

# Transformation Committee

Wednesday, 28th January, 2015

## MEETING OF TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Beattie (Chair); and  
Councillors Bell, Convery, Copeland,  
Craig, Dudgeon, Graham, B. Groves,  
Kingston, McAllister, McAteer, McConville,  
McKee and Newton.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mrs. S. McNicholl, Strategic Policy and Planning Manager;  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Miss. L. Francey, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies were reported from Councillors Howard and Mullan.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th December were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Shadow Council at its meeting on 6th January.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

### Rate Setting 2015/2016

(Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of Finance and Resources provided the Committee with an update in relation to the establishment of the District Rate for 2015/2016, which would be considered by the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 30th January. He reported that the Northern Ireland Executive had committed a sum of £30million towards a rates convergence scheme, as part of Local Government Reform, and provided examples of how that scheme and the level of District and Regional rates would impact upon the ratepayer.

He explained that, once the aforementioned Committee had agreed the District Rate for the year, information would be published within the next edition of City Matters, on the Council's website and on rates bills and Members would be provided with details on how the rates would impact upon their constituents.

The Chief Executive outlined a number of decisions which were still to be made regarding, for example, the future of the Belfast Investment Fund and the Local Investment Funds and that discussions would take place around the feasibility of making funding available for holding festivals and events in those areas which would, from 1st April, 2015, be moving into the Belfast City boundary area.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

### **Belfast Residents' Survey**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1. Purpose of report**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the key findings from the Belfast Resident Survey and to outline next steps in terms of how the data will be used and reported.**

**2. Background**

**2.1 Earlier this year, Members agreed to undertake a resident survey to help inform the development of the new Belfast corporate plan and the new community plan for Belfast. The survey helps the Council fulfil its duty to consult under the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 as it provides reliable resident perception data to inform strategic planning and performance management. The information gathered from the survey, together with other evidence and data, will be used to help set the future strategic direction of the Council and to inform community planning priorities. Information about the approach taken and some of the key findings are set out in this report.**

***Methodology***

**2.2 The survey was carried out by Social Market Research, who were appointed following a quotation process to ensure independence and to provide expert assurance regarding the statistical validity and reliability of the data. As with previous exercises, the survey was based on a representative sample of residents and carried out via face-to-face interviews conducted in the home. 1500 people over the age of sixteen were interviewed across the new Belfast district council boundary; all new DEAs and electoral wards covered with quotas set to ensure proportionality and representativeness.**

**The fieldwork was carried out between 20th August and 25th September 2014 and sought feedback from residents on the following matters:**

- **Priorities for Improving Belfast**
- **Living in Belfast**
- **Your Local Area**
- **Your Wellbeing**
- **Belfast City Council Performance (current ratepayers only)**

**2.3** The priority questions were also put on the council website to give everyone in Belfast an opportunity to provide their views and contribute to the development of the priorities. In total 266 responses were received on-line. Key findings from this survey are also reported below.

**2.4** It should also be noted that the questions relating to council performance were adjusted so that only current Belfast ratepayers were asked their opinion, as until April 2015 those living in areas transferring to Belfast will not have received direct services from BCC and therefore would be unable to answer these questions.

#### **Key Findings**

##### ***Priorities for Improving Belfast***

**2.5** When asked to prioritise the following 5 themes, respondents to both the resident survey and the on-line survey put them in the following order:

- 1. A Strong Economy**
- 2. Supporting People and Communities**
- 3. Good City Leadership**
- 4. Providing value for money services**
- 5. A Better Environment**

**2.6** To help inform the development of the community plan for Belfast, respondents were asked to select, from a list, the top three things which they felt would make the most difference to improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Belfast. The following tables show the top priorities for each theme:

<b><i>Top 3 Economic Priorities</i></b>	
<b><i>Resident Survey</i></b>	<b><i>On-line Survey</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creating jobs</li> <li>2. Improving skills and employability</li> <li>3. Attracting investment</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creating a vibrant city centre</li> <li>2. Creating jobs</li> <li>3. Attracting investment to Belfast</li> </ol>
<b><i>Top 3 Social Priorities</i></b>	
<b><i>Resident Survey</i></b>	<b><i>On-line Survey</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improving safety, reducing crime &amp; ASB</li> <li>2. Improving community relations</li> <li>3. Improving people's health and wellbeing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reducing poverty and social exclusion</li> <li>2. Improving community relations</li> <li>3. Improving safety, reducing crime and ASB</li> </ol>
<b><i>Top 3 Environmental Priorities</i></b>	
<b><i>Resident Survey</i></b>	<b><i>On-line Survey</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cleaner city and more attractive</li> <li>2. Managing waste</li> <li>3. More energy efficient /invest in renewables</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improving public transport</li> <li>2. Improving walking and cycling routes</li> <li>3. Making the city cleaner and more attractive</li> </ol>

- 2.7 Generally, although there was a strong correlation between the priorities identified by the public in previous surveys (i.e. creating a safer city and making the city cleaner and greener) it is interesting to note that this year the priorities have shifted to issues such as jobs and the economy which may reflect the challenging economic climate. Good Relations issues also feature more strongly in this survey compared to four years ago.

***Satisfaction with Belfast and local area***

- 92% of those surveyed were satisfied with Belfast as a place to live, whilst 86% were also satisfied with their local area. These levels of satisfaction have remained fairly constant since 2007 and compare favourably to other cities.
- Approximately 3 out of 4 people surveyed, felt that in Belfast:

- All people can live life to full (79%)
- Older people are treated with respect (76%)
- Young people can reach their full potential (74%)
- However, this falls to just over half (54%) who felt that in Belfast people get on well regardless of background or beliefs.
- Those surveyed were generally positive about their local area:
  - approximately 8 out of 10 people (81%) felt they could access all the services they needed
  - approximately 7 out of 10 people felt their area was clean and attractive – up from 56% in 2010
  - approximately 7 out of 10 people felt their area had a strong sense of community (73%), that people worked together to improve things (69%), and that the area was welcoming to others (69%)
- However, areas for improvement include:
  - access to job and training - 60% felt they could access these from their local area
  - community and race relations - half of those surveyed felt that their local area was a place where people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds got on well together (52%) or where people from different religious and political backgrounds got on well (51%).

#### ***Belfast City Council Performance***

- Generally, resident opinion about Belfast City Council was positive. The majority of respondents agreed that the council worked to:
  - attract investors to the city (75%)
  - improve the environment (72%)
  - improve local communities and support local people (71%)
  - improve the local economy (70%)
- 69% agreed that the council makes Belfast a better place to live; only 10% disagreed
- 65% agreed that the council shows good leadership for the city; 7% disagreed

- 65% of respondents were satisfied with how the council runs things; 9% disagreed
- 64% agreed that the Council keeps residents either very or fairly informed about the services it provides - up from 54% in 2010 and 41% in 2007
- 60% agreed that the Council consults with and listens to the views of local residents - up from 36% in 2010 and 30% in 2007

### *Wellbeing*

- 2.8 Generally, people in Belfast were positive about their lives and wellbeing. Overall satisfaction with life is scored at 8.01, as scored on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied'. However, the results for satisfaction with physical health (7.73) and financial situation (6.97) were somewhat lower.
- 2.9 It is also worth noting that almost half of those surveyed (48%) did not do any physical activity in a typical week i.e. a total of 30 minutes or more - a significant challenge in terms of improving people's health.
- 2.10 Perceptions of safety at night time have improved, but fallen slightly for daytime. In 2014, 91% of respondents felt safe in their local area during the day compared to 94% 2010; whereas 80% now feel safe at night compared to 64% in 2010. For the city centre, 77% reported feeling safe during the day compared to 85% in 2010; whilst 58% now feel safe at night compared to only 21% in 2010.

