deposits.

There will be an opportunity for Council officers to discharge this offence through the fixed penalty regime.

<u>Clause 4: Limit on tenancy deposit amount; Breach of tenancy deposit limit;</u> <u>recoverability of excess</u>

This clause limits the amount of deposit that is required in connection with a private tenancy to no more than 1 month's rent and where an excess of 1 month's rent has been paid then the amount exceeding that amount is recoverable by the person that paid it. This will only apply to deposits received after the commencement of this Bill and not retrospectively to those deposits taken before the legislation comes into operation.

Comment: It should also be noted that the fees associated with renting a property can also contribute to affordability issues for households on low incomes. This can be particularly acute for benefit claimants, working poor and students. There appears to be more financial assistance to renters in England. The Council would be concerned that the limit on a deposit may lead landlords to ask for 2 months' rent in advance which isn't protected by the deposit scheme. The section relating to the recovery of an excess deposit states that the court may order the excess deposit to be paid back after a conviction. This would mean than matters discharged by a fixed penalty would not result in excess deposit be recovered.

The Department should consider the introduction of a limit on landlords asking for more than one month's rent in advance. In the Republic of Ireland from August 2021, landlords can only

ask one month's deposit and one month's rent in advance. Northern Ireland does not currently have a statutory regulatory framework for letting agents or for letting agent fees. The Commission on the Disposals of Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 covers this issue, but this requires tenants to take their own action. The Council would have welcomed regulations to regulate letting agents within this Bill.

There will be an opportunity for Council officers to discharge this offence through the fixed penalty regime.

Clause 5: Tenancy deposit schemes: time limits

This extends the time limits for a deposit to be protected in an approved scheme in paragraph (3) from 14 days to 28 days and gives additional time for a landlord to provide the information to the tenant and amends paragraph (6)(b) from 28 days to 35 days.

Comment This proposal appears to be designed to assist landlords/agents who manage a number of properties where the tenancies change at specific times of the year.

<u>Clause 6: Certain offences in connection with tenancy deposits to be continuing offences</u>

Clause 6 amends Article 5B of the 2006 Order making the offences under Article 5B (3) or (6) a continuing offence as long as the tenancy deposit breach persists. There will be no time barrier on prosecuting a person who fails to comply with the set requirements.

Comment: This amendment is welcomed as currently there is a 6-month statute time bar on cases being presented in court.

Clause 7: Restriction on rent increases

This provides that the rent payable under a private tenancy may not be increased more than once in any 12-month period. This will mean that there is no restriction upon when the first increase may take place but there must be a minimum of 12 months between increases. Any proposed increase should be made in writing and applies to any private tenancy, except a controlled tenancy

Comment: This clause has no detail regarding an offence for not doing what is required, no penalty for not adhering to the requirements and no enforcement authority in relation to investigation of this matter. The Council would also have concerns relating to historic rent increases. This clause would seem to imply that the offence may be taken back to first 12 months of the tenancy.

There is a mechanism for tenants in both Scotland and the Republic of Ireland to challenge a rental increase and to have it reassessed by a third party. There appears to be no such plans for NI.

If regulations are made to specify circumstances in which this requirement does not apply, it should be made very clear that it should be substantial work when referring to 'renovated, refurbished, altered or extended'.

Clause 8: Fire, smoke and carbon monoxide

This sets out a requirement on private landlords to provide fire, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and details the landlord and tenant duties with regard to these.

The Department will subsequently bring forward proposals in regulations with the standards expected which are intended to reduce the risk of injury or death caused by fire, smoke or carbon monoxide.

This clause provides that a landlord is guilty of an offence under this Order with punishment and prosecution of offences up to level 4 on the standard scale, paragraph (4) refers to the option to consider a fixed penalty notice under the 2006 Order fixed penalty regime.

Comment: The Council is disappointed that the review of the Fitness standard was not included in this Bill and the following clauses do not go far enough to improve physical standards in the sector and that the Bill should consider all matters affecting the risk of fire and escape from fire. It has been previously highlighted to the Department that 2-bedroom flats which were regulated under the old NIHE HMO regime, have no regulation in terms of fire safety and means of escape. This gap needs to be addressed urgently by the Department. The Council understands that the review of the Fitness Standard will be part of phase 2 of the review of the private rented sector and the Council is keen to participate in this review.

The Council would request that the wording is changed slightly so that in relation to 11B(1) the landlord under a private tenancy <u>must supply and</u> keep in repair and in proper working order.

The Council would ask for guidance on provision of battery powered devices versus hard wired installation and location of installation similar to the new Scottish provisions, or perhaps this be contained in the Regulations made under this clause. The Council is unsure as to what regime will be put in place for properties which have not presently got devices

installed. Also, the Council would like to know how this requirement will work for those with additional needs such as a hearing impairment who require specialist devices.

The Department should note that the requirement under Building Regulations for installation of smoke alarms only applies to properties built or substantially renovated after 1994.

Whilst it would appear that there is an offence under 11B (1) The Council also has concerns in relation to fire safety in those common parts of the tenancy as there does not appear to be an offence for this area in 11D. Section 11F states that a landlord is not obliged to repair the item, if they don't have knowledge of the disrepair. Guidance, advice and information will need to be provided for tenants to ensure they have proof of reporting a fault. The Council would ask that the reporting of disrepair to appliances be added to the tenant's duties in 11C. The Department could introduce regulations/guidance to be provided so that landlords will know of disrepair items through periodic checks/inspection of their properties

The Council would like to know if the Department will publish guidance for landlords on the new requirements. If so, will the guidance be statutory or non-statutory? The new requirements are applicable to private tenancies on or after the date in which Section 8 of the new Act becomes law. It will also apply to tenancies before that date but only from a "prescribed date"; what will this "prescribed date" be? How will compliance with the new duties be monitored and enforced? Will there be mechanisms established whereby information can be shared by the Fire Service and local councils in respect of potential failures to adhere to the new requirements?

There will be an opportunity for Council officers to discharge this offence through the fixed penalty regime.

Clause 9: Energy Efficiency Regulations

Clause 9 introduces Schedule 2 and notes its purpose with the provision of an enabling power to make regulations concerning the energy efficiency of dwelling houses let under a private tenancy. Regulations will be made so that a tenancy cannot be granted or let if the EPC is below a certain value.

