

# Corporate Plan

## 2020 - 24

2021 - 22 Delivery Plan  
Year End Report



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**Belfast**  
City Council

# Contents

- Introduction ..... 3
- Our Services ..... 4
- Inclusive Economic Recovery ..... 7
- Community Recovery ..... 13
- Environmental Recovery ..... 16
- Strategic Planning Frameworks ..... 18
- Organisational Foundations ..... 19

# Introduction

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Following the local government elections in May 2019, Councillors and officers worked collectively to develop a new ambitious 2020-24 Corporate Plan. While we continued to implement our corporate priorities, during the COVID pandemic the organisation shifted focus to responding to and recovering from the pandemic. This Annual Delivery Plan 2021-22 therefore sets out the areas we need to focus on in the short term to steer the city recovery during the next phase of the pandemic, as well as building the foundations for sustained recovery. The plan is structured as follows:

- Our services;
- Inclusive economic recovery;
- Community recovery;
- Environmental recovery;
- Strategic planning frameworks; and
- Organisational foundations.

Whilst ambitious, this delivery plan focused on measurable milestones within 2021-22. This year end update reports on progress against each milestone agreed for 2021-22.

# Our Services

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At the core of everything we do are the services that we deliver. Throughout 2021/22 we continued to seek new and innovative ways to ensure our services are delivered to the high standards expected by our customers whilst always ensuring value for money. Despite the challenges of Covid-19, the Council has continued to deliver a range of statutory and other core services to the people of Belfast. This includes essential services like emptying the bins, cleaning the streets, registering births, deaths and marriages, a wide range of regulatory and enforcement activity such as planning applications and building control inspections and enforcement duties relating to public and environmental health including food safety and port health. The Council also continued to maintain and provide a number of local amenities such as parks, playgrounds, community centres and leisure centres (contracted to GLL) as well as regional amenities including City Hall, Belfast Zoo, Belfast Castle, Malone House, Ulster Hall and Waterfront Hall.

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected all our services to varying degrees through 2021-22. As a council, we have continued to respond to the ongoing restrictions put in place, by quickly adapting key frontline services for our residents and businesses and ensuring the continued safe delivery of critical services to our residents and businesses in the city, including bereavement services, waste collection and street cleaning. It also included ensuring that we responded to the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities through working with community and voluntary sector partners and the Department for Communities.

As the NI Executive eased restrictions on a phased basis, we have sought to maximise our contribution to the safety, health, wellbeing and economic recovery of our city by re-opening key services and in supporting businesses to re-open safely.

The following are highlights of what has been achieved against the agreed priority areas in 2021/ 22.

**Front line service delivery**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recycled 68,000 tonnes of waste and recycled 43 per cent of our household waste.</li> <li>Empty approximately 10 million wheelie bins and carry out 38,500 bulky waste collections.</li> <li>Cleaned over 4,787 streets per week (445,000km per year).</li> <li>We continued to maintain street cleanliness, to a cleanliness index of above 65% (the Tidy NI national average).</li> <li>Facilitated 182 community clean- ups in 2021.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivered a 2-week summer programme of activities to approximately 500 children across the city.</li> <li>Supported 350 projects across the city through community provision micro/medium funding, representing a total investment of £990,552.</li> <li>Continued to deal with fuel poverty via schemes like Stay Warm which sold £43,940 in oil stamps.</li> <li>Good Relations participants/beneficiaries, we had 6,332 direct participants on our Programmes and 20,700 indirect beneficiaries of our Programmes.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Planning Service received 1,603 local applications this year and processed them with an average time of 17 weeks. 36 major applications were received with an average processing time of 31 weeks. (NB the figures are still provisional subject to final audit.)</li> <li>Processed 7626 Building Regulation applications.</li> <li>Dealt with 158 dangerous structures.</li> <li>Processed 408 entertainment licensing applications including 40 outdoor licences.</li> <li>Processed 185 applications relating to street trading, petroleum, cinemas, pavement cafes, road closures and amusement permits.</li> <li>Processed 7253 property certs.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>26,175 participation opportunities in Stadium Community Benefits Initiative (delivered by IFA and GAA in partnership with BCC).</li> <li>Belfast Boxing Strategy had 1,028 participants in 2021/22.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,035 Food safety inspections carried out.</li> <li>Health and safety 3,410 inspections carried out.</li> </ul>

**Service recovery**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Reopen the city's crematorium chapel to the public:</b> guidance issued by the Department of Health relating to the handling of infection risks when caring for the deceased and managing funerals in February 2022 included the requirement for the maintenance of the 2m social distance between households at funerals or in funeral homes, meaning a limit of 28 mourners per service at the City of Belfast Crematorium.</li> <li><b>Home safety checks and the distribution of equipment</b> continue to be delivered. Additional funding has been secured from the PHA to resource this function for 2022/2023. We continue to respond to all complaints and have resumed internal inspections.</li> <li><b>NIHMO unit</b> is fully operational and continues to engage regularly with DFC on service delivery. An internal service review is on-going to ensure efficient and effective delivery of this service.</li> <li>In line with the council agreed Service Recovery process, we have moved to recover nearly all <b>neighbourhood services</b> to pre Covid levels but with some ongoing mitigating measures to support recommended behaviours and ensure the highest levels of staff and customer safety. Our community centres, pavilions and pitches are open for bookings and we are processing third party requests to host events in our parks and open spaces thus giving individuals and families important social and recreational opportunities to support their physical, emotional and mental health and well-being.</li> <li>The <b>kerbside sort collections</b> were re-established in September 2021.</li> <li><b>City events</b>, including the Marathon and Christmas celebrations, have restarted since the easing of lockdown restrictions and have been delivered successfully.</li> <li><b>Smithfield</b> and <b>St George's Markets</b> are now operating normally following the removal of Covid related restrictions. A new layout was implemented from 4 March. The next stage is to bring on board new stallholders, subject to further engagement with CHSU. A new payment system is now in place following bankruptcy of previous supplier.</li> <li>The <b>Continental/ Christmas Market</b> returned after a two-year year absence. Work is under way on new contract development, which is likely to be appointed by July 2022.</li> <li><b>Pest control</b> – outdoor treatments recommenced in September 2020 when staff came off furlough. Indoor treatments recommenced in September 2021. However, only treating rats and mice and not all public health pests.</li> </ul>
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- Responded to 3668 Pest Control Service requests.
- Responded to 1646 daytime noise requests.
- Responded to 4938 Night-time noise requests.
- Responded to 238 urgent complaints.
- Responded to 75 Flooding complaints.
- Housing condition complaints/Statutory Nuisance 2686.
- Issued 1075 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering and dog offences.



- 20 Parks and Green Spaces with Green Flag accreditation.
- Carried out 3,809 cremations and total of 1,636 burials.

The following commitments have been carried forward from the 2021/22 plan into the 2022/23 delivery plan:

- **Implement new legislation to regulate fly tipping.** This has not been possible as councils in NI are still in the process of liaising with DAERA regarding the implementation of this legislation.
- **Delivery of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan** slowed due to pandemic restrictions. Extensions to the programme were agreed to 31 December 2021. Discussion with the funder on project modifications and further extensions to March/June 2023 are also progressing.
- Management of the city’s **off street car parking** is ongoing. The enforcement contract for the off street car parking is currently being reviewed. A consultant has been appointed to complete a piece of scoping work. The current enforcement contract has been extended for one year to allow procurement of a new contract.

### Port Health

- The Port Health service has developed protocols and processes for **imported food control** at Belfast Port to implement the current arrangements together with other competent authorities including DAERA, FSA and DEFRA.
- Continued to deliver its range of functions for infectious disease control and protecting public health. In 2021/22, 108 ship sanitation inspections were carried out, whilst the service assessed 2014 Maritime declarations of health for vessels arriving in Belfast Port.
- Indefinite extension of initial grace periods and easements while UK/EU discussions continue have impacted the timeline for completion of 2021/22 deliverables including:
  - Completion of **new Point of Entry infrastructure** is anticipated to be in early 2024 at the earliest. In the meantime Council continues to participate in ongoing work to inform technical and operational design requirements.
  - **Staff recruitment and retention** has been a significant issue in 2021/22, and work has been completed to review the interim structure. Recruitment to vacant and new posts is expected to be completed during Q1 and 2 of 2022/23. Further work to develop a more sustainable staffing model for the future will be required once the final NI Protocol arrangements are confirmed.

### Circular economy and urban waste

In carrying out its statutory duties in 2021/22 (noted above) the Resources & Fleet Service also carried out the following:

- Conducted an economic appraisal on waste collection schemes to inform our Waste Framework and Capital Programme.
- With funding assistance from DAERA, introduced **carpet recycling** at our Household Waste Recycling Centres, estimated to divert 400 tonnes per annum from landfill.
- Piloted a **laptop re-use scheme** at one of our Household Waste Recycling Centres with a view to expanding in 22/23.
- Commenced the **“More Circularity Less Carbon”** project with ACR+ and Zero Waste Scotland aimed at measuring the Council’s waste carbon footprint and identifying measures to reduce the impact. This is scheduled to be concluded in Q2 22/23.
- Waste Collection management staff continuously **engage with residents, community representatives, the DfI and local councillors** to resolve waste collection issues. This approach has resulted in agreed actions such as changing bin collection points, resident agreeing to change car parking habits, the adding of double yellow lines to improve street access etc.

# Inclusive Economic Recovery

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Our economic recovery has been about building resilient businesses that can protect and create jobs. We have worked alongside the NI Executive, the Department for the Economy, and other partners to bring forward an integrated approach to supporting businesses, sustaining jobs and creating new employment opportunities within the city. We have facilitated and delivered a number of key packages and interventions brought forward over the past year to support those sectors most affected, as well as to stimulate and incentivise job retention and skills development.

We have revamped our current system of business support to make it easier to access, more flexible to meet the needs of business and more focused on those businesses that can benefit from the support. We have worked with partners including Invest NI, Catalyst, FE colleges and community and voluntary organisations to amplify existing programmes and develop new programmes to create a continuum of support for entrepreneurs, businesses, social enterprises and co-operatives to enable individuals to achieve their potential.

Our focus has been on business resilience, job retention and community wealth building. This will continue, focusing on programmes and policies with partners that grow jobs, productivity, and community wealth with an increased focus on key growth sectors. Alongside our resources, we have utilised our City Deal finances, our city investment fund, developer contributions and the outputs from our emerging Inclusive Growth City Charter and Social Value Procurement Policy to assist us with developing jobs, opportunities and businesses for the most disadvantaged in our city. We will continue to support traditional sectors and promote inclusive economic growth across the city.

Whilst responding to the economic recovery, we understand the importance of our existing strategies and programmes of work such as the Cultural Strategy and Belfast Region City Deal – these will realise the long term ambitions of the city and we have continued to progress these in 2021/22.

<p><b>Belfast Region City Deal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Deal signed</b> by all partners on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021</li> <li>▪ <b>Employability &amp; Skills</b> proposition agreed at the Executive Board on 7<sup>th</sup> July</li> <li>▪ Agreed a <b>Governance Framework</b> for Phase 3</li> <li>▪ <b>Financial agreement</b> - Financial Agreement drafted and to be agreed in parallel with the Contract for Funding.</li> <li>▪ <b>Accountable Body</b> - Process drafted to enable funding to flow through the Accountable Body.</li> <li>▪ <b>Phase 3 Programme Plan</b> now agreed and Boards scheduled. Programmes will be kept under review</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cultural Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>2 Royal Avenue:</b> We've transformed 2 Royal Avenue into a meanwhile use city centre space in a new approach to experiential tourism and culture in the city. The opening of this venue marks the beginning of an exciting upscaled programme of culture and creativity for the city between 2022 and 2024.</li> <li>▪ <b>Year of Culture 2024:</b> brand and programme development have been undertaken and progressing to plan.</li> <li>▪ <b>Cultural mapping</b> of the city (including infrastructure).</li> <li>▪ <b>£3.08m funding</b> for Arts, Heritage, Festivals and Events through <b>117 grant awards</b></li> <li>▪ Belfast became a <b>UNESCO City of Music</b>, the first city on the island of Ireland to receive the accolade.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Inclusive Growth Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft <b>city charter (the Belfast Business Promise)</b> developed and scheduled for public consultation. Resource plan for implementation in place.</li> <li>• Development of anchor institution &amp; strategic employer commissioning and <b>procurement group</b>, with the first stage of the high level analysis of procurement spend reported to SP&amp;R Committee in March 2022.</li> <li>• Development of test &amp; learn pilots for a bespoke <b>Community Asset Transfer</b> model</li> <li>• Ongoing support for <b>social enterprises and co-operatives</b>, including plans to refresh the action plan, aligned to the emerging Economic Strategy.</li> <li>• The Council's <b>Social Value Procurement Policy</b> was developed in line with the Council's ambitions in the Belfast Agenda and Inclusive Growth Strategy. The Policy was agreed by SP&amp;R Committee in March 2022 and went live in June 2022.</li> <li>• Established a <b>city leadership group on fuel poverty</b> to support those in need and raise awareness and connect people with support that is available.</li> <li>• Working through our employment schemes (including <b>Employment Academies</b>) to support those who are furthest removed from the labour market (IG Cohorts)</li> <li>• Expanding our approach to <b>community wealth building</b> increasing the focus on social enterprises and co-operatives and identifying opportunities to capitalise on our local assets to build community wealth.</li> <li>• Ongoing review of our <b>HR policies</b> has continued to progress, including the progression towards a Real Living Wage organisation, ring fencing a number of recruitment exercise to the long term unemployed and providing pre recruitment support is planned for 2022-23.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Access to employment and Educational underachievement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This year, <b>816 people attended Employment Academies</b> with an into-work rate of 75% for those who have completed.</li> <li>▪ The Labour Market Partnership Action Plan provided capacity for an additional <b>330 places on Employment Academies</b> for 21/22.</li> <li>▪ Officers are currently testing a <b>new approach to employability and programme-readiness</b> of young people, which is based on the Boston Summer Scheme.</li> </ul>	<p><b>City Recovery, reopening the city and support for businesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We delivered the £4.039m DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme including the <b>Business and Community Cluster Programme Grant</b>.</li> <li>▪ Completed <b>physical interventions</b> including two new <b>Active Travel Hubs</b>; a new fleet of <b>Belfast Bikes</b>; and <b>street closures</b> for innovative reactivation of space on Adelaide St, Union St, Warehouse Lane and Church Lane.</li> </ul>	<p><b>City Growth Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The final <b>Reset for Growth</b> report published June 21.</li> <li>▪ 4 key work strands agreed for progressing: <b>employment pathways, R&amp;D funding for Belfast</b>, a new entity to support investments on the <b>Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor</b> and deliver a <b>unique innovation environment</b> in the city.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Digital Innovation Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The <b>BRCD Digital Pillar</b> has progressed: ministerial approval for Programme Business Case, governance arrangements agreed and other business cases completed.</li> <li>▪ The <b>Innovation City &amp; District</b> through Innovation City Belfast have developed OBC and the development of a <b>Smart District Plan</b>.</li> <li>▪ <b>The Advance Wireless</b> feasibility study and business case have been completed.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increase tourism spend through sustainable tourism products</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We produced a draft <b>tourism plan</b> for Belfast, <b>'Make Yourself at Home'</b></li> <li>▪ We also developed a <b>Belfast Visitor Experience Framework</b>;</li> <li>▪ We launched a <b>Green Tourism accreditation</b> with industry partners.</li> <li>▪ Secured product development funding to pilot <b>meanwhile use experiential tourism venues</b> in the city centre</li> <li>▪ Continued development of SOF projects including <b>Roddy McCorley Heritage Museum</b> and the <b>Eastside Visitor Centre</b>, ensuring alignment with the Council's tourism plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Promote and market the city internationally</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attended <b>UKREiiF</b> (the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum) in May 2022 to market Belfast as an investment opportunity.</li> <li>▪ Reviewed the <b>City Investment and Regeneration Narrative</b>.</li> <li>▪ Redesigned <b>the Invest in Belfast</b> website</li> <li>▪ Continued to provide the <b>Investing in Belfast</b> service</li> </ul>
<p><b>Encourage business start-ups and support indigenous business growth</b></p> <p><b>Business Growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>327 businesses</b> accessed workshops to support their <b>business growth</b>, enhance tendering skills and develop digital capacity.</li> <li>▪ <b>357 businesses</b> accessed <b>1-1 mentoring</b> support.</li> <li>▪ <b>40 businesses</b> had <b>EU exit support</b> in sectors including retail, construction, ICT and manufacturing.</li> <li>▪ Occupancy levels at the <b>Innovation Factory</b> at year end were <b>70%</b>.</li> </ul>		

### Starting a Business

- **760 individuals** supporting them to progress to **start a business**.
- **656 individuals** engaged in **business start-up** activity. 518 of those developed a business plan through the ‘**Go For It**’ programme supporting the **creation of an estimated 311 jobs**.
- Provided additional support to **75 individuals** through 1-1 mentoring.
- **Test trading opportunities** were provided for **49 new businesses** through our dedicated start up space at St George’s Market.

### Social Enterprise & Co-operatives

- **52 organisations** were supported with one-to-one mentoring, advice and guidance to start a new social enterprise or cooperative. 6 of these organisations were new co-operatives.
  - We organised 6 events to **promote social enterprises and cooperatives**, attracting **606 attendees** for the year.
  - The **Social Economy Incentive Fund** launched Oct 2021 and received 45 applications. 11 were selected to receive a share of £60,000.
- 13 social enterprises** to test trade at social economy mini markets hosted at St George’s Market.

### City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy

- **City Centre Living Vision**: articulation of a vision for city centre living developed through focused engagement with communities and other stakeholders
- **City Centre Greening** and a “Grey to Green” project feasibility: agreed by CG&R in April 2022. Locations for **Family Centric Space** are being explored by officers working with key city partners.
- The **Bolder Vision Strategy** and Action Plan are progressing, with the public consultation complete in January 2022 and Ministerial engagements to gain collaborative agreement on the strategy.
- **Vacant to Vibrant Capital Grants Scheme** agreed at Committee with the grant programme scheduled to open in 2022.
- Strategic acquisition of **2 Royal Avenue**, development of an asset strategy, supporting delivery of meanwhile uses and exploring opportunities to attract and secure funding.
- A **Cathedral Gardens Masterplan** is underway in terms of the permanent redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens in line with A Bolder Vision,
- **Inner North West Open Space Framework** (including Cathedral Gardens / St Annes / Writers Sq) also being progressed to shape placemaking and design within individual sites and across the area as a whole, including key links such as Academy St and Donegall St. Aligned to A Bolder Vision.
- **Belfast Entries** Phase 1 is substantially complete. Entries Phase 2 approvals are well advanced, and procurement is underway. A funding extension has been agreed to Sept 2022 along with an additional contribution of £150k from DfC.
- **Tactical Regeneration & Lighting**: Project proposals are under development for Great Victoria St, Castle St and the 5Cs (College Court, College Avenue, College Street, Callender Street and Chichester Street). £162k funding from DfC has been secured, for 5Cs, to be spent by Sept 22. Standalone lighting schemes have been delivered in Castle St, Brunswick St and Church Lane.
- We continue to work with partners and input into **major schemes**. Developments for this period include **The Sixth, Tribeca, Waterside, Belfast Transport Hub / Weavers Cross, UU Community Campus Regeneration Forum**.

### City Infrastructure

### Belfast Hills and North Foreshore

### City Connectivity

- **North Foreshore**: continued to work closely with BHC and Giants Park Leisure Limited to

- **Belfast Urban Greenways (BUG)**: engagement to re-commence in the coming months, including in conjunction

<p>There are a range of <b>partnership infrastructure projects</b> where officers helping to address the city's infrastructure requirements which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Junctions Working Group</b> – working with partners in relation to junction issues including Fredrick St, Clifton St, Peters Hill and the inner ring road in the context of the Bolder Vision.</li> <li>▪ <b>Belfast Rapid Transport</b> - continuing to represent Council on the BRT Programme Board, including responding to BRT 2 consultation and ongoing monitoring of this in terms of progress and direction towards delivery through the lens of the Bolder Vision.</li> <li>▪ <b>Belfast Streets Ahead</b> – continuing to represent Council and input to the proposals for BSA, including advocating for interventions to come forward at pace.</li> </ul>	<p>progress developments at North Foreshore to ensure regeneration opportunities are maximised for the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work has continued on exploring options for the remaining sites at <b>North Foreshore</b> including clean-tech and green sector opportunities.</li> <li>▪ <b>Belfast Hills (and Zoo):</b> work has continued to improve existing animal enclosures in the zoo, whilst exploring development options for the <b>Old Zoo site</b> and <b>integration of the zoo</b> into the wider surrounding area.</li> <li>▪ An extensive programme of exhibit upgrades was undertaken in 2021/22 resulting in improved attractions at the zoo, this included activity in the following areas - sea lions, red panda and Scottish wildcats.</li> <li>▪ The existing zoo, old zoo and Belfast Castle are all part of a <b>Masterplan</b> exploring how best to develop and encourage the use of the attractions going forward. Options are being further developed.</li> </ul>	<p>with the Belfast Cycle Network and the Bolder Vision Action Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>E-bikes:</b> An operator has been appointed for the e-cargo bike 'last mile delivery' project. They are now working to secure clients and have leased a site in Weaver's Cross that will help expand the reach of the e-cargo delivery.</li> <li>▪ <b>Active Travel Hub:</b> QUB project is complete. Planning permission granted for Cathedral Gardens, and an operator has been appointed, with funding secured from DfI, PHA and UU.</li> <li>▪ <b>Belfast Bikes</b> Cycle Parking and Scoping Study identified criteria for strategic locations and types of bike parking Work has been completed to identify the locations for the initial 10 stands.</li> <li>▪ <b>Connectivity Access to the Hills Programme:</b> 5 projects are being progressed to business case stage, including Sydenham Greenway, Glencairn Park/Ligoniel Park Greenway, Blackmountain/Upper Whiterock Greenway and Colin Greenway.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Destination Hub</b> (now known as Belfast Stories)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The <b>City Region Deal bid</b>, including Belfast Stories, was approved on 17th Dec. An initial review of Governance issues has been completed. Stage 2 commenced in early 2022-23.</li> <li>▪ A <b>capital procurement strategy</b> is now in place.</li> <li>▪ The draft <b>geothermal feasibility study</b> has been completed and the findings are being reviewed.</li> <li>▪ A draft framework for the '<b>Stories Collection</b>' is being produced for member engagement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor</b></p> <p>To support the Dublin-Belfast Corridor, we are focusing on the development of the strategy and action plan for the partnership. Work is underway to ensure regular meetings for the directors, chief executives and political advisory groups. The DBEC directors' group have identified a need for resources to support the partnership. Work is underway to scope this and present a paper to the CX group.</p>	<p><b>Upskilling opportunities</b></p> <p>The Labour Market Partnership and action plan has been agreed. This has already produced benefits such as additional resource for extra Employment Academies in 2021-22.</p> <p>Innovation &amp; Inclusive Growth Commission: we have been working with the Skills Champion to design an inclusive pathway to jobs in the Tech sector for those with aptitude but without the vocational skills normally required.</p> <p>Green/Retrofit: we have secured £120k resources through the Community Renewal Fund and are working towards the development of new curriculum content in conjunction with BMC and local skills partners. We are also working closely with key</p>

		anchor institutions such as NIHE to explore opportunities for upskilling and re-skilling within the construction sector.
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# Community Recovery

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The pandemic has further intensified existing inequalities and created significant economic and social challenges for our communities in. We have placed wellbeing at the centre of our recovery efforts, reinvigorating public service provision locally and ensuring people and places disproportionately affected by the pandemic are not left behind.

Our communities need to be at the heart of our city's recovery. We have engaged with and worked alongside our citizens, and others in our communities including the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors who play such vital roles in city life, to identify priorities together. Working with these sectors, we established a VCSE Panel and Network and built on this to enhance participation, most notably in the development of our refreshed Belfast Agenda. This engagement has also supported community participation in the co-design of area based interventions. Recent engagement has highlighted important concerns in relation to 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. These will be central to the refreshed Belfast Agenda.

We have captured significant learning during the emergency response to the pandemic and the relationships with community and statutory partners to continue to support vulnerable people and families through these challenging times, alongside supporting the reinvigoration of our neighbourhoods and developing community confidence, capacity and longer-term resilience through a range of support programmes. As we seek to engage communities in this work over the coming months, we will be building on learning from innovative approaches that we have had to take in response to restrictions on physical and face to face interactions.

<p><b>Good Relations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>PEACEPLUS</b> Local Authority Action Plan progressed, including corporate governance arrangements, undertaking a tender exercise to appoint an external company to support the development of the local action plan and starting the engagement with elected members and key stakeholders</li> <li>▪ <b>SEUPB</b> are still finalising details of the overall programme with the European Commission. Once this has been agreed we will start the process to develop a Co-Designed Local Action Plan for Belfast.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Area Working Groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Baseline information was collated and shared with elected members via Area Working Groups.</li> <li>▪ Work on development of <b>area plans</b> was significantly impacted by the ongoing pandemic when resources were redirected to meet the emergency needs such as the distribution of food parcels to help the vulnerable residents of Belfast. Since then, following on from the initial consultation phase of the Belfast Agenda refresh, it has been agreed that the focus will be on <b>community regeneration</b>. This will be done on a partnership basis to identify area-based priorities taking an assets-based approach and focussing on collaborative gain.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Maximising housing development and regeneration opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Inner North West Development Brief:</b> Housing Associations continue to work with Council and DfC to address various issues.</li> <li>▪ <b>Strategic Site Assessments Phase 1:</b> city centre cluster sites including regeneration concept plans progressing on a number of sites, and the completion of the initial Expression of Interest stage to attract Institutional Investment.</li> <li>▪ <b>Strategic Site Assessments Phase 2:</b> City wide Strategic Site Assessments continuing the comprehensive mapping of public sector assets in conjunction with partners, assessing these assets in line with the Urban Capacity Study and the Housing Monitor to identify and bring forward opportunities for Housing Led Regeneration.</li> <li>▪ Bringing to a conclusion the work on developing a <b>City Centre Living Vision</b> through focused engagement with communities and other stakeholders to inform the City Centre Living Vision Document.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Integrated services at a local level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continued partnership working to support the <b>development and delivery of local area responses and initiatives</b>.</li> <li>▪ Living Here Board continued developmental initiatives testing <b>out area working</b> and thematic working approaches.</li> <li>▪ <b>The Complex Lives model</b> commenced it's initial phase from Oct 21 to Mar 22 with a multi-disciplinary team established, meeting weekly to consider the most complex cases (15-20 per week) and working collaboratively to meet the needs of clients. The next phase is being designed that will scale up to 110 people per week.</li> <li>▪ Work on the <b>Emotional Wellbeing Plan</b> was delayed, however partners continued to promote both Covid-19 and Take 5 messaging throughout the year.</li> <li>▪ Work has commenced with Department of Health and Belfast Trust to align the work of <b>integrated care</b> with community planning and area working.</li> <li>▪ Engagement with stakeholders in the <b>Wider University Area</b> continued and funding for a Holylands Intervention Manager was secured in order to further develop relationships and responses in the locality.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leisure transformation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Templemore Baths</b> construction continued and due to open in autumn 2022.</li> <li>▪ Developed options for inclusion in the <b>Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility</b> Business Case in conjunction with DfC.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The service review of <b>Community Provision</b> was paused during 2021/22 given the focus on Covid recovery and impact on service operations due to the ongoing pandemic and restrictions applied as a result.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed the construction of the new <b>Avoniel Leisure Centre</b> facility which opened in November 2021. This new facility has helped address the lack of 3G pitch provision in the area and provided much needed indoor flexible leisure space.</li> <li>▪ Opened the new <b>Andersonstown Leisure Centre</b></li> <li>▪ Work is ongoing to develop <b>Phase 3</b> of the Leisure Transformation Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A new micro and medium grants model integrated previous funding streams to allow delivery of cross cutting projects and build resilience. This included <b>414 individual grants</b> totalling approximately <b>£1.1 million</b>.</li> <li>▪ Worked with central government to bring forward further support <b>packages for communities and the third sector</b> to help address many of the social challenges which were amplified as a direct result of the impact of the pandemic. This included provision of <b>£2.34million</b> which was used to support individuals particularly impacted by Covid restrictions and the <b>Cost of Living Crisis</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developed new visitor centre at <b>City Cemetery</b> which will open in summer 2022.</li> <li>▪ New 3G pitch at <b>Blanchflower Playing Fields</b> was opened in October 2021.</li> <li>▪ Progressed development of <b>new crematorium</b> including preparation of planning submission.</li> <li>▪ Commenced delivery of the <b>Forth Meadow Community greenway</b> with works completed on Section 1 at Glencairn and works either underway or due to commence on the other sections in 2022/23.</li> <li>▪ Commenced construction of <b>Shankill Shared Women’s Centre</b>. Completed design and submitted planning application for <b>Black Mountain Shared Spaces</b> project.</li> <li>▪ The new £8m <b>neighbourhood regeneration fund</b> was developed in 2021 and opened to the public in February 2022. As per the programme timeframe, Stage 1 is continuing into 2022/23.</li> <li>▪ Delivered <b>Belfast Investment Fund</b> projects including alpine toboggan ride and zipline at <b>Colin Glen</b> (opened November 2021), <b>St. Comgall’s</b> (June 2022) and <b>Lagan Gateway</b> and <b>TAGIT boxing facility</b> (March 2022).</li> <li>▪ <b>Belfast Investment Fund</b> work ongoing with <b>Lagan Gateway Phase 2</b> which will see a path connection from Lagan Land East into Belvoir Forest Park.</li> <li>▪ Delivered <b>Local Investment Fund</b> projects including <b>St. James’s Community Farm</b> (completed May 2021) and progressing work on other projects including new changing facilities at <b>Berlin Swifts</b> and the upgrades to <b>St. Joseph’s Church Sailortown</b>. Match funding for the community garden at <b>John Murray Lockhouse</b> is in the process of being secured so delivery will move into future years.</li> <li>▪ Continued to deliver <b>partnership projects</b> on behalf of the Executive Office under the <b>Social Investment Fund</b> and the <b>Urban Villages</b> initiatives, the Department for Communities, the Department for Infrastructure and the <b>Living with Water Programme</b>.</li> <li>▪ Work is continuing on land disposals: <b>Gasworks Northern Fringe</b> , <b>Upper Whiterock</b> and <b>McClure Street</b>.</li> </ul>	

# Environmental Recovery

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COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of building resilience to future crises. To deliver the urgent action required to respond to climate breakdown, we have accelerated our work on climate adaptation, mitigation and decarbonising our economy. We have published the city's first Resilience Strategy with more than 20 strategic programmes to reduce emissions and protect the city from the effects of climate change. It includes a focus on sustainable tourism, skills for a green economy, and support for SMEs to build their climate resilience.

We have progressed our 'One Million Trees' programme, an ambitious approach to urban tree planting, to build our climate resilience through improved carbon capture and improve city 'liveability'. Through the city's 'Mini Stern' report, we examined the impact of climate change on the city and set out a roadmap and specific actions to create a prosperous and low carbon Belfast.

We have continued to explore zero-emissions transport infrastructure with our partners, grown the network of Electric Vehicle charge points in the city and continued our work to find new ways to incentivise transition to low-emissions vehicles across our fleet. We have also worked with city partners to collaborate on the development of low-emissions public transport and ensure we use digital innovation to drive energy transition in transport.

Through the work of the Resilience and Sustainability Board, we have worked collaboratively with public and private sector partners to ensure our infrastructure meets the city's existing and future needs. We have continued to engage with central government to prioritise and deliver important urban city infrastructure (for example water, waste, energy) to ensure the city can accommodate future growth and remain resilient.

With city partners, we have explored pathways for investment at scale in the energy efficiency of our buildings across the city. This will ultimately contribute to improving health conditions, but will also act as a catalyst to create and sustain jobs, reduce energy bills and provide a significant boost to local supply chains and trades in the construction sector.

We have worked with our Executive colleagues to accelerate the Green New Deal proposal and advocate for investment in housing retrofit schemes, hydrogen transport, flood programmes and sustainable urban drainage. We are also exploring how we use our land assets and enable better access to open and green spaces for communities and families to improve mental and physical wellbeing. We have carried out a comprehensive assessment of air quality, and through our air quality action plan identified what other measures are needed to make further significant improvements in air quality across the city to deliver improved public health outcomes.

<p><b>BCC Climate Adaption &amp; Mitigation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final <b>BCC Climate Adaption &amp; Mitigation plan</b> agreed and will be taken forward through the BCC Climate Plan contract awarded to KPMG due to be delivered Oct 2022.</li> <li>Contract has been undertaken by APSE Energy to produce the <b>BCC Carbon Baseline, Trajectory and Energy Review</b> of 5 buildings which is due to complete by Sept 22</li> <li><b>BCC Climate Risk Assessment</b> and <b>Climate Investment Plan</b> commenced and scheduled to be completed by December 2022</li> </ul>	<p><b>City Wide Climate Adaption &amp; Mitigation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Belfast Climate Plan</b> and <b>Belfast Climate Investment Plan</b> procurement process to be undertaken by September 2022.</li> <li>Ongoing delivery of <b>Belfast One Million Trees</b> (over 63,000 trees planted to date) and <b>Horizon 2020 UPSURGE</b> Project.</li> <li>A BCC delegation attended <b>COP26</b>, with new partnerships developed as a result (Dublin, Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Belfast)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improve Urban air quality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of a <b>new 5-year Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast</b> covering the period 2021-2026. The Action Plan focuses on addressing the few remaining transport related nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) hotspots within our four Air Quality Management Areas and improving ambient air quality generally for the city.</li> <li>The council has appointed Aecom consultants to undertake a detailed review and assessment for <b>nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>)</b> and fine <b>particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)</b> for Belfast. The project is currently progressing in accordance with the Aecom timeline and is therefore scheduled to conclude and report by March 2023.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Energy transition plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will be incorporated into the KPMG Climate Plan contract. A separate but linked contract has been undertaken by APSE Energy to produce the <b>BCC Carbon Baseline, Trajectory and Energy Review of 5 buildings</b> which is due to complete by Sept 2022</li> <li>Discussions are ongoing in relation to the recommendations of the <b>Net Zero Carbon Roadmap</b>, including the role of Community Planning Boards, a review of Belfast Climate Commission, and workstreams linked to the UK Cities Climate Investment Commission which have utilised data from the Net Zero Carbon Roadmap</li> </ul>

# Strategic Planning Frameworks

Whilst our focus in 2021-22 was on recovering the city and the organisation, we have also been mindful of the long term ambitions for Belfast that we have aspired to. Significant effort has therefore been put in to the long term planning frameworks that shape the economic, social, environmental and physical future of the city – our local development plan, the Belfast Spatial Planning Framework and our community plan, the Belfast Agenda.

<p><b>Belfast Spatial Planning Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DfI’s direction on the <b>Draft Plan Strategy (DPS)</b> was issued 04/02/2022. The DPS was found to be sound, subject to a number of modifications. A new strategic policy is out for public consultation. Once complete and agreed with DfI, the Council can move to adopt the draft Plan Strategy.</li> <li>▪ Supplementary Planning <b>Guidance (SPG)</b> work has continued. The priority SPGs are complete and a 12-week public consultation started in April 2022.</li> <li>▪ Work is ongoing on the <b>Local Policies Plan</b>, including an initial review of zonings/designations. We are also continuing to analyse sites in the urban capacity study, including constraints and likely yields for housing and employment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Influence Key Regional Programmes and Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Programme for Government</b> has been paused due to the suspension of the NI Assembly. The case for the further devolution of powers to NI has been made through a number of forums.</li> <li>▪ A revised approach to accessing and BCC being ready to draw down from a wide selection of <b>funding streams</b> is currently being developed and due to be brought to SP&amp;R Committee as soon as possible.</li> <li>▪ Work has continued with government departments to refine a number of key strategies and programmes of work that directly affect Belfast, both formally through consultation responses and through ongoing dialogue. Examples of these include the <b>Living With Water Programme, Investment in NI</b> (to HoC NI Affairs Committee), <b>Green Growth Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy</b> and the <b>High Street Taskforce</b> Call for Evidence.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Build Partnership Working to Deliver the Belfast Agenda</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A co-design approach has been adopted in drafting a <b>refreshed Belfast Agenda</b> with community planning partners and wider stakeholders including the community and voluntary sector and the public. This process is ongoing and a refreshed Belfast Agenda is being drafted over the summer in advance of a draft being published for formal consultation.</li> <li>▪ A <b>Statement of Progress</b> was published in November 2021 that demonstrated the significant progress that has been achieved through the Belfast Agenda 2017-21.</li> <li>▪ Work is ongoing regarding <b>innovation funding</b> and the development of an online <b>monitoring and reporting framework</b> that will be ready for the launch of the refreshed Belfast Agenda.</li> <li>▪ The <b>VCSE Panel</b> have been involved in the refresh of the Belfast Agenda and are now represented on the Community Planning Partnership, as well as the Belfast Agenda Boards. Funding has been agreed to support the VCSE Panel and additional discussions are ongoing to secure the long-term funding model.</li> </ul>	

# Organisational Foundations

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In order to help guide us in delivering excellent front line services and strategic priorities, we need to have the foundations of an excellent, well run organisation that enables us to achieve the highest standards expected of us by the residents and businesses of Belfast. We want to create a resurgent, prosperous city, shared by all of our people and admired around the world. To do this, we can only succeed with the wholehearted support and enthusiastic contribution of our staff. To harness this energy they need to feel valued and understand how they contribute.

Our customer focus programme has improved how we deliver our services and we have continued developing our people to ensure they are valued and appropriately invested in.

Health and safety of the public and our staff is always of importance and Covid-19 has reinforced how important it is to the city and the organisation. We have continued to ensure our services are safe for both the public and our staff as we make changes throughout 2021-22 to our service delivery and working arrangements to comply with government guidelines. We have also planned the safe return to the office whilst considering new models of working for the medium – long term.

We have sought innovative ways to improve services as well as ensure the finances, assets, data and systems of the Council continue to be managed efficiently and strategically to ensure the ambitions set out in this annual delivery plan are costed, resourced and delivered.

Good governance is essential in a large organisation and we have worked to continuously ensure our systems and processes are of the highest standards, including the implementation of the Coll Report recommendations.

We have continued to champion equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation, implementing our Language Strategy, disability action plan and equality action plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Customer Focus Programme:</b> Customer Hub support and training go-live 29 March 2021 with additional <b>Corporate CRM</b> improvements ongoing. Established physical space on the ground floor of CWB from January 2022.</li> <li>▪ The <b>Dual Language Street Signage Policy</b> is being finalised following the public consultation and will be presented to Members for consideration in due course.</li> <li>▪ Following a public consultation, the <b>Audit of Inequalities</b> and the <b>Equality Action Plan</b> were agreed under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive and have been submitted to the ECNI</li> <li>▪ The new five-year <b>Equality Scheme</b> continues to be progressed</li> <li>▪ The <b>Disability Action Plan 2019-2022</b> continues to be implemented</li> <li>▪ The draft <b>Disability Action Plan 2022-2025</b> was agreed by SP&amp;R on 20<sup>th</sup> May and public consultation has commenced.</li> <li>▪ <b>Corporate Health and Safety</b> have continued to support the Recovery Co-ordination Group and operational services with advice on the safe recovery of services and risk assessment support.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>People Strategy</b> reviewed post pandemic. Consultation plan developed which sets out further engagement and consultation activity to take place over the coming months, with a view to launching the People Strategy and the previously agreed Achieving Through People framework in the Autumn.</li> <li>▪ Delivery of the <b>Gender , LGBT+ actions plans</b> continued and revised plans for 22/23 have been agreed. Work has started to develop a Race Action Plan.</li> <li>▪ <b>Return to Office</b> short term strategy for customer related services in the first instance agreed with a greater number of office based staff returning to city centre premises from 31 May 2022 to facilitate full service recovery. The joint working group will consider future operating models once full service recovery is complete and departments will assess how their operational needs can be delivered on a more flexible basis.</li> <li>▪ <b>Corporate Car parking</b> working group established. Legal opinion has been requested and once received recommendations will be finalised for CMT approval. Consultation with Staff and Trade Unions will be required.</li> <li>▪ Progress has been delayed in the <b>business support review</b> due to resources reallocated to support organisational recovery and return to the office. It is planned that a process to commission external support for the design and review of business support will commence in the summer of 2022.</li> <li>▪ The <b>Continuous Improvement Programme</b> service design approach has been further developed and shared with TU colleagues. Significant progress made with <b>CNS Capacity</b> and <b>resilience support</b> – CNS management roles created and appointed, service catalogue developed and published, city services portfolios realigned and a Business Plan has been produced.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Efficiencies</b> required for the 2022/23 financial year have been identified and will be made through Voluntary redundancies. Developed plan for non-recurrent finance 2021/22.</li> <li>▪ Approved the <b>Corporate Pricing Framework</b> in 2021</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The <b>data maturity assessment</b> has been completed.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work is currently ongoing in relation to a review of the BCC Corporate <b>Planning and Performance Management Framework</b> to procure external support to review the planning and performance framework.</li> <li>▪ A review of a number of corporate systems has progressed, including <b>HR &amp; Payroll system, Planning Portal, Finance System, Corporate Asset management system, Health &amp; Safety system</b> and <b>Electronic Document &amp; Records management</b>.</li> <li>▪ <b>Corporate Cyber Incident response</b> has taken place and work is ongoing to review business continuity plans for critical services in alignment with incident and emergency response planning.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council maintained its <b>Elected Member Development Charter Plus</b> status following assessment in early 21/22 and will work towards full re assessment in early 2023. 13 elected members attended Code of Conduct Training in November 2021</li> <li>▪ Actions agreed in <b>Coll report</b> have been progressed and key actions reported through SP&amp;R Committee.</li> <li>▪ The <b>Standards and Business Committee</b> was established in June 2021 and held its first meeting in October 2021 and continues to meet monthly. The committee has delegated authority to adopt or reject <b>Notices of Motion</b> and refers all Notices of Motion to the relevant standing committee or to full Council, as appropriate. This process has streamlined the management of Notices of Motion.</li> <li>▪ The cross-party <b>Members' Language Strategy Working Group</b> has been established.</li> </ul>

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