

# Corporate Plan 2020 - 24

2022 - 23 Delivery Plan  
Year-end report

**DRAFT**



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**Belfast**  
City Council

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# Introduction

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Following the local government elections in May 2019, Councillors and officers worked together to co-design a new ambitious 2020-24 Corporate Plan for the period 2020-2024. Annual delivery plans are developed and agreed every year to ensure the priorities are up to date and reflective of the changing environment of the city. The Annual Delivery Plan 2022-23 was agreed at SP&R Committee on 28/03/2022 with a commitment to bring a year-end report to outline the progress made against the commitments made on the corporate plan. The plan is structured as follows:

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

# Our Services

## Front line service delivery

- *Planning Service Improvement Plan* – We have reduced processing times following trials with the **'Lean Systems' Approach**.
- *Regional Planning IT system* - The **new regional system** has been in place since 5 Dec 22. It is delivering Development Management and Enforcement modules and introducing online applications.
- *Intelligent Client Function* - The new regional **Intelligent Client Function** unit has been in place from Sept. 2022; managing the contract for the new Planning system.
- *Lobby for transformation of the NI planning system* – This work is ongoing though has focused on implementation of the **new planning portal**.
- *Implement agreed new Building Control Structure* - Implementation complete with a significant amount of recruitment to fill posts completed.
- *Dual Language Street Signs policy* - public consultation and EQIA were carried out, with the revised **Dual Language Street Signs** policy being agreed by Council in July 2022. Implementation of the policy has been ongoing with the first applications being approved before year-end.
- *Customer Hub - alignment between Customer and Continuous Improvement teams* - The pilot exercise was completed with Continuous Improvement as part of the implementation of the new IT System and reporting to the IT implementation project board. Engagement continues to ensure that the new IT system aligns with the requirements of the Customer team, including the online submissions and integration with the website. This work will continue through to go live in Sept. / Oct. 2023.

## Service delivery numbers

- Processed **7566** Building Regulation applications.
- Dealt with **163** dangerous structures.
- Processed **452** entertainment licensing applications including 54 outdoor licenses.
- Processed **227** applications relating to street trading, petroleum, cinemas, pavement cafes, road closures and amusement permits.
- Processed **6371** property certs.

## Service Recovery

Transition to pre-COVID recovery delivery of responsive services delivered across the city in relation to Open Spaces, Street Cleansing, Waste Collection, City Services. Key deliverables included:

- Supported **226** groups through our micro/medium grants programme at a value of **£754,056**.
- Delivered **Social Supermarket programme** which supported **20** organisations to deliver food support alongside wrap around services to those most in need.
- Delivered a range of **education programmes** on issues related to cleansing and waste which included an education programme with **181 schools**.
- **139** community clean ups and issued out **45** Litter Hero Kits.
- **2,765** people accessed free sustainable period products which will reduce period waste and help to alleviate impact of poverty.
- Supported **115** groups through our large grants Capacity/Revenue at a value of almost **£2 million**.
- The events team processed **393 third party event requests** in 2022 / 2023. A revised events programme for 2023 / 2024 has been designed and delivery is currently underway.
- Recycled **64,000 tonnes** of waste.
- Collected **63,986** bulky waste items.
- Emptied approx. **10 million** wheelie bins.

## Port Health

- Our Port Health team delivered a **24/7 service throughout 2022/23**, carrying out our statutory duties to ensure imported foods are safe to eat, while also addressing public health and infectious disease risks arising from vessels arriving in Belfast Port.
- Participated in work with key partners, including DAERA, Food Standards Agency and DEFRA to ensure **the facilities, infrastructure, systems, and processes being developed are in place for our future service requirements.**
- **Secured funding from Food Standards Agency (FSA)** for the 2023/24 year, however work continues by FSA to develop a longer-term sustainable funding model.

## The circular economy and urban waste

- **Digital solution project** for waste collection commenced, expected completion during 2023/24.
- Initial options paper presented to SP&R Committee/ Party Groups in relation to **City Kerbside Recycling Collections and Delivery Model.** Members have requested further consideration on options around ‘in housing’ of services.
- Reviews of **glass and organic waste collection** provision for the city completed and presented to Committee.
- **Introduction to the Circular Economy** online guides for householders and businesses completed.
- Pilots carried out in relation to **carpet recycling, bulky wood waste recycling and computer/tablet reuse schemes** to assess their impact on carbon reduction and scalability for the council.
- **Hydrogenated vegetable oil (biofuel)** introduced as interim measure to replace approx. **85%** of diesel consumption as solution to reduce emissions across the BCC Fleet.

# Inclusive Economic Recovery

## Inclusive Growth Strategy

### *Embedding Inclusive Growth*

- A provisional **Inclusive Growth Index** has been developed at a city level, aligned to the refresh of the Belfast Agenda. This is designed to track a series of statistics to indicate the direction of travel and progress being made collectively to tackle the root causes of inequality and create the conditions for a more inclusive society. All city partners will contribute to this through their activities and investments which directly and indirectly increase social mobility, create inclusive labour markets, places and services, particularly for those who are most at risk of economic exclusion (inclusive growth cohorts).
- In parallel and through engagement with key Council staff, an **Inclusive Growth Toolkit** is being developed to help embed inclusive growth in design, decision-making and delivery. This aims to provide practical guidance to staff on how to support inclusive growth. This will be further tested and refined, before rolling out within the Council with a view to sharing with Community Planning Partners.
- The draft Inclusive Growth Index and Toolkit will be brought to the Social Policy Working Group for consideration in 2023/24, to inform next steps.

### *Belfast Business Promise*

- **Staff resources to deliver the Belfast Business Promise were secured**, on a temporary basis, with the Team fully in place by March 2023.
- Social Policy Working Group agreed to go live with a **soft launch and pilot of the Belfast Business Promise on 24<sup>th</sup> April**. This pilot period allows for testing the delivery model to inform further development and refinement of the Belfast Business Promise, prior to full roll-out in autumn 2023. **Creation of brand and website** content. Regular updates are provided to the Social Policy Working Group.
- The team have achieved their aim of securing **20** organisations (including Belfast City Council) to sign-up as BBP Supporters in the pilot by end June 2023.

### *Procurement & Commissioning Group*

- Following a workshop and subsequent 1-2-1 engagement with Procurement & Commissioning Working Group members, the need to revitalise and refocus the working group was agreed. **Eight anchor organisations** have confirmed their participation. The next step is to reform the Network, with a view to developing a collaborative action plan.

### *Community Wealth Building*

- Following the **Independent Advisory Panel's report on Community Wealth Building** commissioned by DfC, engagement with CLES and others, the Social Policy Working Group agreed Council's approach to Inclusive Growth and the underpinning enabling levers and key projects being brought forward would help deliver the ambitions of community wealth building. The SPWG will continue to oversee the delivery of the pillars of work, including the refreshed Anchors Procurement & Commissioning Network, as well as how other levers contribute to the ambitions and principles around Community Wealth Building.

*Training, Skills and Employment*

- Work with anchor institutions also includes working with QUB to design and develop an **Employment Academy** for administration posts, creating a new ‘trainee’ post that removes qualification criteria and directly selecting from those who complete a bespoke Employment Academy focusing on our **Inclusive Growth cohorts** and delivered through the Employability & Skills team in 2023/24.
- In addition to **ring-fencing posts to the long term unemployed for General Operatives and Business Support recruitment campaigns** through bespoke Employment Academies, other academies were delivered for hard-to-fill posts within for **Community Services and Transport**.
- Corporate HR, along with Employability & Skills worked together to support the **DfC JobStart Programme**, recruiting and appointing **9 young people** between 16-24 years to temporary roles (6months, increasing to 9 months for those young people facing multiple barriers) in the Departments for City & Organisational Strategy, Office of the Chief Executive, Place & Economy and Legal & Civic Services.in
- CNS host regular **‘driver shortages’ internal working group** with Corporate HR and Employability & Skills. Through this, driver vacancies and the benefits of working for the Council have been promoted widely, including to driver Employment Academy participants. Open days have been organised to support potential applicants / offer mock interviews etc. The working group is also exploring more medium- and longer-term workforce planning options, including the creation of apprentice-type roles.