Comment: These proposals are welcomed, however there is currently very little detail as to what the minimum rating will be, or if it will be accompanied by some form of financial assistance model to help landlords upgrade their properties. The Department has indicated

that it will be working with experts in energy efficiency and the Department of the Economy (who are developing the Energy Strategy) and will bring forward proposals on an appropriate EPC standard; the timeframes for delivery and proposals around exemptions for some properties. The Council look forward to further consultation and information on new regulations would bring to the Departments attention to the need for an updated fuel poverty strategy considering the tenure with the highest proportion in fuel poverty in 2016 was the private rented sector (35,700; 26%),NIHCS 2016, NIHE.

Clause 10: Electrical safety standards Regulations

Clause 10 introduces Schedule 3 and notes its purpose with the provision of an enabling power for the Department to make regulations concerning electrical safety standards in private tenancies.

Comment: The issue of electrical installations in the private rented sector have been a great concern for Council officers and we would welcome any requirement to have regular checks along with certification and enforcement. We would welcome new mandatory electrical testing such as that which exists in Scotland. The provisions there include properties to have fixed wiring checks, Electrical Installation Condition Report, at least every 5 years. The EICR must also include a PAT test (Portable Appliance Test) on portable electric appliances that the landlord has included as part of the rental. There should however be further consultation in regard to what is a competent person.

The Council would request that a copy of the EICR should be produced by the landlord on request by the enforcing Council within a specific time frame.

The Council would request that a clause is included regarding Gas Safety with the requirement for annual checks by a registered gas engineer. This is enforced by HSENI at present but we would believe that as the enforcement authority for Private Tenancies Order 2006, this requirement would be better serviced by district councils with the offence included within Private Tenancies Order similar to the above mentioned Electrical requirements.

Clause 11: Notice to Quit

This clause will now extend the mandatory notice to quit period for landlords to provide to tenants to 8 weeks (after the first 12 months and until the tenancy is 10 years old). The notice to quit for tenancies longer than 10 years will remain unchanged at 12 weeks.

In the case where a notice by a landlord is issued for a tenant to quit a dwelling house under a private tenancy this will have to be provided in the prescribed form and must contain prescribed information as subsequently set by the Department in regulations.

In the case where a notice by a tenant is given, such a notice will need to be given in writing with the relevant period being 4 weeks if the tenancy has not been in existence for more than 10 years; 12 weeks if the tenancy has been in existence for more than 10 years.

This clause includes a provision to alter the notice to quit periods by way of regulations by draft affirmative procedure and must consult with landlord and tenant representatives before laying any drafts. The clause also gives a prescribed form and information to be contained in the notice.

Comment: Proposal is welcomed but the Council would welcome additional proposals in respect of grounds for eviction which other jurisdictions have in place in order to reduce the amount of retaliatory evictions. The Department should consider the position of accidental tenants (eg family members of deceased and short term rental arrangements)

Private Tenancies Bill

[AS INTRODUCED]

LEGISLATIVE COMPETENCE

At Introduction the Minister for Communities had made the following statement under section 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:

"In my view the Private Tenancies Bill would be within the legislative competence of the Northern Ireland Assembly."

Private Tenancies Bill

[AS INTRODUCED]

CONTENTS

- 1. Tenant to be given notice regarding certain matters
- 2. Tenant to be given notice regarding certain past matters
- 3. Tenant to be provided with a rent receipt for payment in cash
- 4. Limit on tenancy deposit amount
- 5. Increase in time limits for requirements relating to tenancy deposits
- 6. Certain offences in connection with tenancy deposits to be continuing offences
- 7. Restriction on rent increases
- 8. Fire, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, etc.
- 9. Energy efficiency regulations
- 10. Electrical safety standards regulations
- 11. Validity requirements for notices to quit given by landlords and tenants
- 12. Interpretation
- 13. Commencement
- 14. Short title

SCHEDULES:

Schedule 1	Tenant to	be given not	ice regarding	certain past matters
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Schedule 2 Energy efficiency regulations

Schedule 3 Electrical safety standards regulations

Α

BILL

TO

Amend the law relating to private tenancies.

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B E IT ENACTED by being passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly and assented to by Her Majesty as follows:

Tenant to be given notice regarding certain matters

- 1.—(1) The 2006 Order is amended in accordance with subsections (2) to (4).
- (2) In Part 2, after the italic heading "Particulars relating to the tenancy, etc." insert—

"Tenant to be given notice regarding certain matters: grant of tenancy

- **4A**.—(1) This Article applies where a private tenancy of a dwelling-house is granted on or after the date on which section 1 of the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 comes into operation.
- (2) The landlord under the tenancy must, within 28 days after the date on which the tenancy is granted, give to the tenant a notice—
 - (a) in the prescribed form, and
 - (b) containing the prescribed particulars and other prescribed information relating to the tenancy.
- (3) A tenant must not be required to make a payment in respect of any notice under paragraph (2).
- (4) A landlord who fails to comply with paragraph (2) is guilty of an offence under this Order.

Tenant to be given notice regarding certain matters: variation of certain terms

4B.—(1) This Article applies where, on or after the date on which section 1 of the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 comes into operation, a prescribed term of a private tenancy of a dwelling-house is

varied; and it applies regardless of the date on which the tenancy was granted.

- (2) The landlord under the tenancy must, within 28 days after the date on which the term of the tenancy is varied, give to the tenant a notice—
 - (a) in the prescribed form, and

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- (b) containing the prescribed information relating to the variation of the term.
- (3) In paragraphs (1) and (2) "varied" includes varied by omission.
- (4) A tenant must not be required to make a payment in respect of any notice under paragraph (2).
- (5) A landlord who fails to comply with paragraph (2) is guilty of an offence under this Order.

