



Shared City Partnership  
09 September 2023  
Eimear Henry, Strategic Lead



# Report Overview

- Update on progress against the delivery of the Belfast Stories programme.
- Findings of the public consultation exercise, the Equality Impact Assessment and the Rural Needs Screening.
- Actions as set out in the Engagement Plan.
- Findings of the Stories Audit.
- Actions as set out in the Stories Action Plan.
- Inclusive Growth and Social Value Action Plan.
- Setting up of Members' Working Group.

**BELFAST  
STORIES**



# Strategic context

## Programme for Government - New Decade, New Approach

Regional



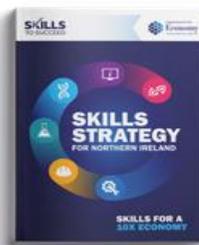
Belfast Region City Deal

NI Tourism Strategy



Delivering a 21<sup>st</sup> Century High-Street (Taskforce)

Culture, Arts, Heritage – A Way forward)



10X Economy – a decade of innovation

Green Growth Strategy (Draft)



Employability NI

City

## Belfast Agenda



The Belfast Agenda

Council



A City Imagining – Cultural Strategy 2020-2030

A Bolder Vision for Belfast



Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy

Good Relations Strategy



Belfast Economic Strategy 2022-30

Tourism Plan 2022-2030



Net Zero Roadmap for Belfast

Local Development Plan



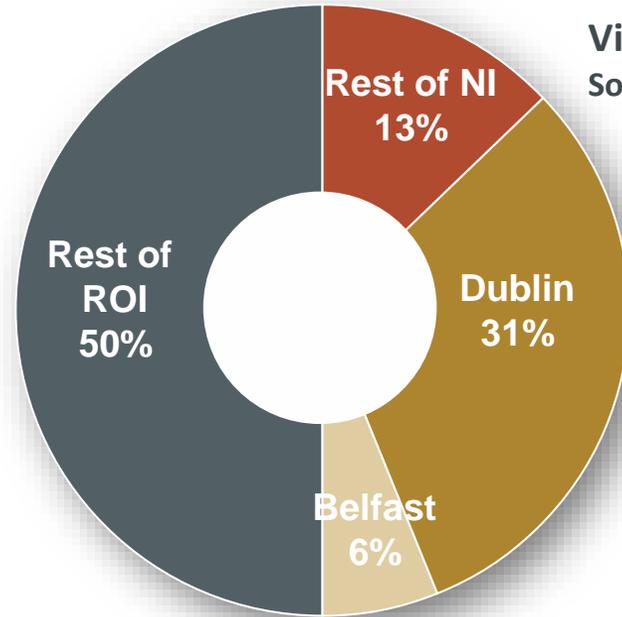
## Corporate plans, investment and programmes

# BRCDC challenge

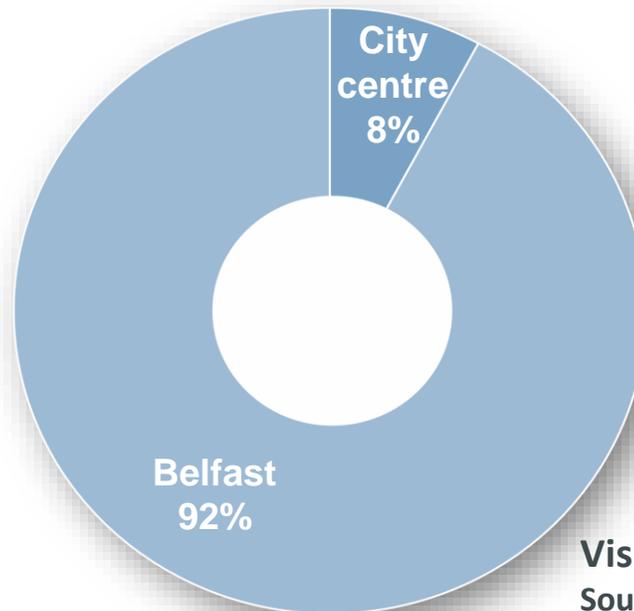
Projects should strive to be of world class quality:

- Innovative & participatory
- Engage the senses & imagination
- Authentic to the place and connect with local communities
- Produced by local people and provide a sense of place
- Provide a new perspective and understanding of the destination
- Be unique and original
- Available year round, day through to evening and weekends

**BELFAST  
STORIES**



Visits to Island of Ireland  
Source: NISRA, FAILTE Ireland, 2018



Visits to Attractions in Belfast  
Source: NISRA Visitors to Attractions 2011-2018

Belfast Stories...A **cultural beacon** for the city; an **anchor for the wider Belfast experience** and a place of orientation for visitors...