### 3. Next Steps

#### *Using the findings from the surveys*

- 3.1 The results from the resident survey will play a key part in helping to inform the development of the council's new Corporate Plan and the development of a community plan for Belfast, the 'Belfast Agenda'. Feedback from residents on priorities and ideas for improvement have been fed into the strategic planning process currently underway with Elected Members and will be used as part of the strategic planning process with community planning partners. Members will have an opportunity to further discuss these findings in more detail as part of the community planning engagement programme, and also through Area Working Group meetings linked to the development of local area planning.
- 3.2 The survey data relating to council performance and outcomes will be fed into the new performance management

arrangements also being developed as part of the council's new obligations under the Local Government Act and where appropriate will be used as performance indicators to measure and progress.

***Reporting and Communication of Results***

- 3.3 As in previous years, it is recommended that the results from the survey will be communicated through the council website, City Matters and via interlink.

4. **Resource Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct resource implications as a result of this report.

**Equality Implications**

- 4.2 There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. However, the information obtained will help inform our good relations work and audit of inequalities.

5. **Recommendation**

**The Committee is requested to note the report and to agree the next steps, including the process for communicating the results to the public and feeding in to the strategic planning process with Members, and community planning partners."**

The Strategic Policy and Planning Manager reviewed the key findings of the residents' survey and pointed out that they would be used as a basis for working with Members in order to confirm areas of priority to be included in the Belfast Agenda and also to identify issues to be addressed at a local level. In that regard, she undertook to circulate to the Committee further information on the survey and stated that discussion around the results at an area level would take place within the Area Working Groups.

The Committee noted the contents of the survey and agreed that the Council's Corporate Communications Unit issue a press statement highlighting the positive elements of the survey and the fact that the Council would use those elements to build upon its future work.

**Development of the 'Belfast Agenda'**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**"1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 **This report outlines for Members an approach for establishing the city's first community plan - the 'Belfast Agenda'. The paper describes the approach to strategic design; stakeholder inclusion; and outlines the likely engagement processes and**

interim governance structures that are required to ensure endorsement of the Agenda by Members and our community planning partners by December, 2015.

- 1.2 Following agreement by Members and our partners, the Belfast Agenda will set out a vision for our city in 2030 and establish a series of related quality of life outcomes for our citizens which will, in effect, constitute the shared long-term strategic plan for the city and its partners. The Agenda will also identify medium term priorities that the Council and its partners are committing to over the next four years if we are to make progress towards achieving our stated long term outcomes.
- 1.3 There already is a substantial body of evidence, and initial feedback from Members and partners, about what our priorities might be – with a strong emphasis on the need to secure sustainable economic growth for the city as a central driver for achieving longer term outcomes for residents. This emphasis has been supported by our initial engagement; ongoing analysis of the socio-economic data; our analysis of our partners’ plans and strategies; and in feedback from our residents via our recent survey.
- 1.4 A key aim of the Belfast Agenda will be to turn emerging consensus on the city’s priorities into a series of firm medium term commitments by government departments, agencies, and other relevant stakeholders over the next four years.
- 1.5 The objectives of this report is to outline for Members consideration a programme of work that will ensure that by December 2015 we have an action-orientated Belfast Agenda that builds on practice, experience and the substantial body of strategic thinking that already exists in the city. At the same time the programme will ensure that we fulfil our statutory obligations as Belfast’s lead community planning partner such as engaging with our partners and residents on the long term vision and outcomes for the city.
- 1.6 We have an opportunity to be creative and pragmatic in our approach to community planning in ways that allow us to begin to quickly address a number of the city’s key priorities.

**2**     **Key Issues**

**2.1**    The key elements relating to the programme are outlined in the following sections:

- 1. What are our community planning obligations?**
- 2. Our approach to design the Belfast Agenda**
- 3. The approach to strategic design and engagement**
- 4. Design of governance structures**
- 5. Timeline**
- 6. Initiatives supporting the development of the Agenda**

**(1) What are our community planning obligations?**

**2.2**    The following is a brief summary of the obligations as described in the draft community planning guidance which is currently out for public consultation. From April 2015 the Council will have a statutory obligation to bring together its partners in the city to lead on the development of the community plan for Belfast. This plan will be the key overarching strategic framework for all of the city's stakeholders and will act as a bridge between regional, city and neighbourhood priorities.