Continued failure by landlord to provide notice under Article 4A or 4B after conviction or fixed penalty

- **4C**.—(1) If a landlord is convicted of an offence under Article 4A(4) or 4B(5), and the failure continues for more than 14 days after the conviction, the landlord is deemed to have committed a further offence under that paragraph in respect of that failure.
 - (2) Paragraph (3) applies where—
 - (a) a landlord fails to comply with Article 4A(2) or 4B(2),
 - (b) the landlord is given a fixed penalty notice under Article 68A in respect of an offence under Article 4A(4) or 4B(5) on the grounds of that failure, and
 - (c) the landlord pays the fixed penalty stated in the notice.
- (3) If the failure to comply with Article 4A(2) or 4B(2) continues for more than 14 days after the landlord pays the fixed penalty, the landlord is guilty of an offence under this Order.".
- (3) In Article 68(1) (prosecution and punishment of offences), after "Article" insert "4A(4), 4B(5), 4C(3),".
 - (4) In Article 68A (fixed penalty for certain offences)—
 - (a) in paragraph (1), after "has committed" insert—
 - "(za) an offence under Article 4A(4) or 4B(5), except one deemed to have been committed by virtue of Article 4C(1);
 - (zb) an offence under Article 4C(3);";
 - (b) in paragraph (8), after "under Article" insert "4A(4), 4B(5), 4C(3),".
 - (5) Omit section 1 of the Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

Tenant to be given notice regarding certain past matters

- **2.** Schedule 1 provides for the giving of notice regarding certain matters to the tenants of dwelling-houses that are let under a private tenancy on the date on which section 1 comes into operation—
 - (a) where the tenancy was granted on or after 30 June 2011 but before the date on which section 1 comes into operation;

(b) where certain terms of the tenancy were varied on or after 30 June 2011 but before the date on which section 1 comes into operation.

Tenant to be provided with a rent receipt for payment in cash

- **3.**—(1) The 2006 Order is amended as follows.
- (2) For Article 5 substitute—

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"Tenant to be provided with a rent receipt for payment in cash

- **5**.—(1) This Article applies where the tenant of a dwelling-house let under a private tenancy makes any payment of rent in cash.
- (2) The landlord must provide the tenant with a written receipt for the payment stating—
 - (a) the date of payment;
 - (b) the amount paid;
 - (c) if any amount remains outstanding, that amount;
 - (d) if no further amount remains outstanding, that fact.
 - (3) The receipt must be provided—
 - (a) at the time the payment is made, or
 - (b) if that is not possible, as soon as reasonably possible after that time.
- (4) A tenant must not be required to make a payment in respect of the provision of the receipt.
- (5) If the landlord under a private tenancy fails to comply with paragraph (2) or (3), the following are guilty of an offence under this Order—
 - (a) the landlord, and
- (b) any person appointed by the landlord to provide the receipt. (But see Article 5ZB for a defence to this offence.)

Continued failure by landlord to provide rent receipt after conviction or fixed penalty

- **5ZA.**—(1) If a landlord is convicted of an offence under Article 5(5) in respect of a failure to comply with Article 5(2), and the failure continues for more than 14 days after the conviction, the landlord is deemed to have committed a further offence under Article 5(5) in respect of that failure.
 - (2) Paragraph (3) applies where—
 - (a) a landlord fails to comply with Article 5(2),
 - (b) the landlord is given a fixed penalty notice under Article 68A in respect of an offence under Article 5(5) on the grounds of that failure, and
 - (c) the landlord pays the fixed penalty stated in the notice.
- (3) If the failure to comply with Article 5(2) continues for more than 14 days after the landlord pays the fixed penalty, the landlord is guilty of an offence under this Order.

(But see Article 5ZB for a defence to this offence.)

Controlled tenancies: defence to offences under Articles 5 and 5ZA

- **5ZB.**—(1) This Article applies where, in the case of a controlled tenancy (within the meaning given by Article 40(4))—
 - (a) a person is charged with an offence under Article 5(5) and a receipt complying with Article 5(2)(a) and (b) was provided in accordance with Article 5(3), or
 - (b) a person is charged with an offence under Article 5ZA(3) and a receipt complying with Article 5(2)(a) and (b) was provided at any time before the end of the period of 14 days mentioned in Article 5ZA(3) (including before the fixed penalty notice was given).
 - (2) Paragraph (5) applies if either condition A or condition B is met.
 - (3) Condition A is that—

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- (a) no further amount in fact remained outstanding,
- (b) the receipt stated that there was an amount outstanding, and
- (c) that amount consists wholly of a sum that is irrecoverable by virtue of Article 50(1).
- (4) Condition B is that—
 - (a) an amount in fact remained outstanding ("the true arrears"),
 - (b) the receipt stated as outstanding an amount that was more than the true arrears, and
 - (c) the difference between the stated amount and the true arrears consists wholly of a sum that is irrecoverable by virtue of Article 50(1).
- (5) It is a defence for the person charged to prove that the landlord had a bona fide claim that the sum mentioned in paragraph (3)(c) or (4)(c) was recoverable.".
- (3) In Article 50 (tenancies subject to rent control: rent in excess of limit to be irrecoverable), after paragraph (3) insert—
 - "(4) In paragraph (2) "similar document" does not include a receipt under Article 5(2).".
- (4) In Article 66(1)(a) (service on an agent named in the rent book deemed to be service on the landlord), for "the rent book" substitute "a rent book".
- (5) In Article 68(1) (prosecution and punishment of offences), for "5(4)" substitute "5(5), 5ZA(3)".
 - (6) In Article 68A (fixed penalty for certain offences)—
 - (a) in paragraph (1), after sub-paragraph (zb) (as inserted by section 1), insert—
 - "(zc) an offence under Article 5(5), except one deemed to have been committed by virtue of Article 5ZA(1);
 - (zd) an offence under Article 5ZA(3);";

(b) in paragraph (8), after "4C(3)," (as inserted by section 1) insert "5(5), 5ZA(3),".

Limit on tenancy deposit amount

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- **4.**—(1) The 2006 Order is amended as follows.
- (2) After Article 5ZB (as inserted by section 3) insert—

"Limit on tenancy deposit amount

Tenancy deposit limit of 1 month's rent

5ZC.—(1) A person (A) must not—

- (a) require the payment by another person of a tenancy deposit in connection with a private tenancy, or
- (b) require that the person to whom a tenancy deposit would otherwise be repaid (B) consent to the retention of the deposit (by A or a third person) in connection with a private tenancy,

that is in excess of the amount of 1 month's rent payable under the tenancy.

- (2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b), A requires that B consent to the retention of a deposit if—
 - (a) a tenancy deposit is paid (at any time) in connection with a private tenancy ("the first tenancy"),
 - (b) a person proposes to grant, or has granted, a private tenancy of that or another dwelling-house (whether to the tenant of the first tenancy or to another person), and
 - (c) A requires that B consent to some or all of the deposit continuing to be held, on or after the ending of the first tenancy, in connection with the new tenancy.
- (3) "1 month's rent payable under the tenancy", where the rent under a private tenancy is not payable monthly, means—
 - (a) where the rent under the tenancy is payable for periods of whole months, the rent for a period divided by the number of months in the period;
 - (b) where the rent is payable for periods determined otherwise than by reference to whole months, the rent attributable to 1 day's letting under the tenancy multiplied by 30.
- (4) A person who contravenes paragraph (1) is guilty of an offence under this Order.
 - (5) Where a person—
 - (a) is convicted of an offence under paragraph (4), and
 - (b) has received or, as the case may be, retained a tenancy deposit in excess of the amount of 1 month's rent payable under the tenancy,

the court may order the excess to be repaid to the person who paid it.