# The 3 'S's

Belfast Stories, in the heart of the city, the place where local people and visitors meet.

Stories  
Screen  
Social Spaces

A world class experience with animated outdoor and indoor spaces and the best of NI's food and drink.

A unique insight into Belfast's people and the city, as the stories of Belfast unravel through all areas.

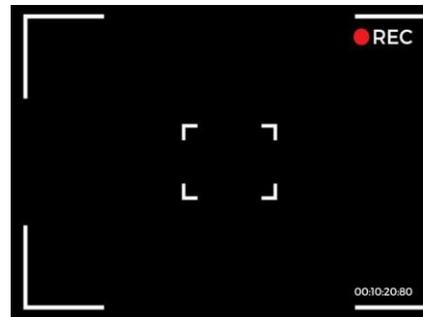
Innovation, education and creative learning programme.

Rooftop with 360 degree city views is the perfect starting point for a visit to Belfast and beyond...

S  
T  
O  
R  
I  
E  
S

S  
C  
R  
E  
E  
N

S  
O  
C  
I  
A  
L





# Why

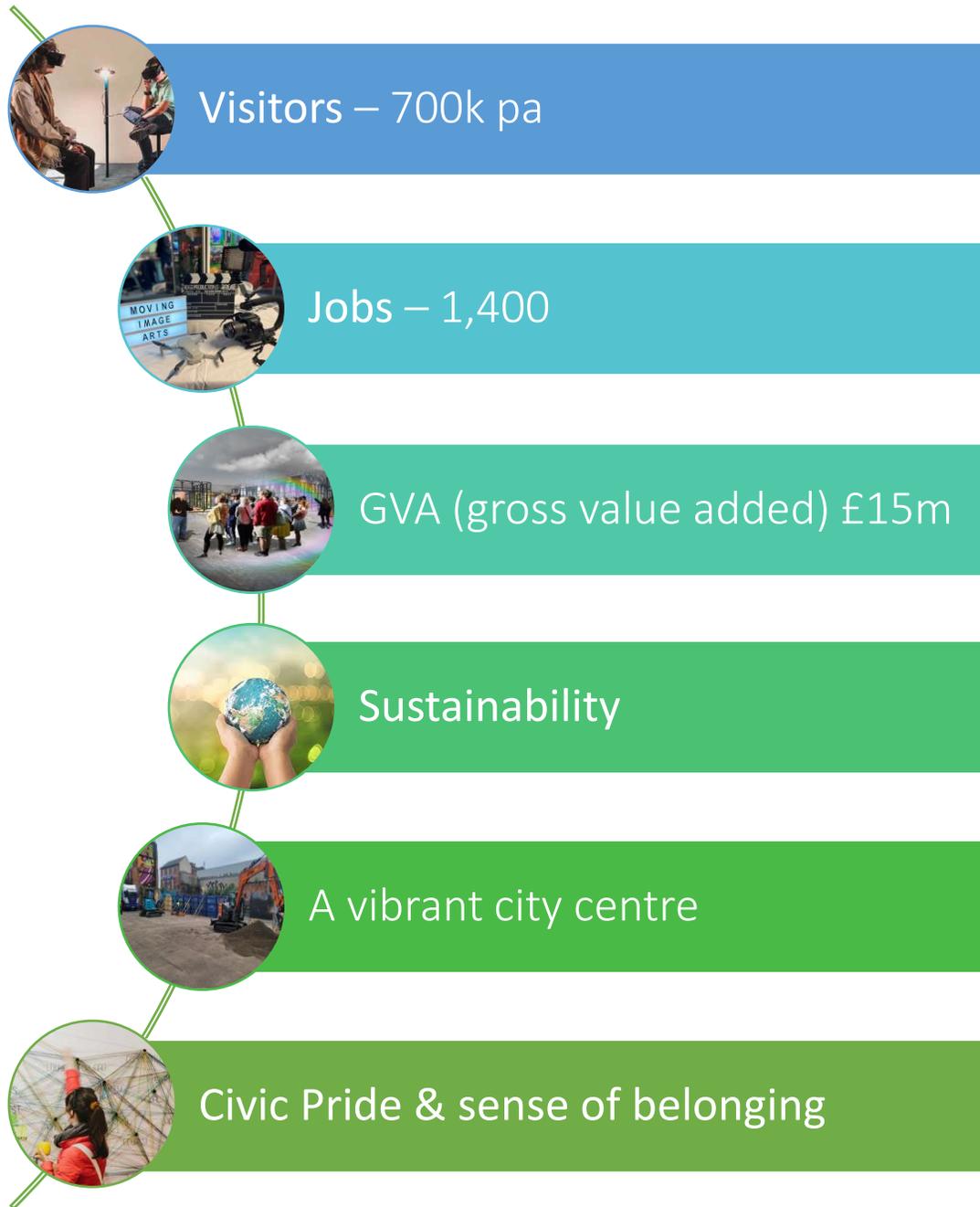