**2.3**    In very broad terms, the plan needs to:

- i Create a shared evidence base that is available to all partners (including communities) and which can be used for on-going monitoring and be a basis for measuring our impact.**
- ii Set out a long a long term vision for the city (up to 2030)**
- iii Set out a number of related wellbeing outcomes for its residents (up to 2030)**
- iv Establish partner actions that seek to achieve these outcomes (up to 2020)**

**2.4**    The guidance specifies that we must work with partners to design a process for establishing the vision, the quality of life outcomes and the actions that actively engages stakeholders and residents.

**2.5**    Belfast will also need a suitable governance structure for agreeing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the plan. The guidance is not prescriptive in terms of the nature of this structure but it would be led by Members and involve community planning partners. It is also likely that the

structure would require some form of representation by business and the community and voluntary sectors.

2.6 Members should note that officers are currently preparing a corporate response to the draft statutory guidance which will be presented to Members in February for approval.

2.7 (2.) Our approach to design the Belfast Agenda  
It is proposed that the Agenda will be structured around two levels:

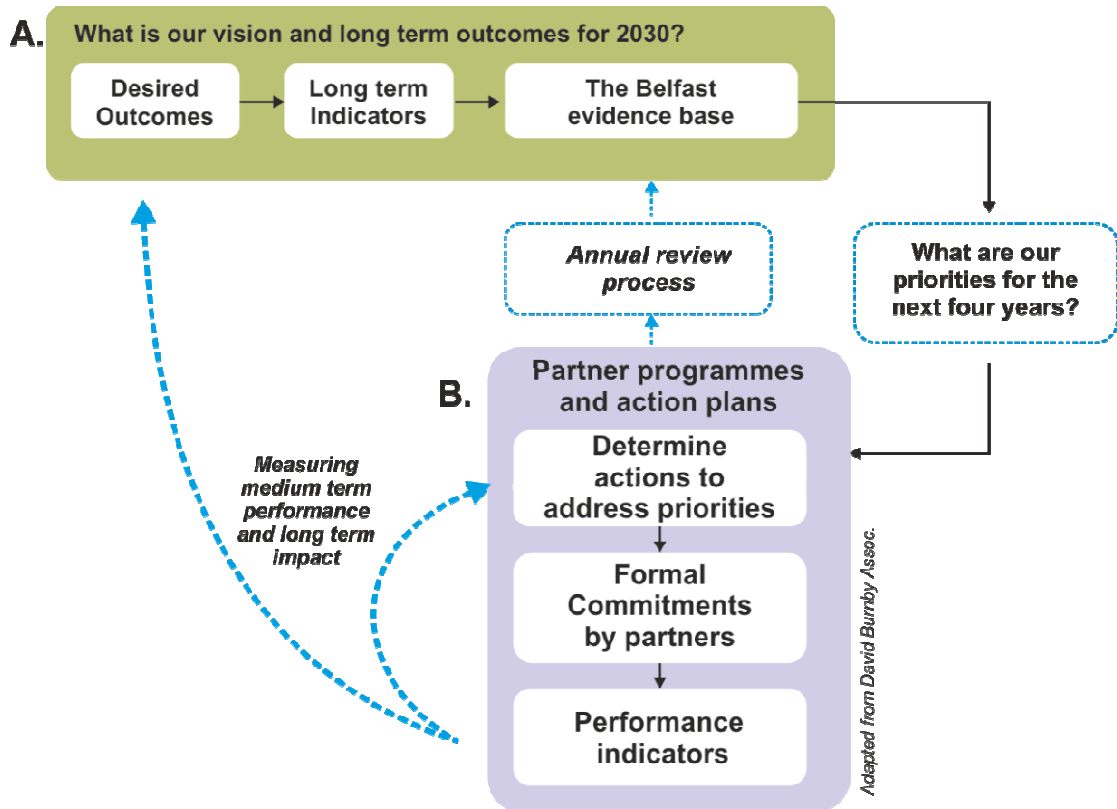
(A) A long term city vision and a series of outcomes for residents (to 2030). This level will set the ambitious long term strategic direction for Belfast. Ideally, any strategic planning process in the city will be able to use these broad outcomes as a reference point. This is also the strategic context for the Local Development Plan. We would agree a series of long term indicators for these outcomes that would help all partners measure the impact of their combined work.