(6) In this Article—

"tenancy deposit", in relation to a private tenancy, means any money intended to be held (by the landlord or otherwise) as security for—

- (a) the performance of any obligations of the tenant arising under or in connection with the tenancy, or
- (b) the discharge of any liability of the tenant so arising;

"money" means money in the form of cash or otherwise.

Breach of tenancy deposit limit: recoverability of excess

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- **5ZD.**—(1) A tenancy deposit in relation to a private tenancy that has not been paid is irrecoverable to the extent that it exceeds the amount of 1 month's rent payable under the tenancy (and this is so despite anything in any agreement).
 - (2) Where, in connection with a private tenancy—
 - (a) a tenancy deposit has been paid or retained (as defined in paragraph (3)), and
 - (b) at the time of payment or retention, or at any time thereafter, the deposit exceeds the amount of 1 month's rent payable under the tenancy,

the excess is recoverable by the person who paid it.

- (3) For the purposes of paragraph (2), if—
 - (a) a tenancy deposit is paid (at any time) in connection with a private tenancy ("the first tenancy"),
 - (b) a private tenancy is granted of that or another dwelling-house (whether to the tenant of the first tenancy or to another person) or (where the first tenancy is a protected tenancy) a statutory tenancy comes into existence, and
 - (c) on or after the ending of the first tenancy, some or all of the deposit continues to be held in connection with the new tenancy,

the deposit is retained in connection with the new tenancy.

- (4) In this Article "1 month's rent payable under the tenancy" and "tenancy deposit" have the same meaning as in Article 5ZC.".
- (3) In Article 68(1) (prosecution and punishment of offences), after "5ZA(3)" (as inserted by section 3) insert ", 5ZC(4)".
 - (4) In Article 68A (fixed penalty for certain offences)—
 - (a) in paragraph (1), after sub-paragraph (zd) (as inserted by section 3) insert—
 - "(ze) an offence under Article 5ZC(4);";
 - (b) in paragraph (8), after "5ZA(3)," (as inserted by section 3) insert "5ZC(4),".
 - (5) The following provisions (inserted by subsection (2)) have effect as follows—
 - (a) Article 5ZC(1)(a) prohibits the making of a requirement within that subparagraph on or after the commencement date;
 - (b) Article 5ZC(1)(b) prohibits the making of a requirement within that subparagraph on or after the commencement date, regardless of the date on which the deposit was paid or the date on which the first tenancy ends;

- (c) Article 5ZD(1) does not prevent the recovery of a tenancy deposit under a legal obligation that existed before the commencement date (whether that obligation accrues before or after that date);
- (d) Article 5ZD(2) has effect in relation to tenancy deposits that are paid on or after the commencement date except where the deposit was required to be paid under or in connection with a legal obligation that existed before the commencement date (whether that obligation accrues before or after that date);
- (e) Article 5ZD(2) has effect in relation to tenancy deposits that are retained on or after the commencement date except where the deposit was liable to be retained under or in connection with a legal right that existed before the commencement date (whether that right accrues before or after that date).
- (6) In subsection (5) "commencement date" means the date on which this section comes into operation.

15 Increase in time limits for requirements relating to tenancy deposits

- 5. In Article 5B of the 2006 Order (requirements relating to tenancy deposits)—
 - (a) in paragraph (3), for "14 days" substitute "28 days";
 - (b) in paragraph (6)(b), for "28 days" substitute "35 days".

Certain offences in connection with tenancy deposits to be continuing offences

- **6.** In Article 5B of the 2006 Order (requirements relating to tenancy deposits), after paragraph (11) insert—
 - "(11A) A person who commits an offence by failing to comply with the requirements of paragraph (3) or (6) continues to commit the offence throughout any period during which the failure continues.".

25 Restriction on rent increases

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- 7.—(1) The 2006 Order is amended as follows.
- (2) After Article 5B insert—

"Rent increases

Restriction on frequency of rent increases

- **5**C.—(1) This Article applies to any private tenancy except a controlled tenancy (within the meaning given by Article 40(4)).
- (2) The rent payable under a tenancy to which this Article applies may not be increased—
 - (a) within the period of 12 months beginning with the date on which the tenancy is granted, or
 - (b) within the period of 12 months beginning with the date on which the last increase took effect;

but this is subject to regulations under paragraph (3).

(3) The Department may by regulations specify circumstances in which paragraph (2) does not apply.

- (4) Circumstances specified under paragraph (3) may include, in particular, circumstances in which the dwelling-house let under the tenancy is renovated, refurbished, altered or extended.
- (5) The Department may by regulations amend paragraph (2)(a) or (b) so as to substitute, for the period that is for the time being specified there, a period that is 12 months or more but not more than 2 years.

Requirement to give written notice of increase

- **5D**.—(1) This Article applies to any private tenancy except a controlled tenancy (within the meaning given by Article 40(4)).
- (2) The rent payable under a tenancy to which this Article applies may not be increased unless the landlord gives written notice complying with paragraphs (3) to (5).
 - (3) The notice must specify—
 - (a) the date on which the increase in the rent will take effect, and
 - (b) the rent that will be payable after the increase.
- (4) The date specified under paragraph (3)(a) must be not less than 2 months after the date on which the notice is given to the tenant.
 - (5) The notice must—

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- (a) contain such other information, and
- (b) be in such form,

as may be prescribed.".

- (3) In Article 72 (provisions concerning regulations)—
 - (a) in paragraph (3), after "5A," insert "5C(3) or (5),";
 - (b) after paragraph (4) insert—
 - "(5) Before laying a draft of regulations under Article 5C(5) before the Assembly, the Department must consult—
 - (a) such persons as appear to it to be representative of landlords,
 - (b) such persons as appear to it to be representative of tenants, and
 - (c) such persons as the Department considers appropriate (which may include landlords or tenants).".

Fire, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, etc.

- **8.**—(1) The 2006 Order is amended as follows.
- (2) After Article 11 insert—

"Application of Articles 11B to 11F

- 11A.—(1) The provisions set out in Articles 11B to 11F apply in relation to—
 - (a) any private tenancy of a dwelling-house granted on or after the date on which section 8 of the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 comes into operation, and

- (b) any private tenancy of a dwelling-house granted before the date on which section 8 of the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 comes into operation (but only from the prescribed date).
- (2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b), a statutory tenancy is to be treated as if it were a private tenancy granted before the commencement of section 8 of the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 (regardless of when the dwelling-house in question became subject to the statutory tenancy).

Landlord's duties: fire, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms

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- 11B.—(1) The landlord under a private tenancy must keep in repair and in proper working order—
 - (a) sufficient appliances for detecting fire or smoke, and for giving warning in the event that they are detected, and
 - (b) sufficient appliances for detecting whether carbon monoxide is present at levels that are harmful to people, and for giving warning if it is.
- (2) The Department may by regulations set minimum standards for the purpose of determining whether the duties under paragraph (1) have been complied with.
- (3) The standards that may be set under paragraph (2) include standards as to the number, type and condition of appliances that should be installed in circumstances specified in the regulations.
- (4) A landlord who fails to comply with a duty under paragraph (1) is guilty of an offence under this Order.

Tenant's duties: fire, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms

- 11C. The tenant under a private tenancy—
- (a) must take proper care of the appliances installed for the purposes of Article 11B as a good tenant;
- (b) must make good any damage to those appliances wilfully or negligently done or caused by the tenant, by any tenant of his or hers or by any other person lawfully living in or lawfully visiting the premises.

Landlord's duties: private tenancy of part of a building

11D. Where a dwelling-house let under a private tenancy consists of a part of a building, the duties imposed on the landlord by Article 11B may require the landlord to position appliances in a part or parts of the building not comprised in the tenancy.

General qualification on landlord's duties

11E. The duties imposed on the landlord by Article 11B do not require the landlord to carry out works or repairs for which the tenant is liable by virtue of Article 11C.

Knowledge of disrepair

- 11F. A landlord is not under a duty to carry out works by virtue of Article 11B unless the landlord has actual knowledge (whether because of notice given by the tenant or otherwise) of the need for those works.".
- (3) In Article 68(1) (prosecution and punishment of offences), after "5ZC(4)," (as inserted by section 4) insert "11B(4),".
 - (4) Article 68A (fixed penalty for certain offences) is amended as follows.
 - (5) In paragraph (1)—

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- (a) at the end of sub-paragraph (a), omit "or";
- (b) after that sub-paragraph insert—
 - "(aa) an offence under Article 11B(4);".
- (6) In paragraph (8), after "5B(10)" insert ", 11B(4)".

Energy efficiency regulations

9. Schedule 2 contains amendments to the 2006 Order enabling the Department for Communities to make regulations concerning the energy efficiency of dwelling-houses let under a private tenancy.

Electrical safety standards regulations

10. Schedule 3 contains amendments to the 2006 Order enabling the Department for Communities to make regulations concerning electrical safety standards in dwelling-houses let under a private tenancy.

Validity requirements for notices to quit given by landlords and tenants

- 11.—(1) The 2006 Order is amended in accordance with subsections (2) to (8).
- (2) Article 14 (length of notice to quit) is amended in accordance with subsections (3) to (6).
- (3) For paragraph (1) substitute—
 - "(1) A notice by a landlord to quit a dwelling-house let under a private tenancy is not valid unless—
 - (a) it is in the prescribed form and contains the prescribed information, and
 - (b) it is given not less than the relevant period before the date on which it is to take effect.".
 - (4) In paragraph (1A)(a) and (b), for "5 years" substitute "12 months".
 - (5) After paragraph (2) insert—
 - "(3) The Department may by regulations amend paragraph (1A) so as to provide that—
 - (a) in relation to a tenancy in existence for more than 12 months but not more than 10 years, the relevant period is a period that is more than 8 weeks but not more than 6 months:

- (b) in relation to a tenancy in existence for more than 10 years, the relevant period is a period that is more than 12 weeks but not more than 6 months.
- (4) Regulations under sub-paragraph (a) or (b) of paragraph (3) may—
 - (a) provide that any amendments do not apply in relation to cases specified in the regulations;
 - (b) provide that the relevant period is different in different cases within that sub-paragraph described by reference to the period for which the tenancy has been in existence.

(But this is without prejudice to the application of section 17(5) of the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954.)

- (5) Any amendment made by virtue of regulations under paragraph (3) does not apply in relation to a notice to quit given before the date on which the amendment comes into operation.".
- (6) At the end of the heading to the Article add ": by landlords".
- (7) After Article 14 insert—

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"Length of notice to quit: by tenants

- 14A.—(1) A notice by a tenant to quit a dwelling-house let under a private tenancy is not valid unless—
 - (a) it is given in writing, and
 - (b) it is given not less than the relevant period before the date on which it is to take effect.
 - (2) For the purposes of paragraph (1) the relevant period is—
 - (a) 4 weeks, if the tenancy has not been in existence for more than 10 years;
 - (b) 12 weeks, if the tenancy has been in existence for more than 10 years.
- (3) Paragraph (1) applies regardless of the date on which the private tenancy was granted.
- (4) The Department may by regulations amend paragraph (2) so as to provide that, in relation to a tenancy in existence for more than 12 months but not more than 10 years, the relevant period is a period that is more than 4 weeks but not more than 12 weeks.
- (5) Regulations under paragraph (4) may provide that the relevant period is different in different cases within that paragraph described by reference to the period for which the tenancy has been in existence.

(But this is without prejudice to the application of section 17(5) of the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954.)

- (6) Any amendment made by virtue of regulations under paragraph (4) does not apply in relation to a notice to quit given before the date on which the amendment comes into operation.".
- (8) In Article 72 (provisions concerning regulations)—

- (a) in paragraph (3), after "5C(3) or (5)," (as inserted by section 7) insert "14, 14A,";
- (b) in paragraph (5) (as inserted by section 7), after "Article 5C(5)" insert ", 14 or 14A".
- (9) In consequence of subsection (3), omit section 3(2) of the Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
 - (10) The amendments made by this section do not apply in relation to a notice to quit given before the date on which this section comes into operation.