## Vision

Belfast will be a caring, vibrant and more visited city; transformed by the power of stories of past, present and future generations.

## Objectives

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

**BELFAST**  
**STORIES**



# Sustainability

## Social

- Regenerative - placemaking
- Wellbeing
- Connection and belonging
- Inclusion - collaboration

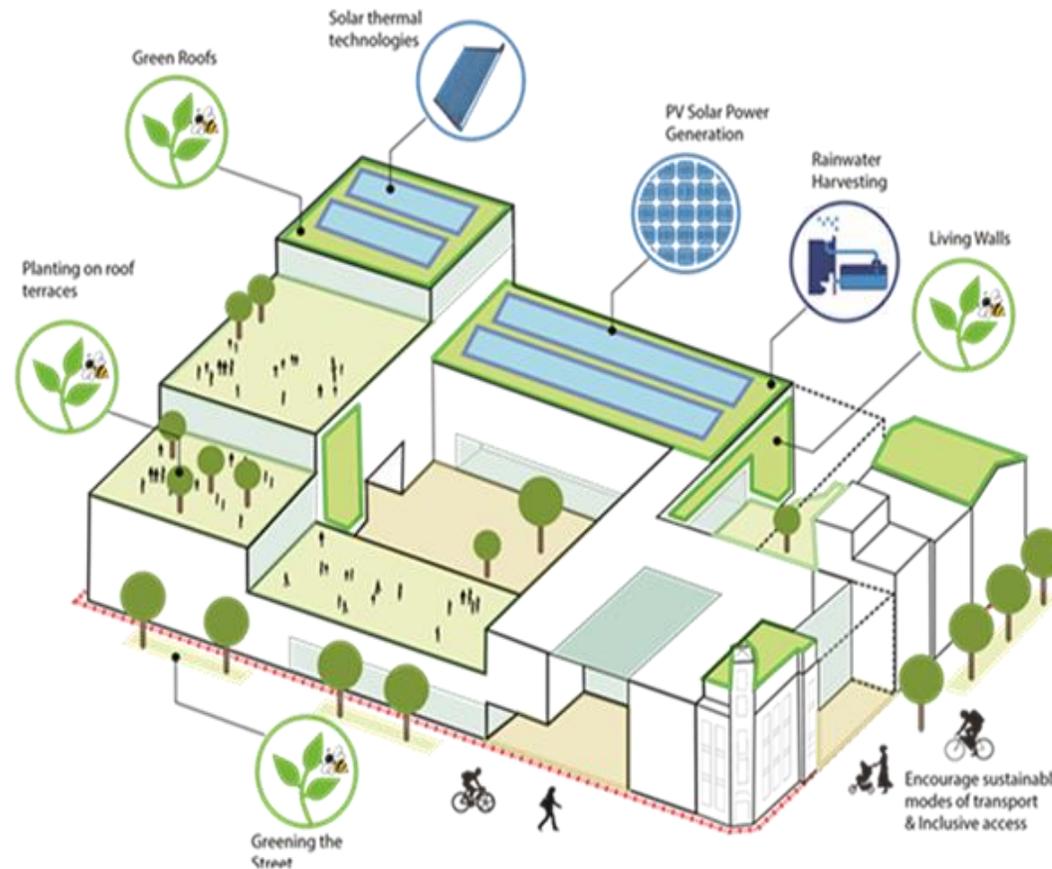
## Economic

- GVA – more people, more time
- Inclusive Growth:
  - jobs, skills, support SMEs, VCSE
- Strengthen the brand

## Environmental

- Net zero exemplar for the city
- Sustainability assessments (e.g. BREEAM outstanding, Passive House plus, CEEQUAL outstanding).