2.8 (B) Our priorities, actions and commitments (to 2020).  
The second level of the Agenda is about identifying the city's priorities over the next four year. What are the things the Council and its partners need to focus on now in order to contribute most to the longer term outcomes? And what are the commitments partners need to make in order to address these priorities. These actions will include programmes, strategies and individual interventions. (There will be an emphasis here on joint actions and commitments that would not be possible without the Agenda.) Alongside the actions would be a number of individual performance measures including targets.

2.9 As Members know, it is also important to make progress in developing the Belfast Agenda in this period so that it can influence the next Programme for Government which is also under development.

2.10 (3) The approach to strategic design and engagement  
It is proposed that, building on the work to date, the Council will lead a twin-track process to:

- a. Establish the long term city vision and a series of outcomes for residents (to 2030); and
- b. Establish our priorities, actions and commitments (to 2020) towards achieving these outcomes.



- 2.11 For Part (A) the Council will set a small design group (drawn from the Council and relevant partners) to draft city outcomes – based on our Plan on a Page; the city evidence base; an audit of city strategies; the results of our residents survey; and the wider knowledge of other partners.
- 2.12 Members have already been introduced to the work of Mark Friedman and his Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) approach to planning. The Friedman model seeks to set out a small number of long term outcomes that are supported by a number of indicators that measure how successfully the city is in achieving these outcomes. (This is an approach that’s already been adopted by a number of cities – including Cardiff and Leeds.)
- 2.13 The Council will hold a ‘Belfast conversation’ on what these outcomes we should have. This would be an inclusive Member-led engagement with a wide range of stakeholders across the city to determine what we want for the city over the longer term. The conversation would include public workshops; online engagement and social media; the use of City Matters and the participation of partners.

2.14 During the same period, the Council will also be working with partners to agree our key priorities and actions for the next four years. The Council hosted a successful initial workshop with a number of key partners on 15 January to consider the initial thinking on priorities. Attended by senior partner representatives the workshop there was broad support for the approach being taken by Members agreement by partners to participate in this process.

2.15 (4) Governance structures

The DoE statutory guidance calls for some form of governance structure for the community planning process. Thinking on governance structures is at a very early stage and will be guided by Members using a 'form follows function' approach. The most effective and efficient governance arrangements will need to be influenced by the outcomes, priorities and commitments within the Belfast Agenda.

2.16 A pragmatic governance arrangement will also need to balance a need for inclusivity with effective and timely decision-making. Over time there may be the need for a number of 'thematic' sub-groups aligned to individual priorities (for example, around economic growth).

2.17 The final agreed governance structure will need to be agreed by Members and the city's partners over the next year. Work has now begun to determine the logistical requirements of a community planning structure; accountability and decision-making mechanisms; roles and responsibilities; etc. A further paper will be brought to a future Transformation Committee for discussion.

2.18 (5) Timeline

The target date for a first fully endorsed Belfast Agenda is December 2015. With this date in mind the following high level stages for the delivery of the programme as proposed:

Stages	Key dates
Develop draft vision and city outcomes	Feb to Apr 15
The 'Belfast conversation' engagement programme	Feb to April 15
Train Members, officers and partners in the Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA)	Feb to Mar 15

Develop city priorities and partner commitments	Feb to June 15
Partners agree draft Belfast Agenda for formal consultation	From June 2015
Formal consultation and further refinement	June to Dec 15
Endorsement of the Belfast Agenda	Jan to Mar 16
Publish the Belfast Agenda	Apr 2016