Interpretation

12. In this Act "the 2006 Order" means the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

Commencement

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- 13.—(1) The following provisions come into operation on the day after the day on which this Act receives Royal Assent—
 - (a) section 12;
 - (b) this section; and
 - (c) section 14.
- (2) The following provisions come into operation on the day after the day on which this Act receives Royal Assent insofar as they confer power to make regulations—
 - (a) section 1;
 - (b) section 2 and Schedule 1;
 - (c) section 7;
 - (d) section 8;
 - (e) section 9 and Schedule 2;
 - (f) section 10 and Schedule 3; and
 - (g) section 11.
 - (3) The other provisions of this Act come into operation on such day or days as the Department for Communities may by order appoint.
- (4) An order under this section may make such transitory or transitional provision, or savings, as the Department for Communities considers appropriate.

Short title

14. This Act may be cited as the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2021.

SCHEDULES

SCHEDULE 1

Section 2.

TENANT TO BE GIVEN NOTICE REGARDING CERTAIN PAST MATTERS

Tenancies granted on or after 30 June 2011 but before the coming into operation of section 1

1.—(1) This paragraph applies where—

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- (a) a private tenancy of a dwelling-house was granted on or after 30 June 2011 but before the commencement date; and
- (b) the dwelling-house is let under that tenancy on the commencement date.
- (2) The landlord under the tenancy must, within 28 days after the commencement date, give to the tenant a notice—
 - (a) in the prescribed form, and
 - (b) containing the prescribed particulars and other prescribed information relating to the tenancy.
- (3) Where a landlord has, between the granting of the tenancy and the commencement date, given the tenant a notice that substantially meets the requirements of sub-paragraph (2), the landlord is to be regarded as having complied with that sub-paragraph.
- (4) A tenant must not be required to make a payment in respect of any notice under sub-paragraph (2).
- (5) A landlord who fails to comply with sub-paragraph (2) is guilty of an offence.
 - Variation of certain terms on or after 30 June 2011 but before the coming into operation of section 1
 - 2.—(1) This paragraph applies where—
 - (a) on or after 30 June 2011 but before the commencement date, a prescribed term of a private tenancy of a dwelling-house was varied; and
- (b) the dwelling-house is let under that tenancy on the commencement date; and it applies regardless of the date on which the tenancy was granted.
 - (2) In paragraph (1) "varied" includes varied by omission.
 - (3) The landlord under the tenancy must, within 28 days after the commencement date, give to the tenant a notice—
 - (a) in the prescribed form, and
 - (b) containing the prescribed particulars and other prescribed information relating to the tenancy.

- (4) Where a landlord has, between the varying of the prescribed term and the commencement date, given the tenant a notice that substantially meets the requirements of sub-paragraph (3), the landlord is to be regarded as having complied with that sub-paragraph.
- (5) A tenant must not be required to make a payment in respect of any notice under sub-paragraph (3).
 - (6) A landlord who fails to comply with sub-paragraph (3) is guilty of an offence.

Continued failure by landlord to provide notice under paragraph 1 or 2 after conviction or fixed penalty

- 3.—(1) If a landlord is convicted of an offence under paragraph 1(5) or 2(6), and the failure continues for more than 14 days after the conviction, the landlord is deemed to have committed a further offence under that sub-paragraph in respect of that failure.
 - (2) Sub-paragraph (3) applies where—

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- (a) a landlord fails to comply with paragraph 1(2) or 2(3),
- (b) the landlord is given a fixed penalty notice under paragraph 6 in respect of an offence under paragraph 1(5) or 2(6) on the grounds of that failure, and
- (c) the landlord pays the fixed penalty stated in the notice.
- (3) If the failure to comply with paragraph 1(2) or 2(3) continues for more than 14 days after the landlord pays the fixed penalty, the landlord is guilty of an offence.

Punishment and prosecution of offences under this Schedule

- 4. A person who is guilty of an offence under paragraph 1(5), 2(6) or 3(3) is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale.
 - 5. Proceedings for an offence under paragraph 1(5), 2(6) or 3(3) may be instituted by the appropriate district council.

Fixed penalty notices

- 6.—(1) This paragraph applies where on any occasion an authorised officer of a district council has reason to believe that a person ("P") has committed—
 - (a) an offence under paragraph 1(5) or 2(6), except one deemed to have been committed by virtue of paragraph 3(1), or
 - (b) an offence under paragraph 3(3).
- (2) The authorised officer may give P a notice in the prescribed form offering P the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction for the offence by payment of a fixed penalty.
 - (3) A fixed penalty payable under this paragraph is payable to the district council whose officer gave the notice.
 - (4) Where P is given a notice under this paragraph in respect of an offence—
 - (a) no proceedings may be instituted for that offence before the expiration of the period of 14 days, or such other period as may be specified in the notice, following the date of the notice; and

- (b) P may not be convicted of that offence if P pays the fixed penalty before the expiration of that period.
- (5) A notice under this paragraph must give such particulars of the circumstances alleged to constitute the offence as are necessary for giving reasonable information of the offence.
 - (6) A notice under this paragraph must also state—
 - (a) the period during which, by virtue of sub-paragraph (4), proceedings will not be taken for the offence;
 - (b) the amount of the fixed penalty; and
 - (c) the person to whom and the address at which the fixed penalty may be paid.
- (7) The fixed penalty payable to a district council under this paragraph in respect of an offence under paragraph 1(5), 2(6) or 3(3) is an amount determined by the council, being an amount not exceeding one-fifth of the maximum fine payable on summary conviction of that offence.
 - (8) In any proceedings a certificate which—
 - (a) purports to be signed on behalf of the clerk of the council, and
 - (b) states that payment of a fixed penalty was or was not received by a date specified in the certificate,
- is evidence of the facts stated.

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- (9) A district council may use amounts paid to it in pursuance of notices under this paragraph only for the purposes of its functions under this paragraph, the 2006 Order or such other of its functions as may be prescribed.
- (10) In this paragraph "authorised officer", in relation to a district council, means an officer of the council who is authorised in writing by the council for the purposes of this paragraph.

Supplementary and interpretation

- 7. Regulations under paragraph 1, 2 or 6 are subject to negative resolution.
- 8. In paragraphs 1 and 2 "the commencement date" means the date on which section 1 comes into operation.
 - 9. Any expression that is used in both this Schedule and the 2006 Order has the same meaning in this Schedule as in that Order.

SCHEDULE 2

Section 9.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY REGULATIONS

- 1. The 2006 Order is amended as follows.
- 2. After Article 11F (as inserted by section 8) insert—

"Energy efficiency

Energy efficiency of dwelling-houses let under a private tenancy

- 11G.—(1) The Department may by regulations provide that a person may not—
 - (a) grant a private tenancy of a dwelling-house to which paragraph (2) applies;
 - (b) continue to let out under a private tenancy a dwelling-house to which paragraph (2) applies.
 - (2) This paragraph applies to a dwelling-house—
 - (a) that is of such description of dwelling-house as is provided for by the regulations,
 - (b) in relation to which there is an energy performance certificate, and
 - (c) that falls below such level of energy efficiency (as demonstrated by the energy performance certificate) as is provided for by the regulations.
- (3) The regulations may provide that a dwelling-house that is of such description as is provided for by the regulations is exempt from such prohibitions imposed by the regulations as are prescribed in the regulations.
 - (4) In this Article—

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- "private tenancy" does not include a protected tenancy or a statutory tenancy;
- "energy performance certificate" means—
 - (a) an energy performance certificate within the meaning given by the Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008, or
 - (b) such other statutory document issued for the purpose of determining or recording the energy performance or efficiency of a dwelling-house as may be prescribed.
- (5) In paragraph (4) "statutory document" has the meaning given by section 1(e) of the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954.

Private tenancy energy efficiency regulations: power to create an offence

- 11H.—(1) Regulations under Article 11G may provide that a person who breaches a prohibition imposed under paragraph (1) of that Article is guilty of an offence.
 - (2) Any offence created by virtue of paragraph (1)—
 - (a) is not to be triable on indictment or punishable with imprisonment;
 - (b) is not to be punishable with a fine exceeding level 5 on the standard scale.".
- 3. In Article 68(3) (prosecution by appropriate district council), after "this Order" insert "(including any offence created by virtue of Article 11H)".

- 4. In Article 68A (fixed penalty for certain offences)—
 - (a) in paragraph (1), after sub-paragraph (aa) (as inserted by section 8) insert—
 - "(ab) an offence created by virtue of Article 11H; or";
- (b) in paragraph (8), after "or 65A(4)" insert "or an offence created by virtue of Article 11H".
- 5. In Article 72 (provisions concerning regulations), after paragraph (5) (as inserted by section 7) insert—
 - "(6) Before making regulations under Article 11G, the Department must consult—
 - (a) the Department for the Economy and the Department of Finance,
 - (b) district councils,

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- (c) such persons as appear to the Department to be representative of landlords, and
- (d) such other persons as the Department considers appropriate (which may include landlords).".

SCHEDULE 3

Section 10.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY STANDARDS REGULATIONS

- 1. The 2006 Order is amended as follows.
 - 2. After Article 11H (as inserted by Schedule 2) insert—

"Electrical safety standards

Electrical safety standards for dwelling-houses let under a private tenancy

- 11I.—(1) The Department may by regulations impose duties on the landlord of a dwelling-house let under a private tenancy for the purposes of ensuring that electrical safety standards are met during the period when the dwelling-house is let under the tenancy.
- (2) "Electrical safety standards" means standards specified in, or determined in accordance with, the regulations in relation to—
 - (a) the installations in the dwelling-house for the supply and use of electricity, or
 - (b) electrical fixtures, fittings or appliances provided by the landlord.
- (3) The duties imposed on the landlord may include duties to ensure that a qualified person has checked that the electrical safety standards are met.
 - (4) The regulations may make provision about—
 - (a) how and when checks are carried out;
 - (b) who is qualified to carry out checks.
- (5) The regulations may require the landlord to undertake works as a result of checks carried out by the qualified person.

(6) The regulations may require the landlord—

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- (a) to obtain a certificate from the qualified person confirming that electrical safety standards are met;
- (b) to give a copy of the certificate to the tenant, or a prospective tenant, or any other person specified in the regulations;
- (c) where the electrical safety standards are not met, to obtain from the qualified person a written description of the works required to meet the standards.
- (7) Regulations under this Article are referred to in Articles 11J and 11K as "electrical safety standards regulations".

Electrical safety standards regulations: power to create an offence

- 11J.—(1) Electrical safety standards regulations may provide that a landlord who fails to comply with a duty imposed under Article 11I(1) is guilty of an offence.
 - (2) Any offence created by virtue of paragraph (1)—
 - (a) is not to be triable on indictment or punishable with imprisonment;
 - (b) is not to be punishable with a fine exceeding level 5 on the standard scale.

Electrical safety standards regulations: other enforcement

- 11K.—(1) Electrical safety standards regulations may make provision, for the enforcement of a duty imposed under Article 11I(1)—
 - (a) under which a landlord may be required to take remedial action;
 - (b) under which a district council may, with the consent of the tenant, arrange for a person to enter the dwelling-house and take remedial action.
- (2) Regulations made by virtue of paragraph (1) may include, in particular, provision about procedural matters.
- (3) Regulations made by virtue of paragraph (1) that make provision in connection with paragraph (1)(a) may include, in particular, provision enabling the landlord to make representations against any requirement to take remedial action.
- (4) Regulations made by virtue of paragraph (1) that make provision in connection with paragraph (1)(b) may include, in particular, provision—
 - (a) about appeals against any proposed remedial action;
 - (b) enabling a district council to recover from the landlord any costs incurred by it in taking remedial action ("remedial costs");
 - (c) enabling a district council to recover from any agent of the landlord any remedial costs, up to the total amount of money held by the agent on behalf of the landlord;
 - (d) under which any remedial costs due under the regulations are deemed, until recovered, to be charged on and payable out of the estate of the landlord in the land in relation to which the costs were

- incurred and the estate in that land of any person deriving title from the landlord;
- (e) about the enforceability and registration of any charge created under the regulations;
- (f) about the application of costs recovered.".
- 3. In Article 68(3) (prosecution by appropriate district council), after "11H" (as inserted by Schedule 2) insert "or 11J".
 - 4. In Article 68A (fixed penalty for certain offences)—
 - (a) in paragraph (1)(ab) (as inserted by Schedule 2), after "11H" insert "or 11J";
 - (b) in paragraph (8), after "11H" (as inserted by Schedule 2) insert "or 11J".
 - 5. In Article 72 (provisions concerning regulations)—
 - (a) after paragraph (3) insert—

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- "(3A) Regulations under Article 11I(1) that contain provision mentioned in Article 11K(4)(d) must not be made unless a draft of the regulations has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, the Assembly.";
- (b) after paragraph (6) (as inserted by Schedule 2) insert—
 - "(7) Before making regulations under Article 11I(1), the Department must consult—
 - (a) district councils,
 - (b) such persons as appear to the Department to be representative of landlords, and
 - (c) such other persons as the Department considers appropriate (which may include landlords).
 - (8) In the case of regulations that contain provision mentioned in Article 11K(4)(d), the consultation must take place before the draft of the regulations is laid before the Assembly.".