**BELFAST  
STORIES**



**Inclusive  
Design  
Principles**



# Location

---

Optimal site.  
Belfast Stories design  
needs to draw people  
in and breathe new life  
into the destination.  
**A recognisable  
window to the city** -  
accessible, bold,  
inclusive, respectful  
and responsive to its  
context.

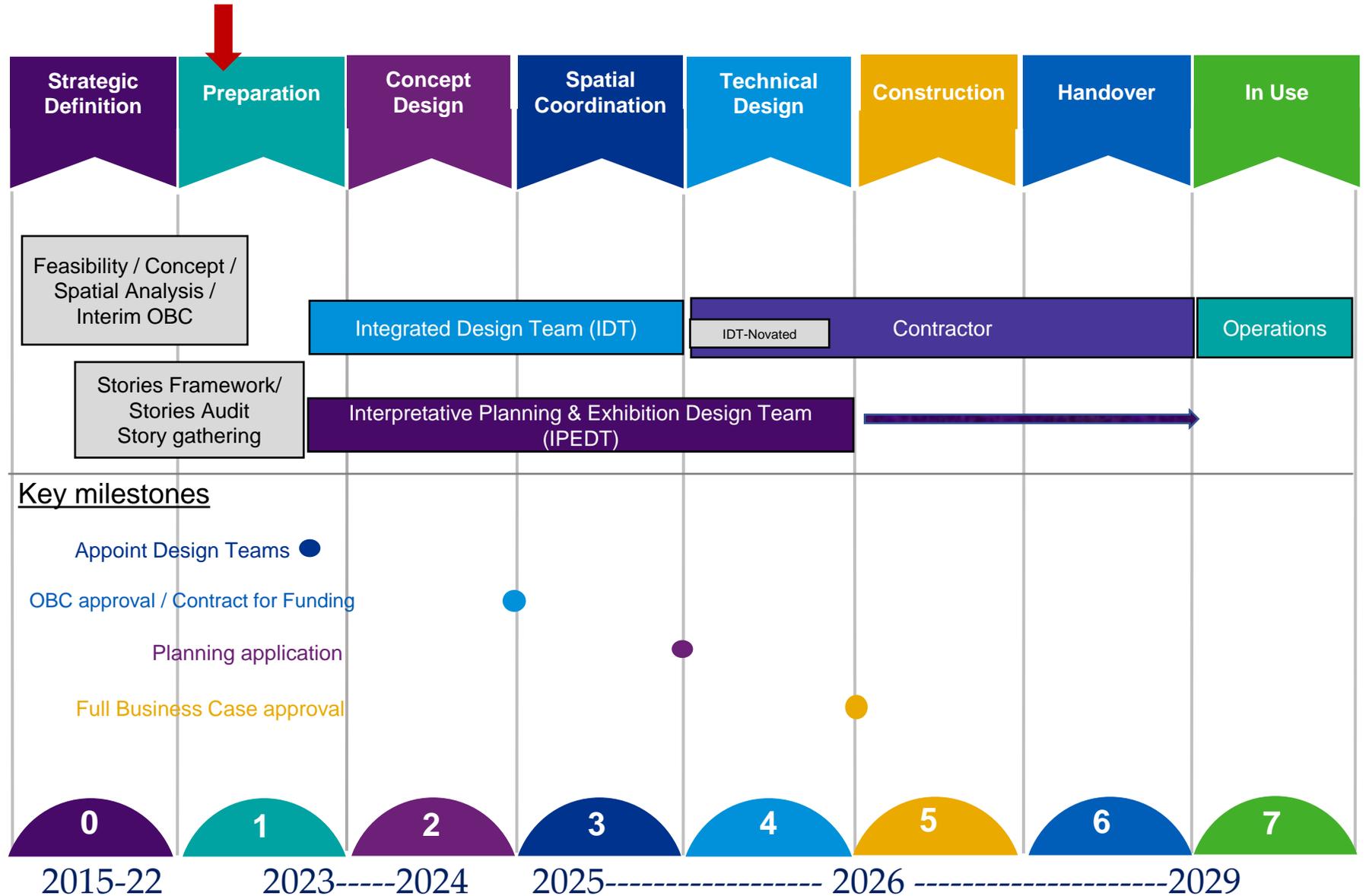
**BELFAST  
STORIES**



# RIBA Project Stages 1 - 7

Integrated Design Team (IDT)