*Poverty*

- Implementation of **£1million Fuel Hardship Scheme**.
- Following engagement with key stakeholders, Community Planning Partners and the VCSE Panel the inclusion of a commitment to establish a **Belfast Poverty Commission** is contained in the refreshed Belfast Agenda 4-year action plan.

*Living Wage Accreditation*

- The Council **was the first local authority in NI to become accredited as a Real Living Wage employer** in February 2023.

**Belfast Region City Deal**

- Formal **monitoring and reporting** commenced as per the requirements of the Contract for Funding and Funding Agreements.
- An updated **Benefits Framework** has been developed and engagement with the Scottish Deals is ongoing to learn best practise.
- An updated **Governance and Assurance Framework** has been developed and agreed and will be kept under review.
- The **verification of claims and funding drawdown process** has been established with

**Social Policy**

- Following feedback from a 12-week public consultation period in 2021 and consideration by the Social Policy Working Group, the Council adopted the **Social Value Procurement Policy** in April 2022 for implementation on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022 for all new procurements. This is supported by a **Social Value Procurement Toolkit** to guide officers in applying the Toolkit.
- Social Value Procurement Policy is a key lever in delivering the ambitions of the Inclusive Growth Strategy and as such, integrates with other inclusive

**City Recovery, reopening the city and support for businesses**

- **New governance structures established** to oversee city centre redevelopment work.
  - Delivery of a **DfC funded Covid Recovery Revitalisation Programme (£4m+)**. A Mid-Term Covid recovery revitalisation programme Evaluation Report was presented to the August CG&R committee. A final report is currently under development and due to be complete by 31 March reporting into CGR Committee in June 2023. An extension of time, subject to sign off

<p>the first claim received and paid. Internal BCC resource assigned following unsuccessful recruitment of BRCD Accountant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring ongoing via <b>Digital Board</b> and engagement with partners and Departments.</li> <li>The <b>Employability and Skills action plan</b> has been agreed.</li> <li><b>Communication &amp; Engagement Plan</b> developed with external expertise commissioned to lead on strategic communications and engagement. The <b>BRCD Website was launched in January 2023</b>.</li> <li>BRCD continue to monitor project delivery through agreed governance arrangements, via ongoing engagement with partners and via representation on Project Boards.</li> </ul>	<p>growth programmes such as the Belfast Business Promise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Social Policy Working Group</b> receive regular reports on the delivery of the Social Value Procurement Policy, and the <b>review of the first year of policy implementation</b> is due to be reported to the August 2023 meeting. This will be reported to Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee.</li> <li>Employability &amp; Skills offer a <b>Social Value support service</b> to both clients and contractors in the city who have SV requirements to meet within their contracts. Most recently this has been accessed by Harland &amp; Wolff and the Markets Development Association in partnership with QUB Communities &amp; Place section in relation to social housing development underway as well as the proposed heritage centre and hostel developments.</li> </ul>	<p>has been granted in relation to <b>Entries Phase 2</b> and <b>Castle Place Kiosk</b> until end of September 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have also supported the '<b>Vibrant Business Destinations</b>' scheme across the city, securing resources for and working with local business associations outside of the city centre.</li> <li>The <b>Vacant to Vibrant Pilot Grant scheme</b> was launched and is currently well into a 24-month pilot timeline. Over <b>200 application packs</b> were issued, and officers are currently working with a number of applicants, providing support to develop their proposals. A total of <b>6 applications have been approved</b> (1 subject to Council ratification in April 2023), a further <b>26</b> applicants are actively engaging with officers to finalise their applications with an expectation that these will be submitted by Summer 2023.</li> </ul>
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## Cultural Strategy

In 2022/23 this work included:

- Delivery of **£3.08m funding** which included **117** award being allocated to the following schemes:
  - Developed, consulted upon and launched the new **Music Strategy for Belfast** to deliver the **UNESCO City of Music** ambitions.
  - Cultural multi-annual funding (CMAG)** including support for Arts/ Heritage organisations and Festivals/Events – **56** organisations supported with **£2.43m**.
  - 4 Pathfinder** awards for organisations not in receipt of core public sector support.
  - 21 Community Festivals Fund** in partnership with DfC.
  - 22 organisations** supported through **Arts and Heritage small grants**.
  - Five Access and Inclusion** grants in partnership with DfC.
  - 8 organisations** supported through **Artist Studios and Maker Spaces Organisational Grants**.
  - 19 individual artists** supported through the **Micro-Grant Programme for Creative Practitioners**.
  - Creative Bursaries** for **10 individuals**.
  - 6** partnerships with key sectoral organisations.
  - A partnership with **Theatre and Dance NI**.

- Partnership with **Craft NI to develop Craft NI Gallery** including a programme of **8 craft exhibitions** and **19 Belfast events** for Craft Month.
- A partnership with **Thrive NI** to continue the **Audience Panel**.
- A partnership with **Ulster Architectural Heritage Society** to deliver **Open Heritage Belfast** and other events, advocacy, advice & support.
- Investment and delivery against the **Creative Communities** programme as part of **Peace IV**.
- Delivery against the **Extended Cultural Programme** including creative commissions to four organisations.
- **Strategic Delivery Body for Festival 2022** including delivery of **Our Place in Space** and support for four additional projects.
- Development, consultation and publication of the music strategy.
- Delivery of the **Belfast Canvass Project** and **city animation projects** across **30** sites across the city.
- Continued support to increase participation and representation at cultural events by disabled people through initiatives such as the **Gig Buddies** programme and a new partnership with the **University of Atypical**.
- Series of small grants (project funding) including the **community festivals fund**.
- Facilitation of sectoral Forums, namely **Belfast Festivals Forum** and **Belfast Visual Arts Forum**.
- Established governance structures and a framework for **Belfast 2024**.

### **Belfast 2024 Year of Cultural Celebration**

- June 2022's CG&R committee noted the principles, concept and work related to the development of a year of culture and Belfast Imagining. An Outline Business Case was developed to support the case for **Belfast 2024**. The official launch of Belfast 2024 will be held later in 2023.
- Commissioning for **Anchor Programmes** for the 2024 Cultural Celebrations commenced.
- An **Open Call Design Contest for Belfast 2024** was launched in December 2022 and contract commissioned in June 2023.
- Delivery of a **Creative Bursary Scheme** (13 bursaries made available in 2023) which directly supported individual artists on a non-project basis (BCC first council in the UK to do this).
- Supported the delivery of **Dreamachine, Storytrails, Green Space and Dark Skies** regional projects.
- Delivered **Our Place in Space (OPIS)** on behalf of SOLACE involving Derry, Belfast, Cambridge, Liverpool, Ulster Transport Museum, including pivoting to incorporate a 5th site at Liverpool as the opportunity arose. Highlights included:
  - o Over **1million live visitors** to the site
  - o **5 new learning resources** developed
  - o App downloaded in **150 Countries**
  - o **1 new Minecraft world** created
  - o **28,000 students** and **2,200 teachers** directly engaged with
  - o **1 World Record** smashed.

**Note:** above figures accurate at end of 4th site, the project is ongoing at 5th site (Ulster Transport Museum). The trail is gifted to National Museums NI to be displayed at the Ulster Transport Museum

<p><b>Upskilling opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Labour Market Partnership action plan</b> for 23/24 agreed by Partnership in March 2023.</li> <li>▪ Priority projects under development include the <b>Labour Market Observatory, Gateway to Choices</b> career advice and support service and additional <b>Employment Academies</b>.</li> <li>▪ <b>The Gateway to Choices Service</b> is being co-designed with key stakeholders such as the Jobs and Benefits Office Network, Careers Service, VCSE sector etc. The Gateway will support up to <b>1,200 people</b> in 2023/ 24.</li> <li>▪ Officers have now completed the scoping and preparatory work and secured additional resources from DfC to establish the <b>Labour Market Observatory</b>.</li> <li>▪ <b>All Employment Academies</b> are now digitally badged as an alternative validation of achievement, with <b>779 badges</b> issued to participants. In addition to this, the Council is working with <b>6 organisations</b> in the city to use Digital Badging for their own participants/employees.</li> <li>- Indicative funding awards issued to <b>6 providers to pilot Bridges to Progression</b> schemes. These are for young people, aged 16-17 years who are at risk of disengaging from Training for Success/Skills for Life &amp; Work due to their personal circumstances.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The <b>strategy and action plan</b> have been finalised. The partnership members have <b>jointly funded two staff resources</b> to drive delivery against priority actions in 2023.</li> <li>▪ <b>Staff resources</b> for DBEC work programme secured and in place</li> <li>▪ Proactively explored possible funding through <b>Shared Island Fund</b> including securing <b>€150,000</b> funding to conduct a feasibility study on <b>regional Innovation Hubs</b>.</li> <li>▪ Successful joint funding bid with Dublin City Council to the Shared Island Fund for a <b>€250,000</b> award to conduct a <b>feasibility study on circular economy facilities in both cities</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reset for Growth Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>New pilot programme</b> developed and delivered with <b>Citigroup</b> and <b>Allstate</b> as sponsors. Further planning work under way in relation to co-designing further programmes.</li> <li>▪ Development work under way on <b>new enterprise support service</b>, with projected start date of September 2023.</li> </ul>
<p><b>City Development and Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work underway in relation to the commissioning and development of a <b>Lobby &amp; Advocacy Paper for Place Based Regeneration Funding</b> and the development of a</li> </ul>	<p><b>Digital Innovation Programme</b></p> <p><i>Digital Pillar of Belfast Region City Deal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ During 2022-23, progress was made to secure resources for the appointment of <b>two Challenge Fund managers</b> and drafting of a number of business cases.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increase tourism spend through sustainable tourism products</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The delivery of the <b>Make Yourself at Home Tourism Plan</b> has commenced with a focus on four</li> </ul>

<p><b>Regeneration Framework and Project Prioritisation Process.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A wider <b>engagement plan</b> has been developed including Party Group Leaders, MPs, Permanent Secretaries and other stakeholders. This is aligned to the ongoing work to develop an emerging project pipeline for Council aligned to funding opportunities and city priorities.</li> <li>▪ An Expression of Interest was launched mid-March 2023 to attract an <b>Institutional Investment / Development partner</b> in respect of Council lands for housing-led regeneration as part of the ongoing concept regeneration plans.</li> <li>▪ Officers continued to actively engage on major <b>private sector led regeneration</b> schemes through the Project Reference Groups.</li> <li>▪ While an application to the <b>Levelling Up Fund (Round 2)</b> was unsuccessful for <b>2 Royal Avenue</b>, formal feedback was received, and work continues on further developing proposals for its long-term use including a focused piece on end user models and identifying potential funding.</li> <li>▪ Work on the <b>Sixth</b> continued to be progressed via the BelTel LLP. The council continued to lead the <b>UU Community Campus Regeneration Forum</b>, including its transition in line with the opening of the Belfast campus.</li> <li>▪ The council continued to work with DfI and DfC on the finalisation of the <b>Bolder Vision Strategy</b>. In the absence of NI Executive Ministers, departmental engagement continued through the oversight and steering groups involving the BCC Chief Executive e and Permanent Secretaries from DfC and DfI.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A full draft of the <b>Business Case for advanced wireless programme</b> was completed and submitted to Department for Economy (DfE) for consideration. BRCD Partners have agreed to a disaggregated approach in the meantime – with a focus on early opportunities to demonstrate the link between the growth of the innovation economy and the availability of advanced wireless. This may include bids to the £80 million <b>Department for Science, Innovation and Technology Advanced Wireless Diversification programme</b>.</li> <li>▪ An outline business case (OBC) was also drafted in relation to the risk finance element of the challenge fund, with significant development of a <b>Digital Venture Fund OBC</b>, with deliverability now to be fully considered by BRCD partners.</li> <li>▪ A first pilot phase of the <b>innovation for societal impact programme</b> is being developed. The £1 million <b>Augment the City</b> pilot aims to support SMEs and City Deal tourism partners in exploring the opportunities associated with immersive tech.</li> <li>▪ Ahead of a future business case for a <b>City Data platform</b>, discovery work on users’ needs and best in class solutions is underway with industry and city partners including the Climate team.</li> </ul> <p><i>Support Innovation City Belfast Board</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ BCC remains a <b>partner in Innovative City Belfast (ICB)</b>, with the Chief Executive representing the city at the board level. ICB continues to encourage strategic alignment at a city, regional and national level to support the growth of our local innovation economy. This includes supporting work on the <b>Innovation District</b> feasibility study, the development of the <b>Belfast Smart District</b>, and support for a <b>UK National Digital Twin Centre</b>.</li> </ul>	<p>strategic themes; Grow Belfast; Experience Belfast; Position Belfast; Sustainable Belfast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Management of <b>Visit Belfast</b> contract in respect of marketing, destination management and visitor servicing.</li> <li>▪ Delivery of <b>Conference Subvention Programme</b> to assist in securing conferences and business events for Belfast.</li> <li>▪ Delivery of an <b>Accessible Tourism Programme</b>, including an engagement session with <b>40</b> businesses (Visit Belfast) members, a <b>‘Living Library’</b> training session for businesses to learn from people with disabilities and a series of <b>‘Be Communication Confident’</b> training videos for tourism / events organisations to access at own pace and in own time.</li> <li>▪ Implementation of <b>Food and Drink Tourism plan</b>. The first year of the Action Plan has been delivered and has focused on <b>‘Focus on Food’ Conference</b> which attracted <b>260 delegates</b> and included a producer zone, keynote speakers included food columnist for The Guardian, Grace Dent, positioning exercise, audit of photography and finally an audit of Council assets with regard to public-facing Council-managed assets. Funding secured in-year from Tourism NI and DAERA to uplift Council budget and associated activity.</li> <li>▪ Ongoing scoping of the <b>Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme</b> to support development of cultural tourism products, which promote enhanced visitor footfall, dwell time, spend and economic benefits across the city’s neighbourhoods.</li> <li>▪ <b>Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDSI)</b> application resulting in elevation of Belfast as a</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DfI <b>accelerated the Belfast city centre element</b> of the BMTP to the <b>Climate Action Plan</b> to model options for the provision of the strategic transportation network and to help inform the emerging capital project list.</li> <li>▪ <b>Strategic Site Assessment for Council lands</b> have been undertaken on a city-wide basis with an initial assessment for housing-led regeneration purposes. A similar exercise was undertaken (as part of a Housing-Led Regeneration Group with NIHE and DfC) in respect of other public sector lands. Proposals and next steps to be brought to a Members' Workshop.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Smart Belfast urban innovation programme</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Smart Belfast has published its <b>new five-year framework</b> that sets the objectives and plans to grow the city's capacity for greater urban innovation.</li> <li>▪ Work continued on the develop and delivering of a <b>Smart District</b> in the heart of the city, with an initial focus on the opportunities for joint innovation projects at the significant <b>Weaver's Cross</b> transport and regeneration development.</li> <li>▪ Proactive work underway to <b>identify opportunities and to develop funding bids</b> to support health, transport, inclusive innovation capacity building with communities and advanced wireless projects.</li> </ul>	<p>business events destination to 8th position in the world - ensuring Belfast is globally competitive in securing conferences and business events for Belfast, resulting in associated economic benefit / sectoral support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategic and operational planning is ongoing for the delivery of the <b>One Young World</b> event in October 2023.</li> <li>▪ Promoting the <b>Green Tourism Certification</b>, which has resulted in 80% of hotel rooms being accredited; and ensuring that sustainability is fully integrated in all tourism / event planning.</li> <li>▪ Working with Visit Belfast, Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland to <b>position Belfast as an attractive tourist destination</b>. This ensures Belfast is positioned as a Gateway to Northern Ireland and a must-see urban destination.</li> <li>▪ <b>Tourism &amp; Belfast Stories</b> teams working together to support Neighbourhood Tourism organisations to tell the key stories of the city.</li> <li>▪ Secured <b>Tourism NI product development funding</b> to support new products such as <b>Ceili at the Castle, Music Tours and music workshops</b>.</li> <li>▪ <b>Mapping Council-owned and existing tourism assets</b> against the city's 'Belfast brand' and Tourism NI 'Embrace the Giant Spirit' brand to deliver on experiential tourism in Belfast.</li> <li>▪ Other major bid-for events have been progressed during the year including the <b>Fleadh Cheoil</b> (in partnership with the Ards Comhaltas) and the <b>European Football Championships in 2028</b> (decision due Sept. 2023).</li> <li>▪ <b>Christmas 2022</b> was successfully delivered. The analysis, learning and future actions from the St</li> </ul>
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		<p>Patrick’s Event pilot, were agreed by June’s CG&amp;R committee, and the 2023 event is imminent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The <b>Maritime Festival</b> development continues, in consultation with partners, with the next edition planned for September 2023.</li> <li>▪ Physical Programmes has continued the delivery of the <b>Social Outcomes Fund</b> to improve the neighbourhood tourism offer in the city. This year they have worked with <b>Belfast South Community Resources</b> to complete tourism signage works and work is underway on the <b>Roddy McCorley Heritage Museum</b>. Work on <b>EastSide Visitor Centre</b> is progressing in conjunction with Urban Villages.</li> </ul>
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### Encourage business start-ups and support indigenous business growth

- *Enterprise awareness activity*: engaged **755 individuals**, supporting them to progress to start a business
- *Start a business activity*: **503 individuals** engaged in business start-up activity, **476** of those individuals developed a business plan through the **Go For It Programme** supporting the creation of **299 jobs**. We provided additional support to **70 individuals** through 1-1 mentoring and access to financial support of up to £1,500 to help kick start their business We also enabled test trading opportunities for **31 new businesses** through our dedicated start up space at St George’s Market.
- *Support for Social Enterprises and Co-operatives*: **60 organisations** were supported with one-to-one mentoring, advice and guidance. Four of these organisations were new co-operatives. The **Social Economy Incentive Fund** launched in September 2022, with an available pot of almost **£50,000 to support social economy businesses** with **8 businesses** supported through the funding.
- Belfast City Council won ‘**Council of the Year**’ at the **Social Enterprise Northern Ireland Awards** in October 2022.
- *Business growth support*: **246 businesses** supported through this programme
- *Launch of Digital Surge (Digi Transform) programme* in partnership with the 10 other councils – **22 Belfast-based companies** have benefitted from this support
- *Enhanced approach to business start-up and growth support* - Officers have engaged councils to co-design and progress the new enhanced approach with DLUHC committing up to **£17m for an 11-council Entrepreneurship Support Service (ESS)**, over 2 years from April 2023. **BCC will be lead council.**
- *Launched the Vibrant Business Destinations programme* (January 2022) in partnership with DfC. This aims to drive footfall and create vibrancy in areas outside of the city centre. Four associations have now been supported to develop area-based action plans.
- *The Innovation Factory* is now at **77% occupancy (yearly average)** and the operator has ambitious plans to increase those numbers in 2023/2024 with interest from sectors including TV/film, digital, engineering, and green tech. Over the year, **78 businesses engaged** in masterclasses and events at the centre, **38 work placements** were facilitated, and a series of school engagement activities took place involving **223 young people**.

- *The Way to Scale programme* supported **40 individuals** to transform their businesses and grow to turnover of more than £3million. **10** were supported to participate in a one week residential at MIT and access a peer-to-peer workshop series with Catalyst. We also put in place support for businesses in creative and digital industries and financial services sectors to build capacity and access opportunities for finance to support the growth and development of their businesses. **90 new companies** will be supported through these services.

### Promote and market the city internationally

- Development of **new economic strategy** – which identifies priority interventions to support city positioning.
- Delivery of a public private **Renewed Ambition Programme** is on-going across the 5 pillared structure of activity aimed at marketing the city locally, nationally, and internationally across events, engagement & advocacy, communications, and repository.
- An **Invest in Belfast website** has been established which contains information on Belfast, the key growth sectors and specific investment and development opportunities.
- A **Marketing Prospectus** of key public and private investment opportunities across the BRCD region has been prepared.
- A **‘Building Impact’** report on the social, environmental, and wider economic impact of the built environment was completed and was presented to the Social Policy Working Group in August 2022. Work is on-going to develop an internal action plan to address the report recommendations relevant to BCC.
- Monitoring and analysis of valid planning applications to inform the **City Development Tracker** continues on an ongoing basis. Work has progressed on integrating the city investment narrative into the **Invest in Belfast website** to align the messaging with wider

### Access, Connectivity, Active & Sustainable Travel

- An update on the Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel (CAST) programme of work was presented to the Council’s City Growth and Regeneration Committee in February 2023.
- Work is underway to arrange an **All Party Round Table workshop** on future priorities in relation to Connectivity, Active and Sustainable travel as agreed by the Committee.
- Continued engagement with Department for Infrastructure (DfI) on the development of the **Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP)**.
- Ongoing delivery of the **DfC Covid Recovery Revitalisation Fund (£4m+)** which has supported the extension of the **city-wide cycle stands** including securing cycle parking at CastleCourt in October 2022. Funding proposals developed and submitted for DfI B&G 22/23 funding.
- Delivery of new **Active Travel Hubs at QUB and Cathedral Quarter**.
- The **Sustainable Travel E-Cargo Pilot** launched in the first half the year, with the operator presenting to Committee in CG&R Sept. 2022.
- As agreed by CG&R Committee in June 2022 the refresh of the **Car Parking Strategy** is deferred pending the finalisation of the **LDP & BMTP**.
- BCC continues to work with DfI and DfC on finalisation of the **Bolder Vision Strategy** with the emerging draft Strategy approved by CG&R Committee in August 2022. Ongoing engagement with departments, in the

### Future City Centre Programme and Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy

- Developed and delivered **Future City Centre (FCC) Programme** priority actions across the 6 pillars of Regeneration & Connectivity (including city centre living and Bolder Vision); Business & Investment; Positioning the City to Compete; Vibrancy & Culture; Innovation & Digital; Clean, Green, Inclusive & Safe.
- Continued to work with city stakeholders through the **Community Planning Partnership’s City Development Board** and relevant sub-structures and have co-designed four-year action plans (2023-2027) aligned to the priorities identified for the City (i.e., Housing Led Regeneration; Future City Centre Programme and Citywide Regeneration; Connectivity, Active & Sustainable Travel).
- Ongoing engagement with partner organisations and co-chairing the **Community Campus Regeneration Forum (CCRF)** which developed and oversees an outreach programme between the Ulster University and surrounding communities in line with the opening of the new Belfast campus.
- Established new **City Centre Governance structures** and continue to meet and progress priorities and address issues. This has included initial work to develop appropriate **metrics and measurements of success** for the overall **Future City Centre programme**.

<p>Council led initiatives and other stands of work. The new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system was completed and is currently being rolled out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through our investor support activity, we continued to <b>provide advice and connections to potential investors.</b></li> </ul>	<p>absence of Ministers through the oversight and steering groups involving the CX, and Perm Secs from DfC and DfI. DfI have accelerated the Belfast city centre element of the BMTP to the Climate Action Plan to model options for the provision of the strategic transportation network and to help inform the emerging capital project list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Belfast Bikes</b> - Three new stations were introduced at <b>Lisnasharragh and Olympia Leisure Centres</b> and the <b>Kennedy Centre</b>. Work continues to install a new station at the <b>Waterworks</b> and develop additional stations in line with the directions from CGR and SP&amp;R Committees.</li> <li>At Quarter 3 of 2022-23 financial year, there were <b>76,565 registered Belfast Bike users</b>. Pay as you go' (PAYG) remained the most popular form of membership, accounting for 88% of users.</li> <li>Officers continue to engage with DfI on the delivery of the <b>Belfast Cycling Network and the BMTP</b> with regular updates provided to the CG&amp;R Committee, and at the proposed <b>All-Party Connectivity &amp; Active Travel Workshop</b>.</li> <li><b>City Transport Plan</b> - We continue to work with the department to influence the city transport plan. The Director of Planning and Building Control is a member of the BMTP Board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Future City Centre Leadership Group</b> has considered and agreed the draft emerging FCC action plan and associated partner leads for delivery as part of the <b>refresh of the Belfast Agenda</b> and has agreed leads for delivery of associated actions.</li> <li>A number of priorities and projects identified within <b>Belfast City Centre Regeneration &amp; Investment Strategy</b> continue to be progressed via BCC and other private /public sector partners. The 2022/23 regeneration tracker was presented to the CG&amp;R Committee in March 2023.</li> <li>The <b>Joint Regeneration Group</b> (BCC, DfC, DfI, NIHE) meet on a monthly basis to co-ordinate the public sector approach to <b>Housing-Led Regeneration, A Bolder Vision, public realm projects and the FCC programme</b>.</li> <li>DfI have provided Council with a Letter of Offer (LoO) to fund the <b>"Grey to Green"</b> programme within the city. Awaiting LoO in respect of the <b>Active Travel Enabling</b> funding proposal as reported to March 2023 CGR Committee</li> <li>DfC has provided a LoO (£250k) for the <b>South-West Quarter Revitalisation</b> project with works scheduled to commence shortly.</li> <li>The council continued to lead the <b>Community Planning Partnership's City Development Board</b> with a focus on the refresh of the Belfast Agenda and associated emerging draft action plans aligned to the newly identified priorities of the City Development Board, i.e., Housing Led Regeneration; Future City Centre Programme and Citywide Regeneration; Connectivity, Active &amp; Sustainable Travel.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>City Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing work to finalise the <b>Belfast Infrastructure Study</b>.</li> <li>• Continue to provide <b>civic leadership and strategic input to the major city infrastructure projects</b> and represent Council on citywide boards, enabling, facilitating, and influencing major infrastructure development and investment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>North Foreshore and Belfast Hills</b></p> <p><i>North Foreshore</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>On site infrastructure works</b> progressing including drainage, landfill gas ring main, pumping stations and Northern Ireland Electricity Substations. Service capacity is continuously reviewed to ensure services and road capacity meet the demands of the current developers.</li> <li>▪ Legal work is progressing in relation to the <b>leisure led development with Giants Park Leisure Limited</b>.</li> </ul> <p><i>Belfast Hills (and Zoo)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Works underway on <b>the Lion/Big Cat Enclosure</b> and are due to complete later in 2023.</li> <li>▪ Progressed options for the <b>Zoo, Belfast Castle and the old Zoo</b> site that provide synergy with many of the Council's priorities, including active travel, tourism, economic development and a commitment to a green economy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Belfast Stories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The assembly of the two remaining properties linked to development has been completed. Council is in <b>ownership of all properties</b> at the site. Work is underway to complete the abandonment of the adopted alleyway off <b>Kent Street</b>.</li> <li>▪ The <b>procurements for the professional services teams</b> including the Integrated Design Team (IDT), Interpretative Planning and Exhibition Design Team (IPEDT) and Project Management and Design Assurance Team (PMDAT) are underway, with the prequalification stage now completed. Invitation to Tender (ITT) stage commenced in March with appointments expected before Autumn 2023.</li> <li>▪ A city-wide <b>Stories Audit</b> completed in May 2023.</li> <li>▪ A <b>14-week public consultation exercise</b> has been completed with the findings and recommendations</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commissioned <b>Access to the Hills feasibility study</b> to include a delivery plan for creation of a comprehensive and sustainable pathway network.</li> <li>▪ At the end of Q3 the Belfast Zoo had welcomed <b>184k</b> visitors. This is <b>14k higher</b> than the five-year average.</li> <li>▪ The Zoo was open to the public as normal throughout Q3 and <b>re-launched its Junior Keeper experience</b> in November 2022. Several zoo initiatives, including interactive animal experiences, unfortunately, continue to remain unavailable.</li> <li>▪ The <b>Zoo Friend’s Community Group</b> celebrated their 25th anniversary and received charity status from the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.</li> </ul>	<p>currently under review. A summary report was brought to CGR Committee in June 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An <b>engagement plan and communications plan</b> has been developed and updated in line with consultation feedback. The plan will include consultation and engagement activities in 2023/24.</li> <li>▪ <b>Belfast Stories social media channels</b> (Facebook and Instagram) support ongoing online engagement.</li> <li>▪ An <b>action plan to support Inclusive Growth</b> has been developed to ensure this area of work is considered at the project development stage.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Educational underachievement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>GCSE support programme:</b> Since September 2022, <b>281 young people</b> have been engaged on the programme which is expected to increase to <b>365</b> young people engaged throughout the 2022/23 academic year.</li> <li>▪ <b>Youth Support Programme:</b> We are supporting <b>170 young people:</b> of those, <b>87</b> have completed accredited training and <b>65</b> are undertaking essential skills qualifications</li> <li>▪ <b>Summer Work Experience Programme</b> was piloted in summer 2022 for young people aged 14-16 years at highest risk or who had already disengaged from the formal education system with <b>30</b> completing the programme and <b>28</b> moving into positive outcomes (14 continued in formal education at year 13 and the remainder moved into vocational training)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Access to employment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Since April 2022, we have invested in <b>over 700 places on Employment Academies</b>, utilising our own resources and attracting additional resources through the <b>Labour Market Partnership, Learning &amp; Work Institute’s New Futures programme</b> and the <b>Community Renewal Fund.</b></li> <li>▪ On average, <b>93%</b> of those who started an <b>Employment Academy</b> successfully completed, and for those, we achieved an <b>into-work rate of 75%.</b></li> <li>▪ The most attended academies were in <b>logistics, education, construction</b> and <b>upskilling</b> academies for people in traditionally low-paid sectors.</li> </ul>	

# Community Recovery

## Good Relations

- **Action Plan (2022-23)** fully delivered under 10 core themes:
  1. Council Good Relations Grants Programme
  2. St Patrick’s Day Celebration programme
  3. Cultural Expression Programme
  4. Civic Engagement and Learning Programme
  5. Inclusion Programme
  6. Shared City Building Relations Programme
  7. Interface Engagement
  8. Shared Education Schools Programme
  9. Strategic Intervention Programme
  10. Civic Leadership
- Delivery of **PEACE IV Local Action Plan**.
- Delivery of **Children and Young People programme** with **2662** participants completing projects, which represents **80%** achievement of revised target
- Delivery of activity within the Building Positive Relations completed with **1182** participants completing projects, which represents **68%** achievement of the revised target
- Final activity within the Shared Spaces and Services is completing. To date over **500** participants have completed projects, with over **8,000** people attending events along the Greenway.
- Construction of Sections 1, 3, 4 and 5 of **Forth Meadow Community Greenway** has been completed. Construction of Section 2 is to complete 30 June 2023. OSS engaged on the Forth Meadow Greenway project delivery team, and management and maintenance of all completed sections of new greenway on handover from Physical Programmes Department.

## Neighbourhood Regeneration

### *Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (£10m)*

- ‘Stage 1 (application phase) completed and **21** projects across the city progressed to ‘Stage 2 (development phase).
- Commenced appointment of consultants to develop business cases for Stage 2 projects and ensured that the Outcomes Based Accountability approach is embedded within the development of the Stage 2 projects. Following completion of business cases, the programme will move towards ‘Stage 3 – Delivery’ in 23/24.

### *Physical Projects*

- Continued delivery of a number of physical programmes that span the neighbourhoods including the **Alleygates Phase 5**.
- Continued of the programme of **Local Investment Fund** and **Belfast Investment Fund** projects across the city.
- Completed work on **Playground Improvement Programme**.
- Continued development of a number of projects on behalf of partners including **Urban Villages and Peace IV**.
- Ongoing implementation of **Open Spaces and Streetscene** vision, including enhancing our parks, open spaces, and public realm across city.
- Limited progress on the development of 5-year action plan for the delivery of the **Belfast Open Spaces Strategy** due to resource constraints (human/ budgetary).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of <b>Shankill Women’s Centre</b> and <b>Black Mountain Shared Space</b> continue to be progress by Physical Programmes Unit with both state-of-the-art facilities due to complete and open in late 2023.</li> <li>• Partnership working the Executive Office on the delivery of BCC park redevelopment projects within the good relations focused Urban Villages Programme including <b>Marrowbone Millennium Park, Ballysillan Playing Fields Redevelopment, Pitt Park, and Pairc Nui Chollan.</b></li> <li>• Ongoing management and maintenance of <b>Pairc Nui Chollan Project.</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Community Capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supported <b>115</b> groups through our large grants Capacity/Revenue at a value of almost <b>£2 million.</b></li> <li>▪ Officers engaged with stakeholders in identified areas and sought additional financial resources to support delivery.</li> <li>▪ Delivered the following activity through Co-located team of staff in BHDU (partnership with PHA/BHSCT).</li> <li>▪ Installed <b>16</b> Take 5 benches with QR codes providing access to information on wellbeing/positive mental health and delivered Take 5 programme in schools.</li> <li>▪ Produced third <b>4-year Age Friendly Plan.</b></li> <li>▪ Supported <b>Winter Wellness</b> programme delivered by GLL and Warm Spaces in Council Community centres and delivered a range of events for older people.</li> <li>▪ Facilitated Belfast Festival of learning with over <b>140</b> free events.</li> <li>▪ Delivered pilot <b>Participatory Budgeting</b> programme on ‘Move More, Eat Less’ theme. Over <b>30</b> groups took part.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Integrated services at a local level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Worked with city partners, through community planning, to co-design and implement new integrated service delivery models including the <b>Complex Lives project</b> which supported up to <b>50 vulnerable individuals</b> who were homeless and have complex needs due to the use of drugs and alcohol.</li> <li>▪ Worked with partners to co-design the refresh of the <b>Belfast Agenda and associated collaborative action plans</b> for the city.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leisure Transformation</b></p> <p><i>Leisure Phase 2b</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Working in partnership with GLL on the restoration and extension of <b>Templemore Baths leisure facility and development of a visitor centre</b> with facilities opened in June 2023.</li> </ul> <p><i>Leisure Phase 3</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A comprehensive community consultation process took place to inform the business case for <b>Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility.</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Leisure Phase 4</i></p>	<p><b>Maximising housing development and regeneration opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Concept Regeneration Plans</b> developed for a number of <b>city centre cluster sites</b> (from the Strategic Site Assessment work) including site and title due diligence. Continued engagement with key stakeholders and Pre-Application Discussions (PADs) undertaken.</li> <li>▪ Launch of <b>Expression of Interest in March 2023</b> which seeks to identify potential institutional investors and/or development partners to fund, develop and manage, as appropriate, <b>housing led regeneration schemes</b> at scale, (including affordable /social) working in partnership with Council.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Options are being considered that will align with the <b>Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy</b>.</li> </ul> <p><i>Sports Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Through the <b>Boxing Strategy</b>, <b>6,745 participants</b> were given the opportunity to take part in the sport in 2022/2023</li> <li>▪ Through activities and programmes funded through the <b>Stadium Community Benefits Initiative</b> over <b>42,000</b> participant opportunities were created</li> </ul> <p><i>GLL/ Active Belfast Ltd</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed review and implemented emerging recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work on the <b>city-wide strategic site assessments</b> was progressed with the identification and mapping of land assets owned by statutory partners (e.g., BCC, NIHE and DFC) which may have housing development potential. Detailed assessment has been undertaken on the operational requirements, planning, title, zoning and other relevant considerations. This work has been taken forward through the Housing Led Regeneration Group established under Community Planning.</li> <li>▪ Completion of the <b>City Centre Living Vision</b> following extensive consultation and engagement. Recommendations for implementation will be submitted to Council’s City Growth and Regeneration Committee by Autumn 2023. a</li> <li>▪ Ongoing engagement with the private sector, NIHE, Housing Associations and BCC Planning Service to identify challenges to development, especially city centre residential development and consideration of options to address such challenges.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Physical Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Delivery of 2022-23 physical programme including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- completion and opening of <b>City Cemetery Visitor Centre</b></li> <li>- completion and opening of <b>St. Comgall’s</b> providing a new state of the art and conference centre</li> <li>- completion of works at <b>Boodles Dam</b></li> <li>- continued work at the <b>Lion and Big Cat Enclosure at Belfast Zoo</b></li> <li>- survey and site investigations commenced as part of the <b>Reservoir Safety Programme</b></li> <li>- continued work on the development of the new <b>Crematorium and major waste projects</b></li> <li>- completed public consultation on the masterplan for <b>Cathedral Gardens</b> with the next stage comprising appointment of a design team</li> <li>- commissioned development of feasibility study and delivery plan for <b>Access to the Hills</b></li> <li>- commenced works on the <b>Shankill Shared Women’s Centre</b> and <b>Black Mountain Shared Spaces</b> project</li> <li>- completed community consultation for Phase 2 of the <b>Lagan Gateway</b> project and the <b>Lisnasharragh Community Schools</b> project</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Under the <b>Local Investment Fund</b>, works completed at <b>St. John Bosco Boxing Club</b> and <b>Wishing Well</b>. Works are nearing completion at <b>Berlin Swifts, St. Joseph’s Church Sailortown</b>. Work to <b>John Murray Lockhouse</b> is underway</li> <li>▪ Under the <b>Social Outcomes Fund</b>, we worked with Belfast South Community Resources to complete tourism signage works and work is underway on the <b>Roddy McCorley Heritage Museum</b>. Progressed work on <b>Eastside Visitor Centre</b> in conjunction with Urban Villages.</li> </ul>
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- Delivered a range of capital projects on behalf of local agencies (e.g., Urban Villages) including completed works at **Pro-Kick Community Gym, Páirc Nua Chollann** and **Colin Valley Football Club**. Work commenced at **Marrowbone Millennium Park** and excellent progress has been made on the development of **Ballysillan** and **Pitt Park** which will start on site in the next financial year.
- Continued work on the **Walkway Community Centre** as part of the **Social Investment Fund Programme**
- Secured **Levelling Up Round 2** funding towards the **Strand Cinema** redevelopment.
- Continued development/implementation of **city hall statues programme** including commission of artists for **Mary Ann McCracken** and **Winifred Carney statues**.

#### *New Programmes*

- Work commenced on development of a **new Capital Programme** with thematic action planning with senior management taking place.

#### *Land Disposal*

- Continued to progress a number of land disposals including completion of **McClure Street** and **Gasworks Northern Fringe**. Work continues on the **Film Studio Extension** and the **Beechvale Farm** sites.

#### *Land Acquisition*

- Ongoing site assembly in support of projects funded through Peace IV, Urban Villages, Belfast Investment Fund and Social Outcomes Fund.

# Environmental Recovery

## BCC Climate Adaption & Mitigation

- Development of draft **Climate Risk assessment** and draft **Climate Action Plan** which will be submitted for Council approval in Autumn 2023.
- Developed and commenced delivery of **18 pilot climate projects** and **feasibility studies** under the **£1m Climate Fund**. Governance, oversight and evaluation arrangements agreed and put in place.
- A **Monitoring, Reporting and Learning officer** recruited into the climate team to monitor and report on progress and compliance with the Council's Net Zero, adaptation and Green Economy objectives and targets, related actions plans and KPI's.
- Completed a **baseline emissions analysis** and **draft trajectory report** for the Council.
- Exploratory work commenced to scope a possible **climate data platform** which would assist with the embedding and monitoring of the Climate Action Plan priorities and KPIs.
- Continued engagement with DAERA, via the Green Growth Forum, to assess the forthcoming **mandatory emission reporting requirements for Council**.
- The **capacity needs assessment** was postponed pending recruitment of the PSO-Climate post. In the meantime, climate Literacy training completed for Climate programme Board and Climate and Resilience Committee members.

## Improve Urban air quality

- A progress report on the **second-year delivery of the 2021-2026 Air-Quality Action Plan**, will be brought to Committee in August 2023 and then submitted to DAERA.
- The **Detailed Assessment for NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>** was completed at the end of March 2023, with findings presented to the People and Communities Committee at its meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The assessment report contains suggestions for the possible revocation of some of the city's Air Quality Management Areas.
- Continued delivery of air quality and ambient monitoring interventions as part of the **local air quality management regime**, which is part funded by the DAERA grant.
- The council is now operating the **Zephyr air quality monitors for PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub>**, installed as part of the detailed assessment project.
- A **vehicle anti-idling education initiative** is being delivered across several Belfast schools. Clean Air Day 2023 has been publicised through the council's social media channels
- Responses to planning consultations and PPC enforcement are on-going with continued engagement with DAERA about the **Clean Air Strategy for NI**, the **Regulatory Transformation Programme for PPC** and other policy work aimed at improving air quality in the city.

## City Wide Climate Adaption & Mitigation

- Work initiated on the development of **Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)** which will help secure necessary investment to decarbonise the city.
- Phase 1 funding secured from Innovate UK to develop a feasibility study (scheduled in 2023-24) to tackle non-technical barriers to the uptake and scale out of the hydrogen economy. This work was undertaken with the Energy Systems Catapult as part of the close collaboration with ICB, Catagen and Artemis technologies on the concept of a Net Zero Park in the innovation District.
- A **retrofit Hub** was established to catalyse retrofit activity across the city with support from Leeds University and two hub meetings and 8 roundtable focus groups were held. The team also supported LSE with their research into a **Just Transition Bond** to support a retrofit programme.

- Work commenced on the development of **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (EVI) Strategy** (due for completion in August 2023). Ongoing participation in the Interreg funded **FASTER project** which will deliver EV infrastructure at several leisure centres, and on a planned bid to the On Street Residential Charging Scheme which will see charging infrastructure installed at council car parks for public use.
- Funding was secured from Horizon Europe to develop a **Net Zero neighbourhood in the Linen Quarter** – a 3-year project being undertaken jointly with the Climate Team and the City Development team.
- Phase 1 funding was also secured from the **Shared Island development fund for two projects with Dublin (circular economy – working with Economy and Waste teams) and Cork (Solar PV and port regeneration – working with City Regeneration / Development and the Physical Programmes teams).**
- Through the Resilience & Sustainability Board, **35 public building operators** have expressed an interest in being off takers on a heat network. This is also part of a wider piece of work that has engaged UKIB, UKMBA and Meridiam in exploring new financial models for a heat network, the Net Zero Park, a 5G network and decarbonizing the BCC fleet. In parallel, scoping work commenced with 5 other Councils on a NI Carbon Offset fund.
- Enhanced **staff resources and capacity within the resilience and climate team** including the recruitment of an Adaptation and Resilience Advisor, Project Support Officer and Monitoring, Reporting and Learning officer.
- The Met Office completed a **heat map and a vulnerability index for Belfast.**
- Continued delivery of the **1 million Trees project** and supporting initiatives linked to woodland restoration and volunteer programmes across the city in partnership with the Woodlands Trust and the Belfast Hills Partnership. The project also produced the **Belfast I-Tree ECO report**, the first of its kind in the North or South of Ireland.
- Commenced the **UPSURGE project** with planning work underway to develop the research and community site in Botanic in partnership with QUB.
- The **Belfast Sustainable Food Places Framework and Action Plan** report was completed to support renewal of Bronze Sustainable.
- Following the annual submission to the Carbon Disclosure Project, **Belfast scored an A in 2022.** Belfast was also ranked in the **top 10 sustainable destinations globally** (in the GDS Index) in 2022. The Net Zero Targets from the Carbon Roadmap were also formally adopted by Council and Resilience and Sustainability Board (66% reduction in emissions by 2025, 80% by 2030 and 100% by 2050).
- The **Resilience and Sustainability Board** has met regularly and continues to lead the delivery of the Resilience Strategy with new groups reporting into the Board including: the Sustainable Food Partnership, Belfast Retrofit Hub, the Net Zero Park, the Net Zero Belfast Project and the LAEP.

# Strategic Planning Frameworks

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## Belfast Spatial Planning Framework

- The steps required to meet the Local Development Plan (LDP) timetable and feedback from the PAC report have all been completed.
- **Local Development Plan Strategy** agreed for **formally adoption** in May 2023.
- The **Supplementary Planning Guidance** has also been completed following consultation and feedback from public consultation.
- The **Local Policies Plan (LPP)**, including initial review of zonings/designations, is continuing into 2023.

## Build Partnership Working to Deliver the Belfast Agenda

- As convening lead, the Council **facilitated the co-development of the refresh of the Belfast Agenda (2023-2027)** and associated action plans.
- Implemented an **intensive co-design approach** with Councillors, statutory partners, anchor institutes, community and voluntary sectors, the private sector and residents in developing the draft refresh of the Belfast Agenda. Formal public consultation scheduled for Autumn 2023.
- Continued collaboration, joint planning and delivery across community planning partners to address the agreed priority challenges and opportunities facing the city and its communities. Cross-sectoral Belfast Agenda delivery boards established and operational.
- Continued joint working with the **Belfast Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sectoral Advisory Panel** in support of the delivery of Belfast Agenda.

# Organisational Foundations

<p><b>Customer Focus Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All actions to optimise have now been completed <b>68% service level in 2022/23 Vs Target of 80%</b> Note significant impact industrial action and bank holidays.</li> <li>Achieved <b>79% customer satisfaction</b> with ‘Customer Hub’ against a target of <b>75% for 2022/23</b>.</li> <li>Baseline definition has been agreed for the transition and transformation approach and will be furthered in 23/24 with a change board.</li> <li>Prioritisation is linked to the formation of a change board in 23/24.</li> </ul>	<p><b>People</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Senior Leadership Development Programme</b> - whilst progress has been delayed pending the recruitment of resources to the CHR team, the delivery of the leadership programme to Tier 4 is included in People Strategy Year 1 action plan (2023/34).</li> <li><b>People Strategy</b> - refresh and consultation completed, and the draft strategy will be presented to SP&amp;R in August 2023 and launched alongside and the previously agreed <b>Achieving Through People</b> framework in the Autumn.</li> <li><b>Individual Performance Management</b> whilst progress has been delayed as a result of the pandemic and organisational recovery, a review of the effectiveness of the approach to individual performance management is included in the People Strategy Year 1 Action Plan.</li> <li><b>Corporate HR Review</b> - implemented, professional supervision framework for HR Dept staff is being developed.</li> <li><b>Strategic Workforce Planning</b> - progress has been delayed pending the recruitment of staff resources to the CHR team. However, work has started on developing workforce planning solutions in areas of the organisation currently facing difficulties with filling posts for example, driver posts and critical digital services posts.</li> <li><b>Return to the office</b>- Pilot Workstyles Policy was agreed and implemented 1 April 2023 which provided flexibility to staff to work from home 2 days a week subject to business need.</li> <li>Delivery of the <b>Gender, LGBT+ and Disability actions plans</b> continued and revised plans for 23/24 were agreed. A Race champion has been appointed and a <b>Race Equality Action Plan</b> is under development.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Data Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed <b>Pilot Data Model</b> for baselining service design and efficiency approach as part of the Building Control system implementation project.</li> <li>A report for <b>Data Management</b> for business intelligence was taken to the Digital Services’ Senior Change Advisory Board with technical</li> </ul>	<p><b>Business support review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilised a recruitment framework to assist with the appointment of <b>35 permanent Business Support Clerks</b>.</li> <li>This work will be carried forward into 2023/24 and in particular:</li> </ul>

<p>proposals on how to improve <b>BCC’s Business Intelligence and Analytics</b> provision through Data Management. This will be taken forward as a key strand in the new <b>Digital Strategy</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning underway for the implementation of <b>Land and Property Services (LPS) new address management and BCC Building control systems</b>.</li> <li>▪ Established a direct link between Webservice and LPS in context of the <b>Customer Hub</b>, which enables the escalation of non-verified addresses directly to LPS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete the work on Business Support Manager posts to provide support for the new CMT structure and departments.</li> <li>- Support the wider business support model for Place and Economy, ensuring this is done within the Industrial Relations Framework.</li> <li>- Conduct a “profiling” activity for all business support posts to provide the baseline to inform the next steps for Business Support and the wider Change Programme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Continuous Improvement Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Service design approach</b> has been implemented on several large projects including Resources &amp; Fleet and City Services. As part of the audit response plan for CI, the service design approach will be further reviewed and refined, taking into account any impact from the Digital Strategy.</li> <li>▪ <b>Project management framework</b> has been implemented throughout 22/23 and will also be subject to review and development as an audit response action for 23/24. CI will also be central to the development of a corporate approach to project management during 23/24.</li> <li>▪ Design work underway to create a one <b>front door approach by CI for all service requests</b> which will include a triage and sequencing process, led by the Director of C&amp;OS.</li> <li>▪ Established the <b>Performance &amp; Improvement Unit</b> within CNS.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Corporate Planning &amp; Performance Management Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Performance function</b> transferred to Strategy, Programmes &amp; Partnerships Team.</li> <li>▪ Review commenced of the <b>corporate performance management framework</b> with a view to refreshing and aligning with new corporate planning process.</li> <li>▪ Process and timescales established for the <b>development of the new Corporate Plan for the period 2025-2028</b> which will commence in Autumn 2023, following elections. The refreshed <b>corporate plan</b> will be aligned to the <b>refreshed Belfast Agenda</b>, with focused priorities for the Council to deliver, alongside a series of performance targets that demonstrate impact of our strategic investments and interventions. This will be developed with Councillors from the initial stages.</li> </ul>
<p><b>IT Security</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Enhancing Cyber Security Incident Response</b> - Digital Services, Audit Governance and Risk Services and Emergency Planning have worked with the council’s critical services to update business continuity plans in relation to the response to major cyber incidents. The <b>corporate cyber incident response plan</b> is being updated alongside system recovery priorities and the development of a ransomware playbook.</li> <li>• <b>Improving Cyber Security Awareness</b> - regular phishing simulations carried out to raise internal awareness on the latest cyber threats. This was accompanied by focused training in the form of short video-based</li> </ul>	<p><b>Medium Term Financial Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The <b>Efficiency Programme</b> and <b>Medium-Term Financial Plan</b> are interlinked and were impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.</li> <li>▪ A <b>financial strategy</b> was agreed with members to deal with cost pressures in the 23/24 financial year, with work ongoing in the following areas to help mitigate against district rate impact for 24/25: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Category management</li> <li>- Contract management</li> <li>- Income generation opportunities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>learning and quizzes that educates staff on best-practice cyber security advice. Compliance is now reported to DMTs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Implementing Cloud Governance and controls-</b> Digital Services has developed a <b>Cloud Strategy</b> to address the opportunities and challenges arising from the adoption of cloud-based technologies. Digital Services has prepared new reports on cloud application usage in the council and will be bringing a report on recommendations for dealing with unapproved use of cloud applications to CMT.</li> <li>• <b>Updating Security policies and standards</b> - a new Computer Use policy has been approved and communicated. Security policies are reviewed on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• <b>Improving automated detection and response-</b> Digital Services are in the process of upgrading our enterprise <b>security information and event management (SIEM)</b> product to provide improved alerts against Cyber Attacks; trigger automated responses when incidents are detected and to allow user and management level reports.</li> <li>• <b>A new Cyber Security maturity assessment</b> - the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) are in the process of testing their Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) in Local Government. Digital Services will <b>procure a new cyber maturity assessment</b> in alignment with the NCSC CAF based on learning from the pilots.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alternative service delivery models</li> <li>▪ Physical Programmes Department is taking the lead in the development of a <b>new capital programme</b> and is being supported by corporate finance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Asset Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of the <b>Asset Management Strategy and Plan</b> is ongoing. The <b>Asset Management System</b> has been live, and we have continued to develop its use. Physical Programmes has been working closely to integrate it with the <b>e5 SAP Replacement System</b>.</li> <li>▪ Estates have been visiting all sites and checking boundaries for encroachments against mapping and title and any other site changes. Condition surveys are undertaken by Property Maintenance.</li> <li>▪ Physical Programmes Department through their Estates unit continue to manage a wide range of leases across the city.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Member Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Successfully retained accreditation of the <b>Member Development Plus Charter</b>, with reassessment due early 2024.</li> <li>▪ Development and implementation of <b>Elected Member Induction Programme</b> following the 2023 Local government elections for new and returning members.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Coll Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recommendations emerging from the Coll Report have now been completed, with the Audit and Risk Panel and Strategic Policy and Resources Committee indicating that they do not require further updates.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Political Governance Arrangements</b></p> <p><i>Standards and Business Committee</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued monthly meetings of the Standards and Business Committee which considers emerging Notice of Motions from Members.</li> <li>Trainer provider has been commissioned to design and roll-out the delivery of a bespoke training programme for relevant managers starting in October 2023.</li> </ul> <p><i>Remote and Hybrid meetings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council now provides a hybrid model of remote and in-person Committee and Council meetings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued work undertaken on the service review of the Equality &amp; Diversity Unit. Anticipated emerging recommendations will be brought to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval in Aug. 2023.</li> </ul> <p><i>Language Strategy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A <b>Members’ Language Working Group</b> established and regularly.</li> <li>External stakeholder fora established and meeting regularly.</li> <li>Completion of pre-consultation engagement on the draft <b>Language Strategy Action Plan</b> is now complete. This will be brought to SP&amp;R in August with a view to starting the formal public consultation in Sept. 2023.</li> <li><b>Dual Language Street Signs Policy</b> was finalised and agreed in July 2022 and is now being implemented.</li> </ul> <p><i>Equality</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued implementation of Equality Scheme with annual progress report submitted to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</li> </ul> <p><i>Disability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New <b>Disability Action Plan for 2022-25</b> ratified by Council in March 2023, with Year-1 (2022-2023) delivery underway. Annual progress report for 2022-23 is currently being completed.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Corporate Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Finance System</b> - implementation of the new Finance system will shortly be entering the data migration and user acceptance testing phases with ‘Go-Live’ planned for Q3.</li> <li><b>Regional Planning Portal for BCC</b>- the new regional planning portal went live on the 5 December 2022 for 10 councils and the Department of Infrastructure. The <b>Intelligent Client Function (ICF)</b> has been established successfully and is supporting the department’s project team in resolving outstanding issues with the new system. Additionally, it is managing the new contract on behalf of the 11 planning authorities with the overall objectives of delivering and maintaining performance, driving efficiencies, and achieving value for money.</li> <li><b>HR &amp; Payroll system</b> - HR system implementation has progressed with the majority of organisational structures built as the pre-requisite for improved corporate reporting. System enhancements have delivered an improved end-user experience. New NILGOSC reporting requirements have been delivered successfully. The majority of major development and integration issues between the HR system and Time and Attendance (T&amp;A) have been progressed to allow a plan to be put in place for the roll out of the new T&amp;A system in September 2023. Outstanding issues are being reviewed to ensure delivery within the timescales of the new plan. Online recruitment has been built and configured. Final configuration is ready for sign-off to allow internal and external pilots to commence.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Corporate Asset Management System (AMS)</b> - implementation was put on hold to focus on the delivery of the new Finance system as interfaces will be required between the 2 systems. The AMS Project Board has now agreed to proceed with recruitment of a temporary project manager and preparation for project restart. Development of an updated delivery timeline for the replacement of <b>Archibus</b> and implementation of the remaining AMS Modules will be the project manager's immediate priority once in post.</li> <li>▪ <b>Electronic Document and Records Management Implementation</b> - EDRMS pilots have been implemented in Corporate Procurement Services, Audit Governance &amp; Risk Services, and the Office of the Chief Executive.</li> <li>▪ <b>Building Control replacement IT system</b> - the procurement of a new Building Control system (which includes facilities for both Building Regulations and Licensing) is complete. The Building Control Service and Digital Services are currently working with the supplier on the implementation of the solution which comprises data migration from legacy systems and configuration of the new system. <b>Go Live</b> is taking a phased approach with the Building Regulations module planned for end of September and licensing at the beginning of November 2023.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Corporate Health and Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Additional short term agency resource was secured in the early part of 2022/2023 which allowed for regular health and safety work to resume. In the later part of 2022/2023, <b>staffing levels returned to normal.</b></li> <li>▪ Implementation of the health and safety IT system continued as planned during 2022/2023 with one remaining module carrying forward into 23/24.</li> <li>▪ Health and safety advice provided as required to support the organizational recovery programme in the early part of 2022/2023.</li> </ul>	

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