Private Tenancies Bill

[AS INTRODUCED]

A Bill to amend the law relating to private tenancies.

Introduced by: Ms Deirdre Hargey, Minister for Communities

On: 06 July 2021

Bill Type: Executive Bill

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS
An Explanatory and Financial Memorandum is printed separately as
NIA Bill 32/17-22 EFM.



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Agenda Item 6e

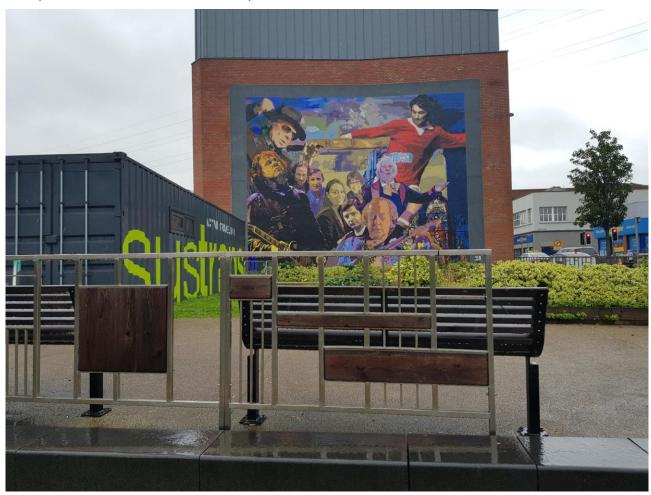


PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Sub	ject:	ITV 1 Million Minutes Bench at C.S. Lewis Squa	are		
Date	9 :	9 th November 2021			
Rep	porting Officer: Ryan Black, Director Neighbourhood Services				
Con	tact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Ma	nager		
		·			
Res	Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?		Yes No X			
	If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
	After Committee	Decision			
	After Council Do				
	Some time in th	e future			
Never					
Call-in					
Is th	ne decision eligible for (Call-in?	Yes X No		
1.0	Purpose of Report or	Summary of main Issues			
1.1	•	per is to ask for Members approval for the Cour	ncil to support the 1 Million		
		• •	• •		
	minutes campaign and to permit the temporary wrapping of a bench at CS Lewis Square as part of the ITV 1 million minutes campaign to combat the national pandemic of loneliness.				
2.0	Recommendations				
2.1	The Committee is asked	to:			
	 Consider this request to support the campaign and approve the application of a temporary 				
	wrap to a bench	at CS Lewis Square.			
3.0	Main report				
	Background				
3.1	City and Neighbourhood Services have received a request from ITV Good Morning Britain and the				
	Eastside Greenways tea	am to support the ITV I million minutes campaign	1.		
3.2	A Milliam Misselfa a sa	dana arangka aritta akanditian (a bada arangka) ()	nal nandamia af lasa lis		
J.Z	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·				
	i nis campaign doesn't a	ask for money, it asks people for their time. Throu	ugnout December there will		

be a pledge button on the ITV website where people can commit time to volunteer with charities helping lonely people. This could be as simple as a companion call or running a friendship group.

- Last year they had a record-breaking 85 million minutes pledged a number they hope to exceed in 2021. This year, as part of the campaign, ITV would like to launch an installation series that puts benches around the country to encourage people to sit down and talk to one another. They aim to make people think about those who are lonely and to inspire them to help by pledging their time.
- 3.4 ITV Good Morning Britain would like to place a temporary wrap on an existing bench at the popular location in front of the Visitor Centre at CS Lewis Square in East Belfast. See below. The timescale is from 6th-31st December. ITV would be responsible for the application of the wrap, ongoing maintenance, liability etc for the duration of the campaign until the 31st December when there will be the option to leave or remove the wrap.



Financial & Resource implications

3.5 | None

Rural needs, Equality or Good Relations Implications

3.6 | None.

4.0 | Appendices – Documents Attached

None

Agenda Item 6f





Subjec	et:	Request to film using a drone at Cave F	Hill Country Park	
Date:		9 November 2021		
Report	ting Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services		
Contac	ct Officer:	Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services	s Manager, North	
Restric	ted Reports			
Is this	report restricted?		Yes No X	
H	f Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?		
	After Committe	ee Decision		
After Council De		Decision		
	Some time in the	he future		
	Never			
• " '		_		
Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes $\begin{array}{ c c c c c }\hline X & No \\\hline \end{array}$				
1.0		t or Summary of main Issues report is to advise Members that the Cou	uncil has received a request	
		illed Piranha Bar to film a commercial on	·	
		g a small unmanned aircraft / drone (SUA		
	15 th November 2021 from 8am to 10am.			
1.2	Members are advis	ed that Council Officers are currently at t	he final stages of developing a	
	new drones policy for the Council which, following consultation and agreement, will provide			
	a framework for dea	aling with future drone flights request acro	oss the Council. In the interim	
	all current requests	are presented for consideration at Comr	mittee.	
2.0	Recommendations	 S		
2.1	The Committee is a	asked to;		
	Agree the re	equest from Piranha Bar to film a comme	rcial for Tourism NI using a	
	SUA (Small	Unmanned Aircraft/Drone) at Cavehill Co	ountry Park week commencing	
	0071 (01116111	ommanifica / morant brond) at caverim of	ountry I ain wook commonoling	

	Council meeting that the decision of the committee will be implemented with
	immediate effect, subject to the organisers
	 Resolving all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
	- Meeting all statutory requirements including Public Liability Insurance cover,
	Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities; and
	- Adhering to Government Covid19 Regulations in place at the time of the
	event.
3.0	Main report
	Key Issues
3.1	Piranha Bar will be using the services of SUA Operator John McCreesh for the filming
	request. John McCreesh will be undertaking the drone filming of Belfast from Cavehill
	Country Park and has operational authorisation from the Civil Aviation Authority for this
	activity.
3.2	Piranha Bar wish to film a commercial for Tourism NI that will promote Belfast as a
	destination for people to visit.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.3	The OS&SS Manager has no operational issues with these events and no additional staff
	are required.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.4	There are no known implications.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None
	INOTIC