Interpretative Planning & Exhibition Design Team (IPEDT)



# Key milestones

2023-2024

**Design** - Appointment of the professional services teams is underway:

- Integrated Design Team
- Interpretative Planning and Exhibition Design Team
- Project Management and Design Assurance Team.

**BELFAST  
STORIES**

1

Design - Teams appointed - October 2023

2

Develop concept design RIBA 1 & 2 Nov 2023 - May 2024

3

Gather - commence stories gathering pilot - Q3 2023

4

Engage - set up Stories Network & Stories Panel - Q3 2023

5

Develop the Outline Business Case (OBC) Nov 2023 - May 2024

6

Consult on the concept designs Feb 2024 - April 2024

7

Submit OBC for BRCD funding approval - June 2024

## Design

Produce RIBA 2 designs that:

- meet BRCD challenge evidenced through consumer testing.
- resonates with the people of Belfast evidenced through public consultation.
- create a model of storylines to city-lines that supports hub and spoke model evidenced through neighbourhood tourism.

**BELFAST  
STORIES**

## Engage

Deliver against principles of inclusion and diversity:

- reach voices previously marginalised or at risk of missing out.
- develop capacity across city to tell their story and community story connected to cultural heritage.

**BELFAST  
STORIES**

## Gather

Gather stories that represent:

- authenticity of stories.
- multiplicity of perspectives in the city.
- world-class approach to presenting a city's stories through first person accounts.

**BELFAST  
STORIES**

# Consultation findings

- Overall very positive response to plans and enthusiasm about being involved and contributing.
- Positive feedback on regeneration and restoration of heritage building.
- Concerns over divisive 'us' and 'them' perspectives on one hand or the 'sanitisation' of the city's stories on the other hand.
- Concerns over displacement and/or lack of in existing infrastructure.

**BELFAST  
STORIES**

## What we did

**2,755** visits and 2,495 unique visitors

**234** views or downloads

**149** responses to online survey and polls

**65** workshops reaching **1,148** participants

## How well we did it

100% enjoyed the consultation

96% felt listened to

60% of survey respondents were female

21% of survey responses from LGBTQ+ community

20% of survey respondents had caring responsibilities for an older person or disabled person

## What difference it made

82% - now excited by the concept of Belfast Stories

58% - offered stories, experiences, knowledge and networks they could share to help develop

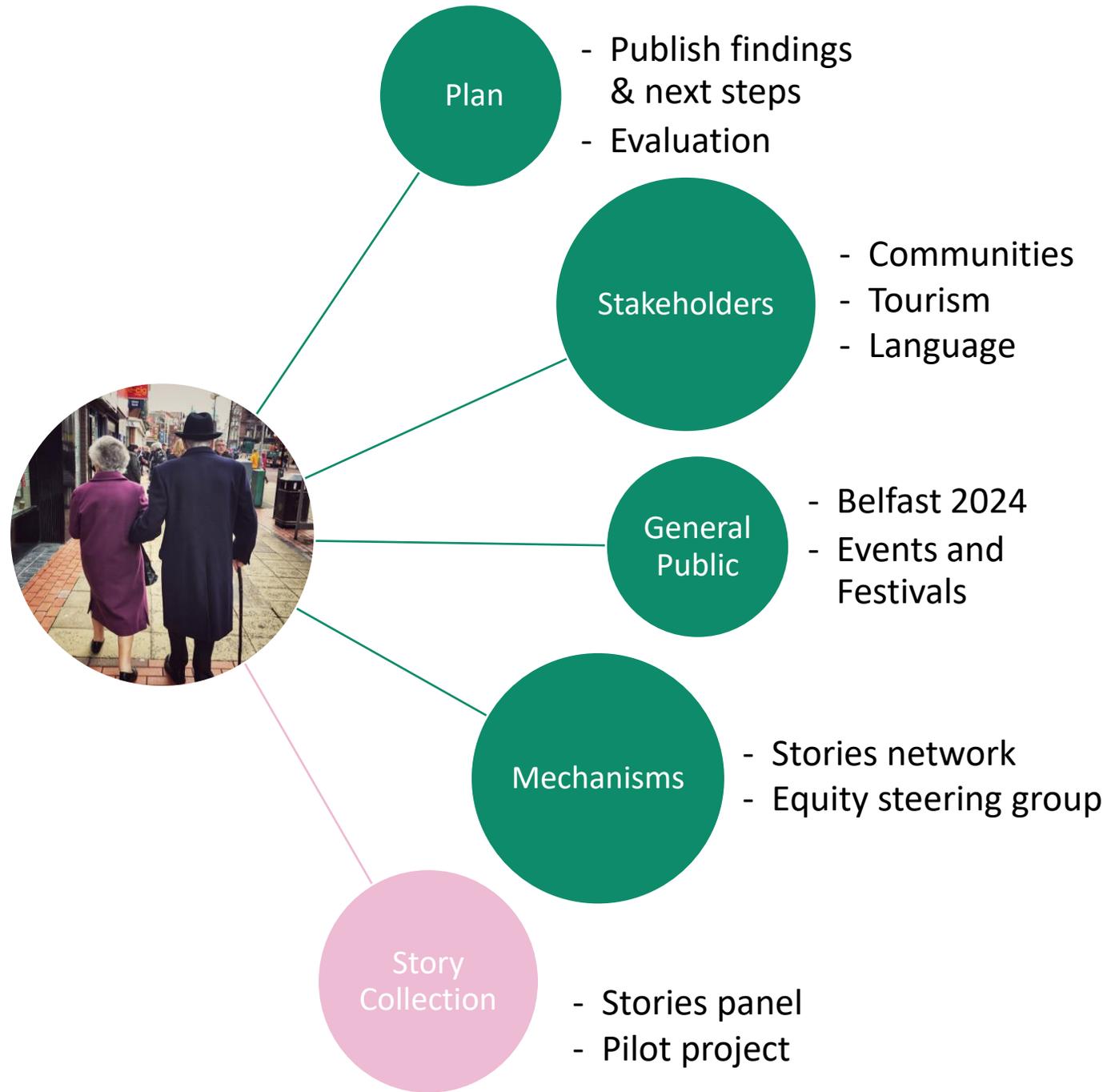
Belfast Stories



# Engagement actions

The purpose of the engagement plan is to help make Belfast Stories a destination that resonates with local people, captivates visitors and is welcoming of all.

Our mission is to bring Belfast Stories to life through the knowledge, insight and ideas of its people and stakeholders.



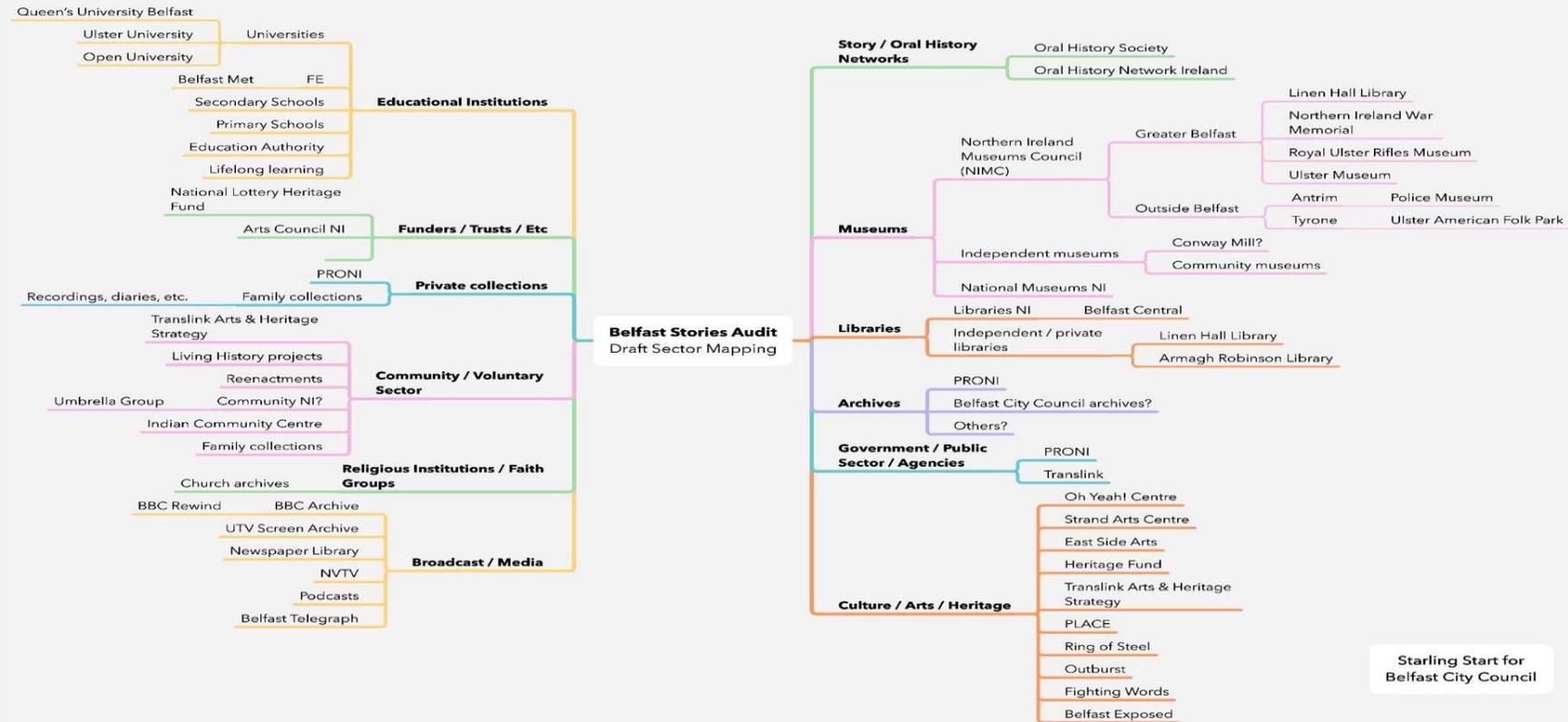
Public consultation at end of design stage

# Stories audit

The audit produced a **catalogue of 100 story collections and projects**, the majority of which are held by independent organisations working in the community / voluntary sector or in culture, arts and heritage.

This is the first phase completed of ongoing work. The catalogue accompanies the main audit report as a searchable tool which can be used in ongoing research and updated as plans for Belfast Stories develop further.

*“A free person tells her own story. A valued person lives in a society in which her story has a place.”* Rebecca Solnit (2017)



# Stories actions

- Explore new ways of telling the stories and different perspectives.
- Bring the people of Belfast into the heart of the initiatives.
- Increase accessibility of existing collections.
- Identify and address gaps in stories that have not been collected or that lack visibility.
- Encourage long term active engagement with partners creating a network across the city and beyond that will increase opportunities to participate in the cultural life and support neighbourhood tourism.
- Identify sustainable ways of sharing and putting collections to their best use.

**BELFAST**  
**STORIES**

## Story Collection Framework

- Guiding principles
- Ethical parameters
- Themes
- Partnership model

Stories Audit – ongoing  
updates and additions

### Stories Action Plan

- Set up Stories Panel (specialists)
  - Pilot project
- Best practice including language and missing voices

#### **Link to other Council programmes:**

- Heritage plan for city including attracting external funding for skills development and partner projects
- Neighbourhood tourism investment

# Inclusive Growth

3 Stages:



## Provide New and Better Jobs

- Over 200 permanent jobs to be created
- Over 1,000 jobs created during the construction phase

## Reduce Economic Inequalities

- Offer above average salary in the sector
- Increase accessibility to jobs
- Support inclusion - employment academies

## Support Access to Training

- Offer apprentice opportunities
- Work experience for the next generation of talent

## Foster Business Growth

- SMEs and VCSE sector to access supply chain opportunities
- Community tourism capacity building\*

## Skills for life

- Capacity building & training through stories
- Heritage skills
- Digital/ Screen Industries – Creative Learning Centre

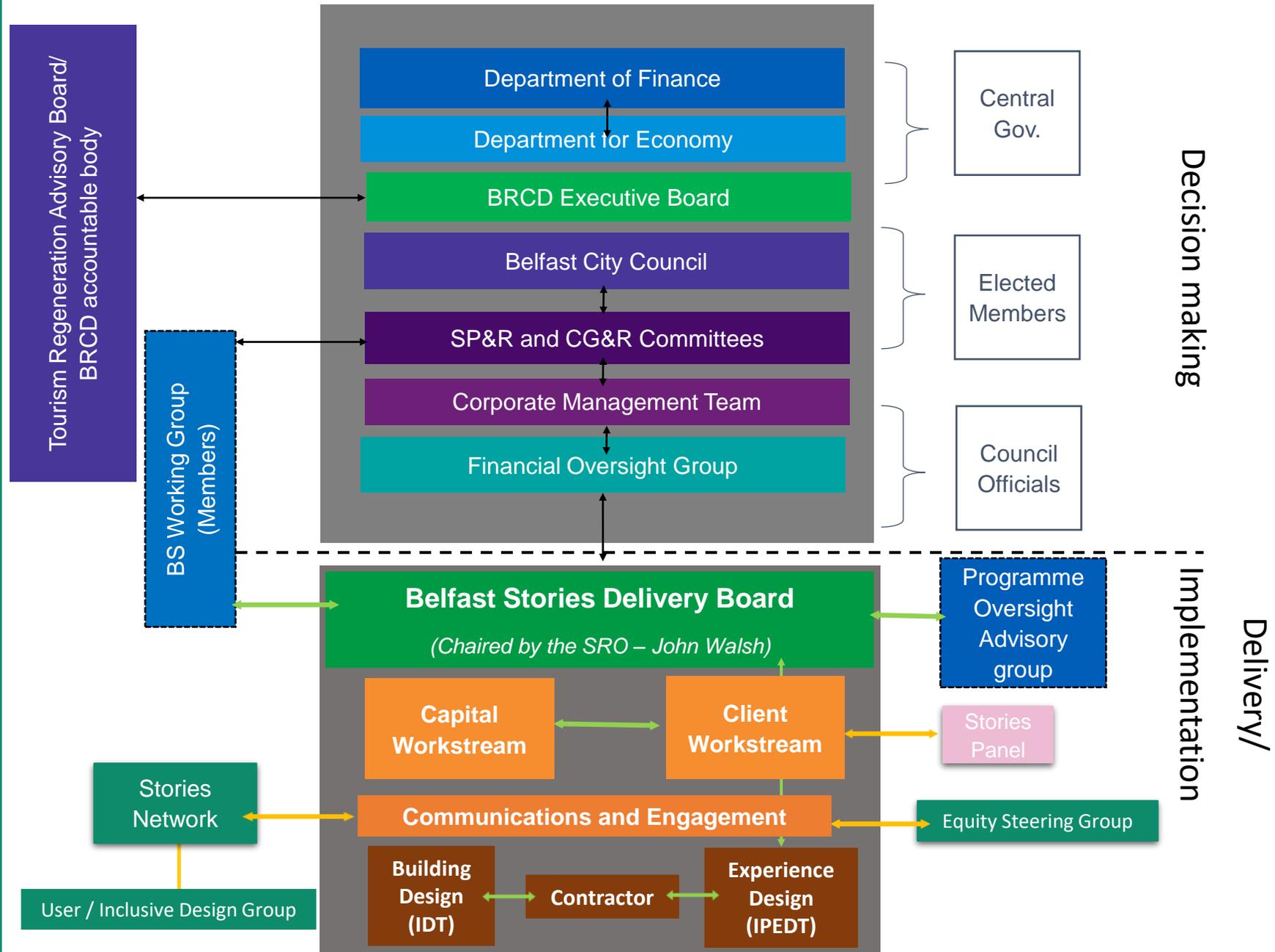
**Belfast Stories aims to deliver inclusive growth through:**

- **employability and skills**
- **education**
- **increased social value for communities**

# Governance

Stage 2 recommendations agreed by CGR Committee:

- Members' Working group
- Stories Network (open and citywide)
- Stories Panel (specialists including ethics)
- User/ inclusive design group (following design team appointments).



# BELFAST STORIES

The life and times of a city,  
in its own words.



@belfaststories



@belfast\_stories