- 2.19 (6) Initiatives supporting the development of the Agenda  
There are a number of initiatives that are currently in development in support of the approach outlined above. Members are asked to note the following:
- 2.20 (a) Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) Capacity programme  
As noted above Members have already been introduced to Mark Friedman's Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA). We will now be rolling out OBA training during February and March with Members and officers. The approach will use real data and real issues to support the development of the draft Belfast Agenda. This training will build our 'in-house' capacity to use and develop our own OBA planning processes in the future.
- 2.21 (b) Building the 'Smart City' evidence base  
As noted above, one of the statutory requirements of the community planning process is for the council to set up and manage an shared 'evidence base' which would be available to community planning partners to inform ongoing decision-making on priorities, actions and as a basis for impact measurements. This evidence base would develop over time into a managed resource of smart urban data that would be contributed to by different partners.
- 2.22 Officers in the community planning team are working to create the initial city baseline (which includes the results of our residents survey and strategic planning audit) and are also pursuing a number of possible routes towards exploring and resourcing a future Smart Cities model.
- 2.23 (c) Engagement on future Regional Government policies and priorities  
As Members will be aware during 2015 the Executive and its departments will be working to establish the next Programme for Government. This is an important time for the Council to make the case for Belfast and to ensure that there is closer alignment between local, city and regional priorities. A key aim of the Belfast Agenda will be to articulate the challenges

and opportunities facing the city and to demonstrate a consensus amongst the city's stakeholders about what Belfast's priorities should be so that this can inform the new Programme for Government. Initial engagement is beginning to identify areas of importance around the city's role in attracting inward investment; the need to secure long term economic growth; the importance of our city centre not only for the city but for the entire region; the issue of skills and employability; the need to continue to build on the potential of tourism; and the need to build good relations. The Council, in developing the Belfast Agenda will need to consider its relationship with new and emerging policies and programmes being led by government departments, such as Urban Villages, Social Investment Fund projects and Building Successful Communities.

- 2.24 One strand of this conversation with regional government is around engagement on the social strand of the Programme for Government. As part of their evidence gathering for this work the Council has been asked by OFMdFM to carry out some early engagement on their behalf during February and March (along with the new Mid-Ulster and Derry City and Strabane district councils) on the social challenges. This engagement programme would then be rolled out to other councils from April onwards.
- 2.25 In a separate development Community Foundation NI (CFNI) recently offered to facilitate a short engagement programme with a number of 'hard to reach' communities on issues of poverty and social inclusion as part of the wider engagement on the Belfast Agenda. Officers are proposing to avail of this offer from CFNI to contribute to the both the Belfast Agenda and the request from OFMdFM to support them in the development of the new regional Social Policy.

### **3 Resource Implications**

- 3.1 This development phase of the Belfast Agenda is included within departmental resources. The OBA capacity building programme is being supported through the funding allocated for local government reform capacity building.

### **4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

- 4.1 The Belfast Agenda will be developed in line with the Council's equality and good relations policies.

5 **Call In**

5.1 This decision is subject to Call In.

6 **Recommendations**

6.1 The Committee is requested to:

1. note the outline community planning obligations and the intention of Council to make a formal response to the draft statutory guidance
2. consider and agree the broad 'two-level' approach to design of the Belfast Agenda and the broad approach to engagement
3. note the approach to the design of governance structures
4. note the proposed timeline and
5. note the initiatives in support of the development of the Agenda”

The Chief Executive reviewed the principal aspects of the report and pointed out that, prior to the meeting, she had received from Mr. B. Marr, who was assisting the Council in developing the Belfast Agenda, the latest draft plan arising from feedback from the Members and from stakeholders. She provided a brief overview of the draft, which set out ideas for outcomes and priorities, and confirmed that the Council would now be identifying actions and targets in order to progress the Belfast Agenda. That process would, for each priority area, involve the establishment of a City stakeholder group and extensive consultation with key stakeholders, including Elected Representatives, external agencies and residents.

After discussion, during which the Chief Executive undertook to forward to the Members a copy of the latest version of the draft plan, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairman