

Belfast City Council

***Draft response to the Strategic Regeneration
Framework's***

DRAFT

Confidential

Working Draft

1 Introduction

1.1 *Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Draft Strategic Regeneration Frameworks. The council views these frameworks as key strategic documents articulating local needs and aspirations.*

1.2 Our response to the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks is structured in the following way:-

- Background to the SRF's
- Strategic fit with BCC
- Progress towards regeneration objectives
- How BCC will use the SRF's
- Comments and questions regarding implementation and next steps

1.3 The sections that follow this report provide some specific issues and comments pertaining to each of the five SRF's.

1.4 Please note that this is a working response only and has not yet been endorsed politically.

2 Background to the SRF's

2.1 In June 2006, the Department for Social Development launched its Renewing Communities programme which included a commitment to the development of Strategic Regeneration Frameworks for each of the five areas of Belfast covered by Area Partnership Boards (East, North, South, West Belfast and Greater Shankill).

"Each Belfast Area Partnership will be commissioned to provide a Strategic Regeneration Framework for their area, which will set a strategic context for important initiatives such as Neighbourhood Renewal, the development of arterial routes and the Health Action Zones".

2.2 The Strategic Regeneration Frameworks aim to;

- To provide a strategic vision and context for guiding regeneration, planning and development.
- To identify a portfolio of strategic regeneration activities, which could be delivered by the public/private sector.
- To set investment priorities for the area and influence planning decisions.
- To provide a clear comprehensive plan for action.
- To link with existing and emerging policies, projects and initiatives.

2.3 The Draft Strategic Regeneration Frameworks have now been presented to Belfast City Council, Government Departments and key agencies for consultation.

3 Strategic fit with Belfast City Council's Corporate Objectives

- 3.1 The council's corporate plan embodies what the council intends to achieve. It sets out our elected representatives' ambitions for the city and their commitment to improving quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in and visits the city. It is based on an assessment of need in the city, the views of residents on what the council's priorities should be and a commitment to strong political and executive leadership.

The council is supportive of the approach to create the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks which can provide a direction for area based regeneration and improving the quality of life for citizens in our neighbourhoods. The council views these frameworks as a longer term articulation of local issues and priorities.

BCC is currently considering its overall corporate planning and policy process and the hierarchy of plans within this spectrum. The SRF's are key strategic documents that have already been identified as a key reference in the council's corporate and city-wide strategic planning frameworks and are a key element of our current corporate plan.

- 3.2 The Council's six strategic themes presented in the Corporate Plan 2008-2011 'Today's Action, Tomorrow's Legacy' are;

1 City Leadership - strong, fair, together

Leadership in Belfast City Council is about:

- *Ambition* – being ambitious and visionary for Belfast and its people
- *Advocacy* – coalescing around, and influencing, those quality of life issues which affect our citizens
- *Partnership* - convening and working in partnership to develop and deliver a shared agenda for making Belfast better
- *Action* - leading by example, investing for the future and integrating services

The Council has made a commitment in the corporate plan, under the leadership theme to:

"Develop and deliver a city Masterplan, drawing on the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks being developed by DSD and use this framework to inform and influence other regeneration activities".

The Council, through the priorities it has established within its corporate plan, has shown its commitment to the aims for area based regeneration presented in the SRF's. We continue to provide civic and political leadership, deliver key services, projects and initiatives, which contribute to improving the quality of life for everyone in the city.

2 Better opportunities for success across the city

City regeneration, growth and prosperity in Belfast City Council is about:

- *Wealth Creation* – supporting business, developing key growth sectors and securing investment within the city
- *Opportunity* – a city where everyone has access to and can benefit from the city's success and employment opportunities

- *Skills and Innovation* – developing, nurturing and retaining a skilled, flexible workforce and encouraging enterprise and creativity throughout the city
- *Regeneration* – making Belfast an attractive place to live in, work in, study in, invest in and visit

3 Better care for Belfast’s environment - a clean, green city now and for the future

Environmental responsibility in Belfast City Council is about:

- *Action* – securing the long term viability of the city and its environment;
- *Improvement* - creating a cleaner, greener and healthier environment;
- *Education* – increasing public knowledge about environmental issues and promoting positive behaviour; and
- *Protection* – ensuring adherence with all current and future statutory responsibilities.

4 Better support for people and communities

To achieve better outcomes for people and places Belfast City Council will:

- *Engage* - to better connect with local people
- *Develop* – to build capacity within the city to influence and address local issues, tackle inequalities and improve relationships
- *Improve* - to make the best use of Council and other local services and facilities based on the priorities and issues facing the city and its neighbourhoods
- *Transform* – to enhance the city and local neighbourhoods by making them safer, healthier, more inclusive, welcoming and enjoyable

5 Better services - listening and delivering

In Belfast City Council this is about:

- making the best use of our resources to provide a range of services which best meet local need and improve quality of life;
- providing services that will be easy for everyone to access and will always be delivered to an agreed high standard; and
- providing our services in a way that maximises their value for money and effectiveness.

6 Better value for money - a can-do, accountable, efficient Council

In Belfast City Council, this is about:

- ensuring resources are fully aligned to corporate priorities;
- ensuring the organisation delivers value for money services;
- attracting and developing people who will work together to deliver the best services and develop the organisation for the future; and
- leading the organisation through the challenges and transition of RPA.

Within the confines of its powers and given its civic leadership role the Council has moved to influence and shape the development of the city and this work has enabled us to address many of the priorities within the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks and underlying to all of this work is

the desire to create a better city for all, one with a vital and attractive centre connected to dynamic neighbourhoods.

- 3.2 Our work in local economic development, cleansing, environmental improvements, community relations, community safety, neighbourhood renewal, urban regeneration, planning, environmental health, community development and leisure as well as the provision of services for children/young people and older people have had a significant impact on regeneration throughout the city.

Some key examples of how Belfast City Council already is involved in promoting regeneration include:

- Our commitment to creating a cleaner and greener environment has resulted in an increase in the city's household recycling rate from 3% in 2003 to 24% in 2007.
- Our success in bringing agencies together to provide integrated services for citizens is evident with the development of the innovative £18million Grove Wellbeing Centre which brings together leisure, health and education facilities under one roof located in one of the most deprived parts of the city. We have also invested £6 million the development of the Falls Leisure Centre.
- Our role in supporting community safety has resulted in a funding package in excess of £1million being secured, the development and roll-out of a community warden scheme and the extension of the 'Get Home Safe' scheme across the city.
- Encouraging and supporting good relations and equality has been a central tenet of all our activities. The Council has developed a Good Relations plan for the city and is currently delivering measure 1.1 of Peace III 'Building positive relations at the local level'. This is a £6.3 million programme across the city.
- Through the Council's good relations programme, grant aid and support on issues such as bonfires, murals and minority ethnic issues is on-going in all areas of the city.
- We have made significant contributions to the development of the Titanic Quarter and North foreshore and to the promotion of economic development at a local level and in sectors such as advanced manufacturing and the creative industries.
- The Council has given commitment to fund a wide range of physical development projects which already meet the objectives raised within the SRF's including the Connswater Community Greenway project, Titanic Signature project, and the Lyric theatre.
- Our Economic Development Unit is delivering social economy and enterprise support activities across the city, both for existing and new businesses. Our objective is to help more businesses set up in the city and to help those companies become more competitive.
- The unit also works in partnership with a range of stakeholders to deliver programmes to enhance the skills and employment potential of the long term unemployed within the city's neighbourhoods. It has also worked with partners to ensure social classes will be incorporated within major construction contracts.

- The Renewing the Routes programme represents an innovative approach developed locally to enhance the areas and vitality of the major routes throughout Belfast. A wide range of actions have been completed under the themes of commercial improvements, developing gateway sites, celebrating diverse heritage and working towards cleaner, greener and safer neighbourhoods.
- The Council has been actively working towards the successful implementation of its commitment under Neighbourhood Renewal. We are actively working on adapting our services to meet the requirements of the NRP plans.
- Creating a safer Belfast is a key priority for us. We lead the multi-agency Community Safety Partnership in the development of the Safer Belfast Plan 2009-11. Key initiatives include the Get Home Safe Campaign, Alley-Gates, Safer Neighbourhood ASB programme, Neighbourhood Watch Schemes, Good Morning programme, Roaming Safety Wardens.
- We provide access to twenty-two community centres and six play centres and provide grant aid to hundreds of community organisations across the city.
- Our ten leisure centres are accessed by thousands of people on a weekly basis and our parks provide much of the open space within the city.
- We are developing an approach to local and neighbourhood working. This approach will give us a more detailed understanding of the individual needs and characteristics of all parts of Belfast. It will allow us to plan and deliver our services in a more effective manner and make it easier for us to engage with local people about what we do in their area. This will help us to prepare for our role in community planning. The role of the SRF's will be key to this.
- We are committed to leaving a legacy for future generations, providing value for money, effective services and ensuring that as many people as possible within the city can connect to the opportunities all around us.

3.3 In addition to the corporate plan there are a number of existing or pending key council strategies, plans and activities that are relevant to the SRF's. These include:

- Community Support Plan
- City Investment Framework
- Play Review
- Belfast Employability and Skills Plan
- Open Spaces Strategy
- Strategic Review of Leisure
- Pitches Strategy
- Belfast Masterplan
- Physical Activity & Sports Development Strategy
- Framework for the provision of equipped play areas
- Children & Young People Strategy
- Belfast Community Safety Partnership
- Sustainable Development Strategy
- Safer Belfast Plan 09-11
- Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework
- Council's Local Economic Development Plan

- Good Relations Plan
- Equality scheme
- Disability Action Plan
- BCC Older Person's Action plan
- Poverty strategy
- Public Health Unit
- Belfast Peace III Peace & Reconciliation Plan
- Renewing the Routes programme
- State of the City
- Community Development Strategy
- City Events Strategy

3.4 The extension to our role proposed in *the Review of Public Administration* creates more opportunities for us to engage with key partners and shape the places where our citizens live and work. The extra roles that it was proposed Council's deliver included:

- Local development plan functions, development control and enforcement;
- Local public realm aspects of road functions including streetscaping; town and city centre environmental improvements; street lighting; off-street parking; permitting local events to be held on roads;
- Urban regeneration and community development delivery functions including those associated with physical development, area based regeneration (such as Neighbourhood Renewal) along with some community development programmes and support for the voluntary and community sectors;
- A range of housing related functions;
- A number of functions associated with driving forward local economic development, local tourism and local arts, sports and leisure.
- Our extended role in Community Planning, urban regeneration and promoting community development will be of particular relevance for the implementation of Strategic Regeneration Frameworks post RPA.
- Given the recent announcement by the Executive that the RPA is to be delayed, it remains to be seen whether any of these functions will transfer to local government.

We would welcome continued discussion with DSD/APB's regarding the integration of the SRF's within a Community planning framework.

3.5 How Belfast City Council will use the SRF's

As has been stated earlier, the Council welcomes the opportunity to receive and respond to the SRF's. We see the SRF's as being valuable documents in highlighting local priorities and key to informing regeneration priorities for the city. We anticipate using the SRF's in the following ways:-

- As an evidence base which will help us to identify and determine key local issues and priorities which we can use to augment our own regeneration work across the city.

- Help us to target our decision making activity and set the context for council plans and activities.
- Inform the development of the Council corporate plan and provide a basis for the development of the City Investment Fund, Capital Programme and the Belfast Masterplan.
- Assist us in the preparation for Community Planning.

However it should be noted that the Council's response to the SRF's also needs to take account of the different economic climate within which we are all operating and the significant financial challenges we are facing. We do hope that by utilising the SRF's as indicated above and using them to inform our own planning that we will be well placed to meet the local priorities as stipulated within the frameworks.

4.0 Comments for moving forward

- 4.1 As one of the leading drivers of regeneration within the city, the Council is aware of the need to focus on initiatives which are based within local areas. We note that each of the five SRF's understandably, have an area specific bias however we feel that it also needs to sit within a city-wide context and the potential for connections across the city to employment, educational, cultural, leisure and social opportunities.
- 4.2 One limitation of this looking inward for solutions is that it could lead to service duplication and a plethora of initiatives that stretches resources and ultimately dilutes the impact of potential actions and outputs. There are a number of key strategic regeneration projects that can benefit all neighbourhoods across the city e.g. Titanic Quarter, North Foreshore and it is important that we focus on how all neighbourhoods can connect into these opportunities.
- 4.3 The SRF's fail to recognise the need to link in with the city centre which is the economic engine of the city and the wider region.
- We would be keen to discuss how the SRF's can address local issues but also how local priorities can be a part of the citywide agenda.
- 4.4 The draft SRF's vary in scope and detail which can make it more difficult to have an over-arching city-wide perspective.
- The council is keen to engage further with DSD/APB's to explore how these frameworks could assist in shaping a city-wide masterplan framework for Belfast
- 4.5 There are a range of agencies in the city already dealing with a number of the issues highlighted within the draft SRF's including the Council. A series of bi-lateral meetings have already been held with the key statutory organisations and agencies in the city to gain agreement that the SRF's align with their high level strategies. It is recommended that this should be considered as the first step in the process and that further engagement is required on an on-going basis to ensure that the SRF's can inform and influence statutory planning processes.
- The council recommends that on-going engagement with key organisations is required to ensure that the SRF's can play a key role in informing and influencing planning processes.

- 4.6 The Council is an active partner in the implementation of twelve Neighbourhood Renewal Action plans across the city. The SRF's need to clearly show a link to the work of Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships as well as the five physical concept masterplans which have been produced in order to demonstrate complementarity.
- 4.7 One of the major concerns for Council is the absence of clear associated costs and financial projections to implement the SRF's in their totality or a list of priority initiatives/projects. Whilst the frameworks can be useful to the extent that they confirm the council's understanding of local issues, factors such as financial constraints and political consensus around prioritisation for "spend" are missing from the documents.**
- 4.8 Following on from the above, the Council's view is that the SRF's must reflect a realisation that there may not be sufficient resources to implement the plans as currently presented.
- 4.9 There is little indication in the SRF's as to the potential sources of funding for larger capital projects or the use of existing assets within the areas.
- 4.10 The Council notes that there is insufficient information regarding the timeframe for the development and implementation of the SRF's. The plans range from 10-15 years with no clear indication of start or end dates. Whilst it is appreciated that these are long-term Framework documents that can be used to inform policy and planning, it is still critical to have some guidance around planned project development and subsequent implementation.
- 4.11 Given that it is anticipated that the Council assumes responsibility for regeneration post RPA, the timing of the implementation phase of the SRF's is of critical importance. The council is keen to explore to engage with DSD/APB's regarding roles and responsibilities for SRF implementation post RPA.
- 4.12 The Council notes that there is a need for the SRF's to be aligned to the planning cycles of the council, government departments and agencies. The various partners involved in the development of the SRF's need to be aware of the planning processes, priorities, timing and availability of resources in order to make informed choices and have maximum impact.
- 4.13 The Council wishes to emphasise that the SRF's should be presented at the appropriate level within the various government departments and agencies. The government departments make decisions for the allocation of resources at a regional level thus the SRF's will be competing against many strategies and plans from across Northern Ireland.
- 4.14 Taking each of the above points into consideration it is critical that the key stakeholders engage in an exercise to identify and prioritise those projects and programmes identified within the SRF which are likely to have the greatest positive impact upon the city and its citizens. It is crucial that this is done as a matter of priority to ensure that the projects and programmes are included within the next Investment Strategy for NI and the Programme for Government.

It is also important that this is done in an integrated way to ensure that the focus is placed upon maximizing the impact for the city as opposed to what might be deemed to be Departmental priorities.

- 4.15 The implementation of the SRF's will have a significant impact on Belfast citizens. Engagement and the appropriate level of public involvement need to be considered for the implementation of the SRF's and handled effectively so as to manage expectations and avoid confusion.

Whilst these framework documents are community based, it is recommended that citizens need to be kept abreast of the content and planned progression on the SRF's on an on-going basis.

- 4.16 The development and implementation of the SRF's requires the active participation of a range of partners, who have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and can work collaboratively to deliver the various aspects of the frameworks. The Council recommends that clarity around roles and responsibilities for SRF implementation is considered.
- 4.17 The development of the Belfast Area Partnerships and the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships provide/have provided a mechanism to explore local area regeneration for a number of years. The SRF's also make recommendations regarding the establishment of an urban regeneration vehicle that would be developed to drive these forward.

What lessons have been learnt from the development and implementation of the Area and Neighbourhood Action Plans which could be used to develop the proposed SRF governance structures?

- 4.18 In December 2008 Minister McGimpsey invited expressions of interest from District Councils in the possibility of hosting joint working arrangements with the Public Health Agency. This would support Councils in implementing their future power of well-being and community planning and in developing local inter-sectoral partnerships.

The Belfast Health Development unit was launched on 23rd March 2010. The team's role will be to identify priority actions that can address some of the key problems which lead to ill health in the city and to ensure that the key agencies put in place resources to deliver programmes that are known to work. The health priorities identified in the Strategic Regeneration Framework can inform the work of this new Belfast Health Development unit in tackling the main health priorities in the city.

- 4.19 One of the Council's strategic objectives is the 'Better care for Belfast's environment- a clean, green city now and for the future'. We have a commitment to developing sustainable communities. The Council notes that there is limited reference to sustainability in the SRF's and would welcome the opportunity to talk with DSD/BRO and Area Partnerships about the relevant issues.
- 4.20 Belfast City Council is currently working in partnership with the Strategic Investment Board with support from DSD to identify and prioritise those capital projects which have been identified with the SRF's and government departments. It is of critical importance that those projects which are likely to have the greatest regenerative impact are identified, prioritised and included in the Investment Strategy for NI (ISNI III) so that the necessary resources are allocated to those projects over the next 10 years.
- 4.21 In conclusion Belfast City Council would welcome further discussion with the DSD/BRO and the Area Partnership Boards in relation to our comments and questions and how the proposals can be moved forward within the current economic climate.

Draft response to the North Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In June 2006, the Department for Social Development launched its Renewing Communities programme which included a commitment to the development of Strategic Regeneration Frameworks for each of the five areas of Belfast covered by Area Partnership Boards (East, North, South, West Belfast and Greater Shankill).

“Each Belfast Area Partnership will be commissioned to provide a Strategic Regeneration Framework for their area, which will set a strategic context for important initiatives such as Neighbourhood Renewal, the development of arterial routes and the Health Action Zones”.

- 1.2 The purpose of the Strategic Regeneration Framework for North Belfast has been stated as:-

“The Strategic Regeneration Framework and action plan (the SRF) will define the north Belfast’s needs and priorities to drive activity and investment over the next ten years.

By virtue of its social, physical and economic make-up, north Belfast has been the focus of many regeneration projects and initiatives, including most recently, Neighbourhood Renewal and the Renewing Communities programme. Over the last few years north Belfast has begun to see an increase in private sector led regeneration activity, such as private housing and retail development.

Although there has been clear progress on a number of fronts, there has not been an overarching or shared vision for north Belfast that has captured the strategic linkages between public sector strategy and resources and private sector investment plans and that has inspired ‘buy-in’ from individual communities.

The SRF is an opportunity to address this and to provide all stakeholders, including residents, with a holistic vision and statement of priorities and opportunities for the area, an importantly an integrated and sustainable plan for implementation for the short, medium and long term.

The SRF aims to:

- ***Provide a strategic vision and context for guiding regeneration, planning and development.***
- ***Identify a portfolio of strategic regeneration activities which could be delivered by the public and private sector.***
- ***Set investment priorities for the area and influence future planning decisions***
- ***Provide a clear, comprehensive plan for action.***
- ***Act as a marketing/procurement/planning tool and***

- **Link with existing and emerging policies, projects and initiatives.**

The SRF covers a wide range of themes including economic development, education, skills and training, physical and environmental design, housing and transport in addition to issues community and social regeneration.

(North Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework (Draft) December 2008 page 1)

1.3 The vision statement of the SRF is;

"North Belfast will be regarded as a community that is cohesive, confident and prosperous."

The vision incorporates the following key elements;

"Community- Civic and elected leadership, the people who live, work, invest and play in north Belfast

Cohesion- Improved Community Relations; Community inclusion in decision making; and communities live in harmony with one another.

Confident- People will be empowered to make decisions, to have ambitions to improve their quality of life, and will welcome visitors to the area.

Prosperous- Young people will achieve high education standards, there will be skilled workforce and high employment, and investors will be attracted to north Belfast"

(North Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework (Draft) December 2008 Page 31)

1.4 The SRF has four overarching and interrelated strategic priorities for regeneration:-

- **Leadership and community cohesion- Ensuring north Belfast has a supported leadership, that alleviating community divisions remains a focus, and that a programmed approach to the regeneration of the area is undertaken.**
- **Land use and connectivity- ensuring north Belfast makes the most of its strategic sites in ways that provide opportunities for all, that development is well planned and supports the development of neighbourhoods, and that the area is well connected to the city and other areas of opportunity.**
- **Neighbourhood Vitality- Ensure that people of north Belfast have access to quality housing, have good health and wellbeing, have access to leisure and recreation facilities, and enjoy a safe and secure environment.**
- **Education Skills and Enterprise- Support the people of north Belfast to be well educated and skilled in order for them to maximise employment opportunities. To foster and enterprise culture and equip north Belfast to attract inward investment, and to maximise the benefit of the local tourism economy.**

2.0 BCC services and activities in North Belfast

2.1 The Council already provides a range of services which are central to the SRF objectives and the regeneration of North Belfast. Listed below are some examples of our work;

- We are supporting a number of community initiatives under Peace III and our core Good Relations Fund to begin community dialogues on the removal of interface barriers.
- Participation in the inter-agency Interface Working Group and inter-community Community Partners Interface Working sub-Group.
- Participation in the inter-agency Hazelwood Community Partnership, and Youth Providers Forum to improve community relations in the area.
- Small grants for community cohesion work under Good Relations Fund (up to 10k) and Peace III small grants (up to £25k).
- Inter-Faith Forum.
- Bonfires Management, Cultural traditions and Beacons Programme (up to 6 sites in North Belfast).
- Hate Crime convention and associated activities.
- Various inter-agency groups including the Ardoyne Inter-agency group.
- Common Purpose inter-community shared space project in Skegoneil and Glandore areas.
- Management of the Peace III programme. Examples of programmes are:
 - Peace III - Interface removal programme (up to £180k)
 - Peace III - Mediation capacity building programme (up to £180k)
 - Peace III - Youth Intervention Programme
 - Peace III - Migrant Workers' Forum and advice support
 - Peace III - Cultural diversity in sport
 - Peace III - Community cohesion programme (up to £150k)
 - Peace III - Engagement and capacity-building programme (50k)
 - Peace III - Voluntary and community sector Good Relations training
 - Peace III - Citizenship education
- Phase 2 of the Peace Plan will be rolled out in the near future and some of the key priorities identified within the SRF's can help inform and shape its development.
- Belfast District Policing Partnership (DPP) and Belfast Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) are led by Belfast City Council. BCSP co-ordinates the Get Home Safe (GHS) Partnership. The Get Home Safe Partnership is a multi-agency approach and has been successful in reducing alcohol related violent crime and anti-social behaviour throughout the city. It is mainly targeted at 18- 25 year olds. Get

Home Safe Marketing Campaign is delivered at 3 key times throughout the year; September/ October, November/ December and March.

- The Council also delivered a number of successful Anti-Social behaviour pilots in North Belfast parks including: - Waterworks, Cavehill Country Park and Belfast Castle. This has now become a permanent ASB programme being delivered across all of these sites.
- Through partnership working with the Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Co-ordination Team (EDACT) and three local drug and alcohol groups we were able to identify the need to tackle parental drinking and its impact upon young people within Belfast. The poster campaign challenged parents to think about how their drinking affects their children's views and ultimately their children's use of alcohol.
- Joint Enforcement Work – council officers work closely with the PSNI, to organise high visibility enforcement operations on a weekly basis. They also carry out high visibility operations at events and parades e.g. Tour of the North.
- Off Sales Code of Practice- Off sales in North Belfast are invited to join the voluntary Code of Practice, showing their commitment to reduce underage sales and proxy purchasing. Off sales who have signed up to the Code of Practice has access to free training. On 17th February 2010 North Belfast off sales staff underwent training by Federation of the Retail Licensed Trade. This training will be run again in 2010/ 2011 financial year.
- Counter Measures Training- Bar staffs were also invited to attend a Counter Measures Training Programme run by Federation of the Retail Licensed Trade. On 6th and 11th August 2009 North Belfast bar staff attended this training. This training will also be run again in 2010/ 2011 financial year.
- Parental Awareness Campaign- BCC/ BCSP run a campaign aimed at parents who are concerned about their children's alcohol consumption. The campaign is advertised in bus shelters, health centres etc across North Belfast. The campaign directs parents to the Parents Advice Centre who can deal with the problems or signpost parents to other partner agencies.
- Good Morning Projects are part funded by Belfast Community Safety Partnership. Good Morning Ballysillan is linking with 'Good Morning West' and Lagan Village projects to work towards developing a co-ordinated, strategic approach to a Belfast Good Morning service.
- Hate Crime is a key priority within the Safer Belfast Plan. Four projects are being funded including Tension Monitoring, Training & Engagement programmes, Hate Crime Convention and Hate Crime Awareness campaign.
- Community Safety wardens – new city wide scheme has now been implemented.
- Alley gating and CCTV are key projects to be progressed within the Safer Belfast Plan.
- The Older People's officer group have developed an action plan, including:

- An annual Senior Citizens Convention which is organised to give older people a chance to engage directly with service providers and decision makers in Belfast.
- Development of a Seniors information pack in conjunction with Belfast Healthy Cities.
- Our Environmental Health Service is involved with a multi-agency response to suicide clusters.
- Development of a Belfast Health Development unit with the Public Health Agency and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.
- An inter-departmental group for Health & Wellbeing has been established to develop an action plan for the council to improve health & wellbeing and address health inequalities in the city.
- The planned development of the North Foreshore will create job opportunities for the area.
- Development of the Grove Wellbeing Centre which offers leisure, health and library facilities under one roof.
- Recent upgrade of facilities at Zoo and new Visitor Centre and the associated range of activities around the 75th Birthday.
- Investment in developing pathways etc at Cavehill and recent award of Green Flag status for the Cavehill Country Park, including the Castle.
- Upgrade of the pitch at Ballysillan to a 3G facility.
- Planned upgrade of the kick-around area at the Westlands area of the Waterworks to a grass pitch.
- Planned maintenance and upgrade of the surface of the MUGA at the lower end of the Waterworks.
- Provision of five community centre facilities – Ligoniel, Concorde, Ardoyne, North Queen Street and Duncairn.
- Provision of almost £400,000 in community based funding for capacity building, revenue costs, summer schemes and project and advice services in North Belfast.
- We delivered a new funding programme for children and young people from July-October 2009 called 'Ur City 2'.
- Clean Neighbourhoods investment in Alexandra Park.
- Establishment of a "Friends of Grove" group to help co-ordinate activities, events and clean-up of the Grove Parks area.
- A range of skills, employability and business development programmes are being delivered by the Council's Economic Development team.

3.0 Comments and Questions relating to the North SRF

- 3.1 The council notes that there are clear linkages within the SRF for the forthcoming Good Relations Plan (especially linking leadership and regeneration with the good relations agenda) for the city and the existing Peace & Reconciliation Plan for the Peace III Programme.
- 3.2 The Council is supportive of the broad objectives of the SRF and would encourage a strengthening of the community cohesion/good relations, not only as a headline objective, but as a fundamental cornerstone in the delivery of all objectives outlined in the framework
- 3.3 In terms of uniting leaders, as a sub-objective, the SRF does not propose how this will be done. As the Council develops its leadership programme, and subject to political endorsement, we would consider the SRF as part of our wider good relations discussion.
- 3.4 Good Relations Partnership (GRP) believes that the involvement of young people in the community cohesion agenda is critical.
- 3.5 GRP would also draw attention to the needs of those from minority ethnic and faith communities who are either new to north Belfast or have been located there for generations. It is critical their needs and contribution to north Belfast is made visible through the leadership and community cohesion actions.
- 3.6 The Council supports the objective to progress towards the removal of physical interfaces, an anticipated outcome of the Peace & Reconciliation Plan. It aligns with the Council's participation on the Community Relations Council-led Interface Working Group, an inter-agency group working towards the co-ordinated regeneration of those neighbourhoods located at the interface. We are supporting a number of community initiatives under Peace III and our core Good Relations Fund to begin community dialogues on the removal of interface barriers.
- 3.7 The Council notes that there are clear linkages between the SRF- Maximising Land Use and Connections and the forthcoming Good Relations Plan on the actions around improving connectivity. However, there is a need in North Belfast to increase the amount of public space described as 'shared space'.
- 3.8 In relation to the Healthy Neighbourhoods – access to services. While the SRF highlights the need to improve public transport to health services (with which we would concur), there is also a need to address the physical and psychological barriers which restrict access to quality services and ensuring that the neighbourhoods within which services are located are seen as welcoming and accessible. The Parks and Leisure department are currently undertaking a strategy for leisure which is outcome focussed, takes into account other provision in the city, reflects best practice and allows for future decisions on council provision for leisure.
- 3.9 The Council wishes to draw attention to the issue of mental health. It is critical that in seeking to improve mental well-being, attention is paid to the multiple impacts of conflict, particularly in North Belfast which bore the highest concentration of death and injury in the city. These conflict-related impacts are not referenced in the SRF. Such impacts include: stress from the fear of, or actual occurrence of inter-communal violence; continued paramilitary activity; post-traumatic stress disorder and trans-generational stress; those bereaved by the conflict; those still living with

injuries from politically-motivated violence; restricted freedom of movement (particularly for young people); and a general lack of trust and sense of security. Exposure to conflict and underlying tension is a key determinant of health in a city such as Belfast.

- 3.10 In relation to safe neighbourhoods, the Council believes that tackling hate crime should also be seen as a priority area for community safety in North Belfast. This is not referenced in the SRF. Hate crime include; crimes against members of black and minority ethnic groups, minority faith groups, migrant workers, those with disabilities and those who are targeted due to their sexual orientation.
- 3.11 The Council would support the aspiration to maximise north Belfast's recreational facilities as attractions to visitors outside of the area. This, of course, is dependent on these facilities and parks being seen as welcoming, safe, shared spaces not only while visiting the locations but also on the journey through neighbourhoods to the destination.
- 3.12 The Council notes that working towards the removal of the security barrier in Alexandra Park which would have considerable symbolic importance as well as increasing the attractiveness of one of the oldest parks in the city is not referred to in the SRF.
- 3.13 Community Services provides a range of services in neighbourhoods throughout North Belfast for children and young people, older people, local residents, minority ethnic groups, those with disabilities, and families. In addition the service through its grant aid programme supports several hundred organisations and projects that deliver high quality services and programmes at a neighbourhood level. Overall the SRF has identified a number of key issues which correlate to the Community Services agenda for North Belfast.
- 3.14 Waste and the environment present a range of enterprise opportunities, particularly with regard to the reuse of materials. The Council's Waste Management Service feels that it would be beneficial for waste and environmental opportunities to be considered as a priority with regard to the Social Enterprise objectives of the SRF's. This is a key opportunity in North Belfast given its proximity to the North Foreshore.
- 3.15 The North Belfast SRF has identified specific issues that need to be addressed i.e. training, employment, private sector investment, business creation, inward investment, public transport, connectivity, health, environmental and access to shared space.

The North Foreshore site with its proposals for an Resource Recovery Park and Public open space has been identified in the North Belfast SRF document as a priority project.

The Environmental Business Park has the potential to develop new business opportunities for the environmental technology sector that can help to create jobs for the local community. The Council views this site as a strategic development opportunity and is eager to ensure that communities are connected into these opportunities.

- 3.16 Within the SRF the North Foreshore Project is identified as a priority project 2008 – 2011. Engineering work is already underway on the site to make it ready for development, i.e. waste landfill closure works due to complete 2011. The timescale presented in the SRF is unrealistic, as the current North Foreshore development timescale is 2017/18 subject to funding and market demand.

- 3.17 In the strategic theme of healthy neighbourhoods, the SRF mentions that focus needs to be continued and enhanced to improve peoples health & well-being. However, none of the sub-headings refer to the importance of exercise and physical activity and how the communities could link into existing council parks and leisure centres services and programmes to improve local health and wellbeing. The council is keen to explore these linkages further.
- 3.18 A key output for the SRF is the development of a community greenway – this reflects the Council’s plans for greenway development but, in the absence of funding and a coherent project co-ordinator, this is a long term aspiration for the area.
- 3.19 The SRF under the strategic priority of Education, Skills and Enterprise, states that one of its strategic themes is ‘realising the tourism potential’; - improving and promoting key tourism sites, namely Zoo (mentions specific tourism improvements) and Cavehill Country park (outlines need for further improvements in terms of access and signage). The suggested tourism promotion through key stakeholders is already ongoing (NITB and Zoo and BVCB).

The Council is keen to discuss with DSD/APB how the tourism potential of the area can be further achieved.

- 3.20 The Council contributes to a number of key redevelopment sites in north Belfast including the North Foreshore, Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Barracks. These redevelopments, which are included in the SRF require the active participation of and agreement between political representatives, public bodies, private investors and the community if they are to progress.

The council would be keen to discuss how all of these partners can be brought together to maximise the potential of these strategic sites.

- 3.21 The council would also like to take this opportunity to highlight the potential of the new University of Ulster campus which planned for the Cathedral Quarter and its potential for economic and social regeneration. North Belfast has a key role to play in its development and facilitating stakeholder engagement to maximise benefits for local communities and ensure that issues that have been experienced in the Holylands are not replicated.

- 3.22 The Council is an active partner in the implementation of the four Neighbourhood Renewal Action plans across the north of the city. The draft SRF does not show clearly a link to the work of Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships and there is little mention of the physical master plans which have been produced for the north of the city.

- *To what extent has the SRF taken into consideration the neighbourhood plans developed by the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships and the physical Masterplan?*

Draft response to the South Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In June 2006, the Department for Social Development launched its Renewing Communities programme which included a commitment to the development of Strategic Regeneration Frameworks for each of the five areas of Belfast covered by Area Partnership Boards (East, North, South, West Belfast and Greater Shankill).

"Each Belfast Area Partnership will be commissioned to provide a Strategic Regeneration Framework for their area, which will set a strategic context for important initiatives such as Neighbourhood Renewal, the development of arterial routes and the Health Action Zones".

- 4.1 The purpose of the Strategic Regeneration Framework for South Belfast has been stated as;

"The Regeneration Framework is intended to address several key strands of public policy and intervention which, when combined, will provide a practical and multi-faceted strategic platform for clear and integrated decision-making about future investment, local service delivery, economic development, employment creation and physical regeneration."

(South Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework, Page 1)

- 1.3 The aim of this strategy is to:

- **Improve the quality of life, as well as the social and economic opportunities for all residents of South Belfast.**
- **Provide a strategic context for the transformation of local neighbourhoods, public spaces, retail and other commercial areas etc, where needed.**
- **Provide a strategic context for the improvement and enhancement of the range of public services in the area and, in particular, how they can be provided in a more co-ordinated manner.**
- **Guide public and private investment in a 10 year partnership action plan.**
- **Identify and support existing measures which contribute to the wider strategic plan and vision.**
- **Assist in the evaluation of future initiatives and to help to prioritise current plans and projects.**

(South Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework, Page 5)

- 1.4 The SRF has been based on four Core Principles which were identified within the brief for the preparation of the SRF, Choice, Connectivity, Creativity and Diversity and two overarching aspirations of:
- Promoting access to opportunity; and
 - Improving quality of life.

1.5 The vision statement of the SRF is:

"To promote and sustain a high quality of life for all the citizens of South Belfast, to ensure equity in choice and opportunities, to encourage creativity in all aspects of life and to build on the diversity of the area as a major strength."

(South Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework, Page 12)

1.6 The SRF has 12 Strategic Aims:

- ***Promote and nurture a diverse and robust local economy by capitalising on the strengths of the area's economic dynamism and the presence of several major employment areas including Boucher Road, the City Hospital and Queens University.***
- ***Promote and make more explicit South Belfast's role in the economic and social development of the City.***
- ***Create a high "Quality of Place" by maintaining and enhancing the built environment of South Belfast, including its public realm, particularly in key strategic locations such as Shaftesbury Square and Bradbury Place and its built heritage both within and without the areas Conservation Areas.***
- ***Protect and enhance South Belfast's existing environmental assets including its Parks, Open Spaces and the River Lagan Corridor.***
- ***Ensure continued support for and enhancement of the process of neighbourhood renewal in South Belfast.***
- ***Promote the delivery of quality local services at both the 'City Place' (Reference SNAP) and wider strategic (District) levels.***
- ***Reinforce partnership working across agencies at a day to day level and at a more strategic city-wide level.***
- ***Establish transparent, meaningful and coordinated engagement strategies again bringing various agencies led through the City Council's "City Places" concept.***
- ***Capitalise on the diverse nature of the communities of South Belfast as a strength, where cultural traditions, ethnic origin and sexual orientation all form part of a wider understanding of the complex layers of urban living.***
- ***Promote the creation of sustainable lifestyles across South Belfast reinforcing the concept of "Neighbourhood" or "City Place" through establishing clean, safe, user-friendly places for people to live in.***
- ***Promote and influence Health and Education service provision to meet specific local needs***
- ***Provide a safe and welcoming environment for residents and visitors by good design and through collaboration between the police, local communities and businesses.***

(South Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework, Page 12-15)

1.7 The Strategy has been developed around eight themes which have been selected on the basis of the key issues and opportunities which emerged during the appraisals and consultations for the SRF. There will of course be significant overlap between the themes.

- ***Spatial Strategy;***
- ***Energised Core - Maximising Access to Opportunities;***
- ***Transport and Movement;***
- ***Area-wide Economic Strategy;***
- ***Queen's University;***

- **Culture, Arts and Recreation;**
- **Natural Resources;**
- **Neighbourhood Interventions.**

(South Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework, Page 19)

2.0 BCC services and activities in South Belfast

2.1 The Council already provides a range of services which are central to the SRF objectives and the regeneration of South Belfast. Listed below are some examples of our work;

- Participation in the inter-agency Interface Working Group and inter-community Community Partners Interface Working sub-Group.
- Participation in and support of South Belfast Round Table tackling issues of hate crime and promoting good relations between communities in south Belfast.
- Small grants for community cohesion work under Good Relations Fund (up to 10k) and Peace III small grants (up to £25k).
- Inter-Faith Forum
- Bonfires Management, Cultural traditions and Beacons Programme
- Hate Crime convention and associated activities
- PIII - Interface removal programme (up to £180k)
- PIII - Mediation capacity building programme (up to £180k)
- PIII - Youth Intervention Programme (to be awarded)
- PIII - Migrant Workers' Forum and advice support
- PIII - Cultural diversity in sport (to be awarded)
- PIII - Community cohesion programme (up to £150k)
- PIII - Engagement and capacity-building programme (50k)
- PIII - Voluntary and community sector Good Relations training
- PIII - Citizenship education project
- Phase 2 of the Peace Plan will be rolled out in the near future and some of the key priorities identified within the SRF's can help inform and shape its development.
- Belfast District Policing Partnership (DPP) and Belfast Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) are led by Belfast City Council. BCSP co-ordinates the Get Home Safe (GHS) Partnership. The Get Home Safe Partnership is a multi-agency approach and has been successful in reducing alcohol related violent crime and anti-social behaviour throughout the city. It is mainly targeted at 18- 25 year old. Get Home Safe Marketing Campaign is delivered at 3 key times throughout the year; September/ October, November/ December and March.
- Through partnership working with the Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Co-ordination Team (EDACT) and three local drug and alcohol groups we were able to identify the need to tackle parental drinking and its impact

upon young people within Belfast. The poster campaign challenged parents to think about how their drinking affects their children's views and ultimately their children's use of alcohol.

- Joint Enforcement Work – council officers work closely with the PSNI, to organise high visibility enforcement operations on a weekly basis. Also carry out high visibility operations at events and parades. E.g. St Patrick's Day, Freshers Week in University Area.
- Off Sales Code of Practice- Off sales in South Belfast are invited to join the voluntary Code of Practice, showing their commitment to reduce underage sales and proxy purchasing. Off sales who have signed up to the Code of Practice has access to free training. On 26th January 2010 South Belfast off sales staff underwent training by Federation of the Retail Licensed Trade. This training will be run again in 2010/ 2011 financial year.
- Counter Measures Training- Bar staff were also invited to attend a Counter Measures Training Programme run by Federation of the Retail Licensed Trade. On 19th and 25th August 2009 and 3rd September 2009 South Belfast bar staff attended this training. This training will also be run again in 2010/ 2011 financial year.
- Parental Awareness Campaign- BCC/ BCSP run a campaign aimed at parents who are concerned about their children's alcohol consumption. The campaign is advertised in bus shelters, health centres etc across South Belfast. The campaign directs parents to the Parents Advice Centre who can deal with the problems or signpost parents to other partner agencies.
- Officers from Belfast City Council are representatives at Holyland PACT meetings.
- Good Morning Projects are part funded by Belfast Community Safety Partnership. The Lagan Village project has been incorporated within the new RECALL project to provide the service to south and east Belfast and will link with Good Morning Ballysillan and Good Morning West to help develop a more co-ordinated, strategic approach to a Belfast Good Morning service.
- Hate Crime is a key priority within the Safer Belfast Plan. 4 projects are being funded including Tension Monitoring, Training & Engagement programmes, Hate Crime Convention and Hate Crime Awareness campaign.
- Community Safety wardens – new city wide scheme has been implemented – including a University areas service in line with an agreed Service Level Agreement.
- Alleygating and CCTV are key projects to be progressed within the Safer Belfast Plan – CCTV cameras have been deployed in the Holyland area.
- The Older People's officer group have developed an action plan, including:

- An annual Senior Citizens Convention which is organised to give older people a chance to engage directly with service providers and decision makers in Belfast.
- Development of a Seniors information pack in conjunction with Belfast Healthy Cities.
- Development of a Belfast Health Development unit with the Public Health Agency and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.
- An inter-departmental group for Health & Wellbeing has been established to develop an action plan for the council to improve health & wellbeing and address health inequalities in the city.
- Ongoing work with QUB re ASB in Botanic and Ormeau Park. A permanent ASB programme is being delivered across all Parks and Leisure sites.
- Ongoing work re access through the Botanic Park and increased opening linked to the redevelopment of the Museum (restaurant frontage) and the library.
- This area of the City is already the most used for multi-cultural and local festivals and celebrations including Belfast Mela, Polish Picnic, Rose Week, Garden Gourmet, Spring Fair and other Musical Events.
- Development of Walking routes and "trim trails" in the South Parks as well as work with the "Friends of Botanic" Group.
- Renovated the Stables in Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park and re-opened the coffee shop.
- Shared Neighbourhood Programme – mural by Chilean artists and cross-community artists from Belfast at Ormeau Park.
- Blythefield Allotments and Phase 1 of Nature trail.
- Plans for Therapy Garden (1st of its kind) at Musgrave Park which has Health and Wellbeing as its Theme.
- The Lyric theatre development is a key project ear-marked for funding through our City Investment fund.
- A number of collaborative activities with South Belfast Partnership to support local traders' groups especially on the Lisburn Road have been delivered. Financial support has been provided for local marketing and promotional activities.

3.0 Comments and Questions relating to the South SRF

- 3.1 The Council welcomes the reference to the development of our neighbourhood and local area working agenda and the attempts made by Council to examine how our services are being delivered at a

neighbourhood level. We would be keen to discuss our approach to neighbourhood working further with the Partnership.

- 3.2 The Council agrees that it is critical that we must address larger issues related to minority ethnic persons and migrant workers living and working in the city rather than the historical two-dimensional conflict. It is also important to recognise that a number of inter-community interfaces do exist in south Belfast – Donegall Pass/Lower Ormeau and Finaghy crossroads to name two.
- 3.3 We agree that there is work that could be done to promote the existing shared spaces in south Belfast through a planned spatial strategy with shared space principles deliberately at its heart. This includes the river which could be further developed as an animated city shared space.
- 3.4 The SRF mentions 'A Shared Future' objectives at p37, but there is insufficient detail on what this means. The Good Relations Partnership would argue that all of the actions in the SRF could deliver good relations outcomes, with a little adjustment to the objectives of the stated priorities. Good Relations outcomes must be planned in as explicit objectives and not hoped for as an outcome. Belfast City Council would welcome the opportunity to discuss how this could be achieved.
- 3.5 The Council is supportive of the broad objectives of the SRF and would encourage a strengthening of the community cohesion/good relations, not only as a headline objective, but as a fundamental cornerstone in the delivery of all objectives outlined in the framework.
- 3.6 The Council wishes to draw attention to the issue of mental health. It is critical that in seeking to improve mental well-being, attention is paid to the multiple impacts of conflict. These conflict-related impacts are not referenced in the SRF. Such impacts include: stress from the fear of, or actual occurrence of inter-communal violence; continued paramilitary activity; Post-traumatic stress disorder and trans-generational stress; those bereaved by the conflict; those still living with injuries from politically-motivated violence; restricted freedom of movement (particularly for young people); and a general lack of trust and sense of security. Exposure to conflict and underlying tension is a key determinant of health in a city such as Belfast.
- 3.7 In relation to safe neighbourhoods the Council believes that tackling hate crime should also be seen as a priority area for community safety in south Belfast. This is not referenced in the SRF. Hate crime include; crimes against members of black and minority ethnic groups, minority faith groups, migrant workers, those with disabilities and those who are targeted due to their sexual orientation.
- 3.8 The Council welcomes the focus on the development of a spatial strategy for south Belfast. We wish to highlight that the Council owns considerable green space in south Belfast managed by our Parks and Leisure Department. In the main, the Parks & Leisure department already contribute to the SRF actions through its core business and by developing a programme of activities. The department's business plan references the type of initiatives which the SRF outlines.
- 3.9 The Parks and Leisure Department are also currently undertaking a strategy for leisure which is outcome focussed, takes into account other provision in the city, reflects best practice and allows for future decisions on council provision for leisure.

- 3.10 The Council wishes to highlight that the development of the Lagan corridor for leisure physical activities and the development of additional land will depend on both financial resources and political consensus. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further.
- 3.11 In relation to the SRF's aims 'improving the quality of life' and 'to provide a strategic context for the transformation of local neighbourhoods', the Council's Community Services is pivotal in the delivery of these aspirations. We manage seven Community facilities in the south of the city, provide professional community development support and a programme of community development funding. As well as this we will be developing a BCC Community Development Strategy for Belfast which will deliver on improved quality of life initiatives, partnership delivery and an improved/enhanced community development service.
- 3.12 We note that there is no specific mention of our Community Services in the SRF and would welcome the opportunity to discuss our work in relation to community development with the DSD/BRO and South Belfast Partnership
- 3.13 In terms of Making Best Use of Assets (point 1.3). The strategy refers to the provision of premises for a range of community based support activities. The seven Community centres in South Belfast will be subject to review to ensure that they are best placed for efficient and effective delivery of a range of community based support activities. The priorities identified within the SRF can help inform this.
- 3.14 The South Belfast SRF makes reference to business accommodation availability. This may no longer be a priority issue in the current economic climate. However, all studies show south Belfast as a major economic driver so it will be important that all policies continue to support this, even in this climate.
- 3.15 The strategy also supports the continuation/enhancement of Neighbourhood Renewal. BCC welcomes the recognition of the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans and the work of the two Partnerships within this process. BCC is an actively working towards the delivery of council related actions within both the Inner South and South West action plans. Council also has representation on each of the 12 Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships across the city.

Draft response to the East Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In June 2006, the Department for Social Development launched its Renewing Communities programme which included a commitment to the development of Strategic Regeneration Frameworks for each of the five areas of Belfast covered by the Area Partnership Boards (East, North, South, West and Greater Shankill).

'Each Belfast Area Partnership will be commissioned to provide a Strategic Regeneration Framework for their area, which will set a strategic context for important activities such as Neighbourhood Renewal, the development of arterial routes and the Health Action Zones.'

- 1.2 The Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) was commissioned by East Belfast Partnership to coordinate the response to these issues and to provide a guidance document for regeneration effort over the next ten to fifteen years.

- 1.3 Extensive work has and continues to be done by East Belfast Partnership, Belfast Regeneration Office, Belfast City Council and other public and private agencies to tackle East Belfast's problems head on. Initiatives like Neighbourhood Renewal, the Connswater Community Greenway, Newtownards Road 2012 and a host of other programmes and schemes are already in place. This document provides the opportunity to now set in place an overarching framework for regeneration in East Belfast. This will enable these existing programmes to be placed within in it, new initiatives to be identified and strategically positioned and available resources to be accurately targeted.**

(East Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework Page 1)

- 1.4 The east Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework vision is;
- ***Our next generation will be born with a prospect of a longer and healthier life. This will involve ready access to primary healthcare, to care and support for older people which ensures respect and choice and the provision of good quality open spaces in which residents and visitors can exercise, relax and play.***
 - ***All of our children and young people will progress through an improved educational experience of nursery, primary, secondary and further education, readily available within East Belfast itself. Educational attainment will be encouraged as the path to a better quality of life.***
 - ***Existing and future generations of East Belfast will have access to good quality jobs, be they within settings such as the Harbour Estate, Montgomery Road, local retail centres, the international***

commercial setting of Titanic Quarter or the nearby and easily accessed City Centre.

- ***They will have the right to expect a good quality of housing within East Belfast, with a choice of accommodation to suit their stage of life and lifestyle. Just like their houses, streets will be well designed, safe and attractive places to be.***
- ***Existing and future generations of East Belfast will benefit from excellent links to surrounding areas, including excellent footpath connections and direct access to local, regional and national transport services that are environmentally sound and sustainable.***
- ***They will have direct access to good community facilities with a range of shops and amenities located within easy reach of their home. Such centres will form the heart of diverse and confident communities, welcoming to visitors and newcomers alike.***
- ***The people of East Belfast will be proud to live in an area with a positive identity based upon its rich history, fine architectural heritage, diverse neighbourhoods and an ambitious and innovative approach to the future.***

(East Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework Page 18)

1.5 To realise this vision and to address the key issues identified in the analysis, an eight-point Regeneration Model has been developed. It is advocated that this model should be the framework for future regeneration decisions in East Belfast, to ensure that they are fully integrated with the Strategic Regeneration Framework for East Belfast as a whole.

- Utilising Historical Image
- Sustaining Export Industries in East Belfast
- Employing 'Development Gain' to Optimise the Local Impact of New Investment
- Addressing Inequality
- Developing and Utilising Social Assets
- Building a Contemporary Identity for East Belfast
- Ensuring that Physical Development Connects rather than Separates
- Connecting people to opportunity
-

(East Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework Pages 19-22)

2.0 BCC services and activities in East Belfast

2.1 The Council already provides a range of services which are central to the SRF objectives and the regeneration of East Belfast. Listed below are some examples of our work;

- Participation in the inter-agency Interface Working Group and inter-community Community Partners Interface Working sub-Group.
- Small grants for community cohesion work under Good Relations Fund (up to 10k) and Peace III small grants (up to £25k).
- Inter-Faith Forum
- Bonfires Management, Cultural traditions and Beacons Programme

- Hate Crime convention and associated activities
- PIII - Interface removal programme (up to £180k)
- PIII - Mediation capacity building programme (up to £180k)
- PIII - Youth Intervention Programme
- PIII - Migrant Workers' Forum and advice support
- PIII - Cultural diversity in sport
- PIII - Community cohesion programme (up to £150k)
- PIII - Engagement and capacity-building programme (50k)
- PIII - Voluntary and community sector Good Relations training
- PIII - Citizenship education
- Phase 2 of the Peace Plan will be rolled out in the near future and some of the key priorities identified within the SRF's can help inform and shape its development.
- Belfast District Policing Partnership (DPP) and Belfast Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) are led by Belfast City Council. BCSP co-ordinates the Get Home Safe (GHS) Partnership. The Get Home Safe Partnership is a multi-agency approach and has been successful in reducing alcohol related violent crime and anti-social behaviour throughout the city. It is mainly targeted at young people.
- Through partnership working with the Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Co-ordination Team (EDACT) and three local drug and alcohol groups we were able to identify the need to tackle parental drinking and its impact upon young people within Belfast. The poster campaign challenged parents to think about how their drinking affects their children's views and ultimately their children's use of alcohol.
- Joint Enforcement Work – council officers work closely with the PSNI, to organise high visibility enforcement operations on a weekly basis.
- Good Morning Projects are part funded by Belfast Community Safety Partnership. The Lagan Village project is incorporated within the new RECALL project to provide the service to south and east Belfast and is linking with Good Morning Ballysillan and Good Morning West to help develop a more co-ordinated, strategic approach to a Belfast Good Morning service.
- Hate Crime is a key priority within the Safer Belfast Plan. 4 projects are being funded including Tension Monitoring, Training & Engagement programmes, Hate Crime Convention and Hate Crime Awareness campaign.
- Community Safety wardens – a new city wide scheme has been implemented.
- Alleygating and CCTV are key projects to be progressed within the Safer Belfast Plan.
- The Older People's officer group have developed an action plan, including:
- An annual Senior Citizens Convention which is organised to give older people a chance to engage directly with service providers and decision makers in Belfast.
- Development of a Seniors information pack in conjunction with Belfast Healthy Cities.

- Our Environmental Health Service is involved with a multi-agency response to suicide clusters.
- Development of a Belfast Health Development unit with the Public Health Agency and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.
- An inter-departmental group for Health & Wellbeing has been established to develop an action plan for the council to improve health & wellbeing and address health inequalities in the city.
- The council is actively working with East Belfast Partnership on the development of the Connswater Community Greenway. The construction programme for the integrated team has been developed and this spans 33 months. Integrated design is now completed and by the end of March 2010 the final design drawing will be completed. The tender process is due to be completed in the early July with a contractor appointed in mid September and work is anticipated to commence in January 2011.
- Development of additional ground and extension at Roselawn Cemetery.
- Completion of and planning for additional Playgrounds in the east
- Antisocial behaviour programme - Orangefield; design out crime; work with schools. The ASB programme is now being delivered across all Parks and Leisure sites.
- Tourism work in East Belfast with C.S Lewis, signage, TSP and Cruise Ships.
- Funding had been allocated to the Titanic Signature project through our City Investment Fund.

3.0 *Comments and Questions relating to the East SRF*

- 3.1 The Council notes that utilising historical image and Connswater Greenway, east Belfast has an enormous opportunity to maximise its uniqueness in the city by emphasizing its heritage. It has several sites of importance which could serve as real drivers for shared space as well as economic activity.
- 3.2 We note that in addressing inequality the acknowledgement that the inter-communal tensions have been a drag on maximising development potential of east Belfast is an important point to make. With this in mind, it is critical that there is a distinctive community cohesion aspect to all of the activities outlined in the SRF.
- 3.3 The Good Relations Partnership (GRP) believes that the involvement of young people in the community cohesion and civic pride agenda is critical.
- 3.4 In relation to Contemporary Identity the Council is supportive of this aim as we believe there is enormous potential for good relations and community cohesion outcomes.
- 3.5 The Council supports the important emphasis on the built interface, it is critical that other activities such as the revitalisation of local retail nodes are done so as to improve community cohesion, supporting shared retail space and therefore maximising the attractiveness of the retail opportunities to all local customers.

- 3.6 In the Priorities Table, community cohesion is ranked very low. It is the opinion of the Good Relations Partnership that community cohesion, the development of shared space and improved connectivity are all critical to the delivery of this SRF. The re-development of facilities at Templemore Avenue must include an aspiration for users/clients from Short Strand/Madrid Street. Without the maximum possible users in the local geographic catchment area, the business case for investment will not be attractive to private sector and increasingly, statutory providers.
- 3.7 We would be supportive of the broad objectives of the SRF and would encourage a strengthening of the community cohesion/good relations, not only as a headline objective, but as a fundamental cornerstone in the delivery of all objectives outlined in the framework.
- 3.8 The Council wishes to draw attention to the issue of mental health. It is critical that in seeking to improve mental well-being, attention is paid to the multiple impacts of conflict. These conflict-related impacts are not referenced in the SRF. Such impacts include: stress from the fear of, or actual occurrence of inter-communal violence; continued paramilitary activity; Post-traumatic stress disorder and trans-generational stress; those bereaved by the conflict; those still living with injuries from politically-motivated violence; restricted freedom of movement (particularly for young people); and a general lack of trust and sense of security. Exposure to conflict and underlying tension is a key determinant of health in a city such as Belfast.
- 3.9 In relation to safe neighbourhoods the Council believes that tackling hate crime should also be seen as a priority area for community safety in east Belfast. This is not referenced in the SRF. Hate crime include; crimes against members of black and minority ethnic groups, minority faith groups, migrant workers, those with disabilities and those who are targeted due to their sexual orientation.
- 3.10 The Council welcomes the development of the Connswater Community Greenway and we will continue to play an active role in its development and future use. We wish to highlight that the Council owns considerable green space in east Belfast (in addition to the various pieces of land in the greenway) managed by our Parks and Leisure Department. In the main, the Parks & Leisure department already contribute to the SRF actions through its core business and by developing a programme of activities. The department's business plan references the type of initiatives which the SRF outlines.
- 3.11 The Parks and Leisure department are currently undertaking a strategy for leisure which is outcome focused, takes into account other provision in the city, reflects best practice and allows for future future decisions on Council provision for leisure. The SRF will be key to informing the development of this strategy.
- 3.12 The Council is in the process of developing an extension to the Roselawn cemetery, with the purchase of an additional 28 acres within the last 2 years. We are currently seeking planning permission for this site. There have been issues with badger sets on the site, work is ongoing to resolve this problem but it may be late autumn before this is resolved and a planning decision would not be given until after this.
- 3.13 The plan does not make reference to Victoria Park and how connect that to the Community. We would be keen to discuss the importance this asset in East Belfast and how it can connect to the community.

- 3.14 The Council recognises that regeneration is a long and resource intense process and requires a broad range of measures to be addressed. We note that many of the SRF actions relate to physical redevelopment (Titanic, E-way, Glentoran, Housing, Planning etc.) and areas such as commercial (Montgomery road, Newtownards road, local retail). We would recommend that social and economic considerations are also factored into the regeneration of the area.
- 3.15 The work of our Community Services is directed by a Community Support plan where we seek to improve the quality of life of people in East Belfast. We have 3 community centres through which we provide programmes and space for the local community. These broadly seek to provide activities etc. for C&YP, the Elderly, Ethnic minorities and those suffering from Disabilities, Unemployment, illness etc.
- 3.16 Community Services also provides a range of Grant Aid to many community groups across the area and this helps in the provision of addressing social/community needs. We can also support the work of other partners and or sections in terms of Community Consultation, the provision of Meeting space and providing Networking opportunities.
- 3.17 There is significant tourism potential in East Belfast which needs to be factored in across the SRF this would include the Connswater Greenway.
- 3.18 Our Economic Development team are also delivering a range of projects and initiatives in East Belfast which meet the objectives for business development, enterprise, skills and employability in the SRF.
- 3.19 In particular, we recognise the significance of the Titanic Quarter development and we have given a commitment to helping people access jobs on the site through the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding. There needs to be a recognition that there is an issue to address in terms of local ownership of Titanic Quarter and the potential that it will bring for surrounding communities.
- 3.20 The Council contributes to a number of key redevelopment sites in east Belfast including the Titanic Quarter. These redevelopments, which are included in the SRF require the active participation of and agreement between political representatives, public bodies, private investors and the community if they are to progress.
- *The council would be keen to discuss how all of these partners could be brought together to maximise the potential of these strategic sites.*
- 3.21 The Council is an active partner in the implementation of the Neighbourhood Renewal Action plans in east Belfast. The draft SRF does not show clearly a link to the work of the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership. In addition to this we would be keen to see the physical concept Masterplan for the lower Newtownards Road referenced within the SRF.

Draft response to the West Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework

1.0 Background

In June 2006, the Department for Social Development launched its Renewing Communities programme which included a commitment to the development of Strategic Regeneration Frameworks for each of the five areas of Belfast covered by Area Partnership Boards (East, North, South, West Belfast and Greater Shankill).

"Each Belfast Area Partnership will be commissioned to provide a Strategic Regeneration Framework for their area, which will set a strategic context for important initiatives such as Neighbourhood Renewal, the development of arterial routes and the Health Action Zones".

1.1 The purpose of the Strategic Regeneration Framework for North Belfast has been stated as:-

The Strategic Regeneration Framework and Implementation Plan (The SRF) will define West Belfast's needs and priorities in order to drive regeneration activity and investment over the next 10 years. The associated clear, shared and delivery focused Implementation Plan will guide public and private sector investment in West Belfast over the next three years.

1.2 ***The SRF aims to:***

- ***provide a strategic vision and context for guiding regeneration, planning and development;***
- ***identify a portfolio of strategic regeneration activities which could be delivered by the public and private sector;***
- ***set investment priorities for the area and influence future planning decisions;***
- ***provide a clear, comprehensive plan for action;***
- ***act as a marketing/procurement/planning tool; and***
- ***link with existing and emerging policies, projects and initiatives.***

(West Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework Page 1)

1.3 The SRF vision statement is as follows:

"West Belfast will play an integral role in the regeneration of Belfast showcasing its people, vibrancy and distinctiveness. This is an area of contrasts, positioned against the Belfast Hills...a place of enterprise, creativity, inspiration and passion. An outward looking, welcoming and inclusive community enhanced by civic pride, strength and a determination to flourish."

1.4 The Strategic Regeneration Framework has set four overarching and inter-linked priorities for the long term regeneration of West Belfast as follows:

- **Employability, Education, Training and Skills**
Increase employability and aspirations by focusing on increasing access and participation in education, skills and training.
- **Investment, Enterprise and Economic Development**
Improve the economic viability of West Belfast through attracting inward investment, developing tourism and supporting and encouraging enterprise.
- **Physical, Environmental and Transportation**
Develop well-connected and well-designed neighbourhoods, which enhance and preserve the long-term sustainability and beauty of the natural landscape.
- **Communities and Services**
Ensure that all residents have access to well run, high quality local services and facilities which encourage strong community involvement and operate in a coordinated manner; and Improve the quality of life for all sections of the community through the provision of a safe, secure environment and a range of opportunities to participate in community life.

(West Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework Page 47)

2.0 BCC services and activities in West Belfast

2.1 The Council already provides a range of services which are central to the SRF objectives and the regeneration of west Belfast. Listed below are some examples of our work;

- We are supporting a number of community initiatives under Peace III and our core Good Relations Fund to promote better inter-community relations. Included in this is a dedicated programme designed to begin intra and inter-community dialogue on the removal of interface barriers.
- Participation in the inter-agency Interface Working Group and inter-community Community Partners Interface Working sub-Group.
- Small grants for community cohesion work under Good Relations Fund (up to 10k) and Peace III small grants (up to £25k).
- Participation in the inter-agency Interface Working Group and inter-community Community Partners Interface Working sub-Group.
- Small grants for community cohesion work under Good Relations Fund (up to 10k) and Peace III small grants (up to £25k)
- Hate Crime convention and associated activities
- PIII - Interface removal programme (up to £180k)
- PIII - Mediation capacity building programme (up to £180k)
- PIII - Youth Intervention Programme
- PIII - Migrant Workers' Forum and advice support
- PIII - Cultural diversity in sport (to be awarded)
- PIII - Community cohesion programme (up to £150k)
- PIII - Engagement and capacity-building programme (50k)
- PIII - Voluntary and community sector Good Relations training (to be awarded).
- PIII - Citizenship education.

- Phase 2 of the Peace Plan will be rolled out in the near future and some of the key priorities identified within the SRF's can help inform and shape its development.
- Belfast District Policing Partnership (DPP) and Belfast Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) are led by Belfast City Council. BCSP co-ordinates the Get Home Safe (GHS) Partnership. The Get Home Safe Partnership is a multi-agency approach and has been successful in reducing alcohol related violent crime and anti-social behaviour throughout the city. It is mainly targeted at young people.
- Through partnership working with the Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Co-ordination Team (EDACT) and three local drug and alcohol groups we were able to identify the need to tackle parental drinking and its impact upon young people within Belfast. The poster campaign challenged parents to think about how their drinking affects their children's views and ultimately their children's use of alcohol.
- Joint Enforcement Work – council officers work closely with the PSNI, to organise high visibility enforcement operations on a weekly basis. Also carry out high visibility operations at events and parades, e.g. St Patrick's Day.
- Off Sales Code of Practice- Off sales in West Belfast are invited to join the voluntary Code of Practise, showing their commitment to reduce underage sales and proxy purchasing. Off sales who have signed up to the Code of Practise has access to free training. On 3rd February 2010 West Belfast off sales staff underwent training by Federation of the Retail Licensed Trade. This training will be run again in 2010/ 2011 financial year.
- Counter Measures Training- Bar staffs were also invited to attend a Counter Measures Training Programme run by Federation of the Retail Licensed Trade. On 22nd September 2009 West Belfast bar staff attended this training. This training will also be run again in 2010/ 2011 financial year.
- Parental Awareness Campaign- BCC/ BCSP run a campaign aimed at parents who are concerned about their children's alcohol consumption. The campaign is advertised in bus shelters, health centres etc across West Belfast. The campaign directs parents to the Parents Advice Centre who can deal with the problems or signpost parents to other partner agencies.
- Good Morning Projects are part funded by Belfast Community Safety Partnership. Good Morning West is working with Good Morning Ballysillan and the Lagan Village project now incorporated within the new RECALL project in south and east Belfast to help develop a more a co-ordinated, strategic approach to a Belfast Good Morning service.
- Hate Crime is a key priority within the Safer Belfast Plan. 4 projects are being funded including Tension Monitoring, Training & Engagement programmes, Hate Crime Convention and Hate Crime Awareness campaign.
- Community Safety wardens – new city wide scheme has been implemented.
- Alleygating and CCTV are key projects to be progressed within the Safer Belfast Plan.

- The Older People's officer group have developed an action plan, including:
- An annual Senior Citizens Convention which is organised to give older people a chance to engage directly with service providers and decision makers in Belfast.
- Development of a Seniors information pack in conjunction with Belfast Healthy Cities.
- Our Environmental Health Service is involved with a multi-agency response to suicide clusters.
- Development of a Belfast Health Development Unit with the Public Health Agency and Belfast Health & Social Care Trust.
- An inter-departmental group for Health & Wellbeing has been established to develop an action plan for the council to improve health & wellbeing and address health inequalities in the city.
- Safer Neighbourhoods programme – action plans for Parks and areas across the city. The ASB pilot took place in City Cemetery, Falls Park, Whiterock Leisure Centre and Dunville Park. A permanent ABS programme is now being delivered across all Parks and Leisure sites.
- Falls Park has received significant funding and is a rejuvenated park and open space with a newly designated play area. Work continues in the park to maintain its growing success as a usable public space.
- Improvements have been on-going at the City Cemetery and have included the cutting back of vegetation, the clearing of overgrown areas and cleaning up around graves to make the cemetery more attractive, welcoming and safe, It was also one of the sites in the ASB pilot programme and a range of activities were undertaken to tackle ASB activities in the cemetery including drinking.
- Falls, Andersonstown and Whiterock leisure centres continue to provide quality facilities which are growing in membership in the past 2 years; ongoing development of the sites is planned annually.
- Council is transferring land from the Beechmount leisure centre site to the Department of Education for the development of Colaiste Feirste.
- The third generation playing field at Grosvenor Recreation centre.
- The Parks staff has been working with Lenadoon Community Forum to develop a range of activities in the Millennium Park including soccer in the evenings and a series of workshops with artists which will lead to murals with an environmental or sporting theme.
- Bog Meadows – the Council's open space strategy outlined the lack of funding or community partners to drive the project forward.
- All council's parks are free with an annual events programme to encourage usage and accessibility and the council's Boost scheme addresses issues like being too costly as it provides a range of membership opportunities for people on means tested benefits, older people and where health related problems exist a GP referral scheme.
- 9 play grounds are provided in the locality.

- Council is already committed to developing community Greenways, including one in the West. There have been initial discussions around this but it is at a very early stage. It would be anticipated that the greenway would go from the Belfast Hills through Falls Park to the Bog Meadows, Lagan Meadows and link into the tow path.
- A pilot schools programme initiated in the locality to raise awareness on ASB. Watch this Space, orienteering etc.
- Dunville Park Project Steering Group options agreed for Parks Committee consideration.
- 6 Management lease agreements with Community Organisations to run BCC facilities in West Belfast.
- Health Initiatives at all 6 directly managed Community Facilities.
- Community Services & Health & Social Services providing disabled projects at Whiterock, Horn Drive & Divis Community Centres.
- Older People projects at all directly managed facilities.
- Health Promotion Days at Whiterock community Centre.
- Delivering Funding Programmes through revenue, project, capacity, advice & summer scheme grants.
- Supporting community safety initiatives and developing alternative projects for young people.
- Delivering new funding programme for children & young people July – October 2009 'Ur City 2'.

3.0 Comments and Questions relating to the West SRF

- 3.1 The Council is supportive of the broad objectives of the SRF and would encourage a strengthening of the community cohesion/good relations, not only as a headline objective, but as a fundamental cornerstone in the delivery of all objectives outlined in the framework.
- 3.2 The Council suggests that the North Foreshore has the potential to link into the Belfast Hills. A greenway connection from the North Foreshore to Cave Hill/Belfast Hills, which would be beneficial for developing tourism cycle/walking holidays. It may help to make the West Belfast SRF more outward looking and integrate it into the City.
- 3.3 We wish to highlight that the Council owns considerable green space in west Belfast managed by our Parks and Leisure Department. In the main, the Parks & Leisure department already contribute to the SRF actions through its core business and by developing a programme of activities. The department's business plan references the type of initiatives which the SRF outlines.
- 3.4 The Council wishes to highlight that Beechmount Leisure Centre is now closed and the SRF doesn't mention Whiterock LC and makes only a cursory reference to Andersonstown leisure centre (one of the Council's busiest Leisure Centre's) which is also in the area. As has been mentioned previously, Council is transferring land at Beechmount to the Department of Education for the Colaiste Feirste.

- 3.5 The Parks and Leisure department are currently undertaking a strategy for leisure which is outcome focused, takes into account other provision in the city, reflects best practice and allows for future decisions on Council provision for leisure.
- 3.6 There is no mention of BCC in the development of greenways in the west strategy although the council's Open Space strategy has a framework to develop greenways across the entire city.
- 3.7 Plans are underway for the refurbishment of Dunville Park which is a major asset for the area. An economic appraisal is currently being considered by BRO and it is anticipated that a decision on this will be given in June 2010. This is for an investment of £1 million from Council and £1 million from BRO. If a positive decision is given on the economic appraisal a full planning application will be submitted in autumn 2010, with work anticipated to commence in Spring 2011. The council would be keen to engage with communities regarding the development of this asset in the area.
- 3.8 The Council wishes to draw attention to the issue of mental health. It is critical that in seeking to improve mental well-being, attention is paid to the multiple impacts of conflict. These conflict-related impacts are not referenced in the SRF. Such impacts include: stress from the fear of, or actual occurrence of inter-communal violence; continued paramilitary activity; Post-traumatic stress disorder and trans-generational stress; those bereaved by the conflict; those still living with injuries from politically-motivated violence; restricted freedom of movement (particularly for young people); and a general lack of trust and sense of security. Exposure to conflict and underlying tension is a key determinant of health in a city such as Belfast.
- 3.9 In relation to safe neighbourhoods the Council believes that tackling hate crime should also be seen as a priority area for community safety in west Belfast. This is not referenced in the SRF. Hate crime include; crimes against members of black and minority ethnic groups, minority faith groups, migrant workers, those with disabilities and those who are targeted due to their sexual orientation.
- 3.10 The Council notes that the key issues relating to Community Services are primarily in Section 9 under Communities & Services Framework. This section focuses on the objective of improving the quality of life of local neighbourhoods through the provision of health initiatives, safe and secure environments and opportunities to participate in community life. It seeks to ensure that citizens have access to well run high quality services and facilities with high levels of local involvement. Our Community Support Plan which underpins the work in West Belfast compliments these aims. It seeks to support and energise communities to become strong, confident, active and inclusive.
- 3.11 The SRF highlights 4 types of interventions required to take the Communities and Services Framework forward namely Health & Wellbeing, Safe Environment, Community Cohesion and Service Provision. The Council wishes to note that in addition to the Health related services provided by our Environmental Health Services and Parks & Leisure Department our Community Services supports health and wellbeing programmes in West Belfast across a spectrum of age groups. The Service in partnership with other providers contributes to safer neighbourhood projects and initiatives which impacts on the quality of life of many residents.

- 3.12 In terms of community cohesion the service in West Belfast promotes community involvement at a range of levels including volunteers delivering programmes, community activism to lobby for resources and change, participation on and encouraging community and statutory partnerships and working interdepartmental teams that deliver at local level.
- 3.13 Community Services provides a range of services in neighbourhoods throughout West Belfast for children & young people, older people, local residents, minority ethnic groups, disabled citizens, families and cultural communities. Furthermore the Service through its grant aid programme supports several hundred organisations and projects that deliver high quality services and programmes at neighbourhood level. Overall the West Belfast SRF has identified key issues, which are in many ways correlate to the Community Services agenda for this part of the city.
- 3.14 The Council wishes to highlight that the actions under the 'Communities & Services Programme' are fairly broad and link closely with current provision and priorities of Community Services in West Belfast. However, similar to all organisations there is a limit on human, financial and physical resources available and in the current economic climate these could contract.
- 3.15 The Council is an active partner in the implementation of the four Neighbourhood Renewal Action plans across the west of the city. The draft SRF does not show clearly a link to the work of Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership.
- 3.16 It is recommended that the next stage of the SRF process would be to commence the prioritisation of projects and activities. Council commends the West Belfast Partnership for commencing this process by identifying a number of flagship initiatives that would need to be delivered in the next few years e.g. Ark of Enterprise, Belfast Hills and Gaeltacht Quarter. However, its is recommended that this should be reviewed to take into account the fact that the funding and policy environment has changed considerably since the SRF was initially discussed and there are more constraints now than at the beginning of the SRF planning process. The financial climate will continue to have a major effect on the resources available to progress the SRF.
- 3.17 BCC looks forward to receiving proposal regarding the Gaeltacht Quarter as cultural quarters forms a key part of the Integrated Tourism strategy. Council has already noted the Gaeltacht Quarter as one of the ten geographic cluster areas for development. The council would welcome feedback on the strategy and will work with all partners to ensure its effective implementation.
- 3.18 Council would like to make reference to the current proposals for the redevelopment of the Casement Park and would recommend that this represents a unique opportunity for a large scale mixed development in the west of the city.

Draft response to the Greater Shankill Strategic Regeneration Framework

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In June 2006, the Department for Social Development launched its Renewing Communities programme which included a commitment to the development of Strategic Regeneration Frameworks for each of the five areas of Belfast covered by Area Partnership Boards (East, North, South, West Belfast and Greater Shankill).

“Each Belfast Area Partnership will be commissioned to provide a Strategic Regeneration Framework for their area, which will set a strategic context for important initiatives such as Neighbourhood Renewal, the development of arterial routes and the Health Action Zones”.

- 1.2 **The Terms of Reference for this Framework were defined by Greater Shankill Partnership as follows:**

- ***develop the vision and devise a strategic plan to address the current and future regeneration needs.***
- ***produce an outline view of the existing physical infrastructure with particular regard to the balance of existing and future land uses.***
- ***provide an analysis of the economic, political, social and environmental circumstances and propose solutions for addressing the limitations imposed by those conditions.***
- ***make recommendations for improving transportation and traffic management within the area.***
- ***determine the shortfall in community, business and individual access to digital technology and develop proposals to enhance ICT use.***
- ***develop proposals for a co-ordinated and complementary delivery of high quality public services.***
- ***place the Greater Shankill in both a city centre, city-wide and regional context.***

(Greater Shankill Strategic Regeneration Framework Page 4)

- 1.3 The SRF vision states that

“The Greater Shankill will be revitalised as a sustainable community playing a vibrant role in the life of Belfast. The physical, social and economic decline of the past 40 years will be reversed in a community that experiences educational achievement; accesses employment opportunities throughout the city and sees the improving health of its residents, all set in a safe and attractive environment with affordable housing and a vibrant social and cultural scene. It will be a community at ease with itself and its neighbours”.

Realisation of this vision will be delivered through a model of comprehensive regeneration, based along the following key initiatives.

- ***The Shankill Road – comprehensive improvement of its buildings, businesses and open spaces, so that the Shankill Road plays an enhanced role as the social and commercial spine of the area.***
- ***Sustainable Neighbourhoods – focused regeneration of the Greater Shankill's different neighbourhoods with an emphasis on repopulating low density areas, ensuring good access to services and stimulating community cohesion.***
- ***Fundamental Improvement in Education and Learning - establishment of an Education and Learning Action Zone within which enhanced measures for educational attainment can be put in place. This would be accompanied by the Axis to Knowledge, a specialist corridor for educational excellence and innovation providing a focal point for education provision and associated enterprise opportunities.***
- ***Economic Opportunity – including delivery of local economic development opportunities, enhanced skills provision and physical access to employment centres across the City.***
- ***Forth River Community Greenway – fully realising the potential of the Shankill's natural assets of the hills and river by establishing a high quality and sustainable greenway. This will establish a new connection between the city of Belfast and its hills, whilst providing the focus for development along its length.***
- ***The accelerated delivery of these regeneration proposals will be accomplished through a commitment to a comprehensive approach that sources and applies adequate resources and expertise over the short to medium term. This approach is designed to bring about positive change in the Greater Shankill for the good of its residents, thus stimulating private sector confidence in the area. This will involve the establishment of a community led Urban Regeneration Company, providing a vehicle for effective cross sectoral partnership with Government and the necessary drive capability and access to successfully bring about positive and sustainable physical regeneration and investment.***

(Greater Shankill Strategic Regeneration Framework Page 8)

2.0 BCC services and activities in the Greater Shankill

- 2.1 The council already provides a range of services which are central to the SRF objectives and the regeneration of the Greater Shankill area. Listed below are some examples of our work;
- We are supporting a number of community initiatives under Peace III and our core Good Relations Fund to begin community dialogues on the removal of interface barriers.
 - Participation in the inter-agency Interface Working Group and inter-community Community Partners Interface Working sub-Group.

- Small grants for community cohesion work under Good Relations Fund (up to 10k) and Peace III small grants (up to £25k).
- We are supporting a number of community initiatives under Peace III and our core Good Relations Fund to begin community dialogues on the removal of interface barriers.
- Participation in the inter-agency Interface Working Group and inter-community Community Partners Interface Working sub-Group.
- Small grants for community cohesion work under Good Relations Fund (up to 10k) and Peace III small grants (up to £25k)
- Participation of 6 of Loyalist communities in the process of better bonfire management through the Cultural Networks Programme.
- Continued resourcing and engagement on the removal and replacement of militaristic murals.
- Hate Crime convention and associated activities
 - PIII - Interface removal programme (up to £180k)
 - PIII - Mediation capacity building programme (up to £180k)
 - PIII - Youth Intervention Programme
 - PIII - Migrant Workers' Forum and advice support
 - PIII - Cultural diversity in sport
 - PIII - Community cohesion programme (up to £150k)
 - PIII - Engagement and capacity-building programme (50k)
 - PIII - Voluntary and community sector Good Relations training
 - PIII - Citizenship education
- Phase 2 of the Peace Plan will be rolled out in the near future and some of the key priorities identified within the SRF's can help inform and shape its development.
- Belfast District Policing Partnership (DPP) and Belfast Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) are led by Belfast City Council. BCSP co-ordinates the Get Home Safe (GHS) Partnership. The Get Home Safe Partnership is a multi-agency approach and has been successful in reducing alcohol related violent crime and anti-social behaviour throughout the city. It is mainly targeted at 18- 25 year olds. Get Home Safe Marketing Campaign is delivered at 3 key times throughout the year; September/ October, November/ December and March.
- Through partnership working with the Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Co-ordination Team (EDACT) and three local drug and alcohol groups we were able to identify the need to tackle parental drinking and its impact upon young people within Belfast. The poster campaign challenged parents to think about how their drinking affects their children's views and ultimately their children's use of alcohol.
- Joint Enforcement Work – council officers work closely with the PSNI, to organise high visibility enforcement operations on a weekly basis.
- Good Morning Projects are part funded by Belfast Community Safety Partnership. Work is underway to develop a co-ordinated, strategic approach to a Belfast Good Morning service.
- Hate Crime is a key priority within the Safer Belfast Plan. 4 projects are being funded including Tension Monitoring, Training &

Engagement programmes, Hate Crime Convention and Hate Crime Awareness campaign.

- Community Safety wardens – new city wide scheme has been implemented.
- The Older People's officer group have developed an action plan, including:
 - An annual Senior Citizens Convention which is organised to give older people a chance to engage directly with service providers and decision makers in Belfast.
 - Development of a Seniors information pack in conjunction with Belfast Healthy Cities
- Our Environmental Health Service is involved with a multi-agency response to suicide clusters.
- Development of a Belfast Health Development unit with the Public Health Agency and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.
- An inter-departmental group for Health & Wellbeing has been established to develop an action plan for the council to improve health & wellbeing and address health inequalities in the city.
- Older People projects at all directly managed facilities.
- Delivering Funding Programmes through revenue, project, capacity, advice & summer scheme grants.
- Supporting community safety initiatives and developing alternative projects for young people.
- Delivering new funding programme for children & young people July – October 2009 'Ur City 2'.
- Providing 3 high quality community venues in the Shankill with organised programmes i.e. Hammer Community Centre, Woodvale Community Centre and Highfield Community Centre. We also have community managed facilities e.g. Denmark Street.
- Work in Woodvale Park – Woodvale HUB; Friends of Woodvale Park group; ASB forum. The ASB programme is being delivered across all Parks and Leisure sites.
- BCC is about to embark on a refurbishment of Woodvale Park and improvements are currently being discussed with relevant stakeholders.
- Funding was secured from Sport NI to replace the floor in main hall of Shankill Leisure Centre. Indoor cricket nets were also obtained as part of this funding and a series of sports development activities are scheduled to take place in the coming months
- Shankill graveyard – by April 2010 the stone memorial book and the facility to scatter cremated ashes will be operational.
- Our Economic Development Unit is currently delivering a range of enterprise and business development programmes in the area. We have undertaken a range of collaborative activities with the local traders group and financial support has been provided for local marketing and promotional activities.

- We provided funding along with Invest NI and the International Fund for Ireland for the Phase 2 development of business incubation at the Argyle Business Centre.
- Renewing the Routes has delivered a range of public realm projects, physical improvements and redeveloped shop frontage improvements. Funding secured through the Integrated Development Fund has enabled the programme to be rolled out across the entire area.
- Festivals and signage production has been completed by the Tourism Unit.

3.0 Comments and questions relating to the Shankill SRF

- 3.1 The Greater Shankill's SRF puts its connections to other parts of the city and the city into the Shankill, at its heart, demonstrating the transformative potential of connectivity. It states that the retail sector on the Shankill needs more than its immediate locale using it; it needs shoppers from the Falls and Crumlin too (p32). This is very encouraging in terms of Good Relations and Economic Development, explicitly linking the social inclusion, good relations and competitiveness agenda.
- 3.2 The Council is supportive of promoting the unique cultural identity of the Shankill as welcoming to all tourists and visitors. We would encourage this to be located in a city-wide programme, not only maximising the economic impact of visitors in the Greater Shankill area but across the city
- 3.3 There has been much success in the Greater Shankill to replace and remove sectarian murals and flags, to develop a more welcoming environment. This is important, not only for tourists but as an attractor to SME investment in the area.
- 3.4 The Council is supportive of the long term view taken on the removal of the interface barriers and the proposed Urban Design Study (p42). Planning decisions must assume the removal of the wall at some point and must not compound or make permanent community severance, with new cul-de-sacs or buildings. The assumption must be that the wall will come down and that the maximum potential for community connectivity must be preserved with all planning decisions.
- 3.5 The Council would promote the principle that any developed educational facilities and environmental projects should be designed, planned, managed and promoted as 'shared spaces' and a resource for the city.
- 3.6 We would be supportive of the broad objectives of the SRF and would encourage a strengthening of the community cohesion/good relations, not only as a headline objective, but as a fundamental cornerstone in the delivery of all objectives outlined in the framework.
- 3.7 The SRF references the Council's own good relations strategy and government's A Shared Future document and aligns well with emerging priorities for the Peace III Plan.

- 3.8 The Council wishes to draw attention to the issue of mental health. It is critical that in seeking to improve mental well-being, attention is paid to the multiple impacts of conflict. These conflict-related impacts are not referenced in the SRF. Such impacts include: stress from the fear of, or actual occurrence of inter-communal violence; continued paramilitary activity; Post-traumatic stress disorder and trans-generational stress; those bereaved by the conflict; those still living with injuries from politically-motivated violence; restricted freedom of movement (particularly for young people); and a general lack of trust and sense of security. Exposure to conflict and underlying tension is a key determinant of health in a city such as Belfast.
- 3.9 In relation to safe neighbourhoods the Council believes that tackling hate crime should also be seen as a priority area for community safety in the Greater Shankill. This is not referenced in the SRF. Hate crime include; crimes against members of black and minority ethnic groups, minority faith groups, migrant workers, those with disabilities and those who are targeted due to their sexual orientation.
- 3.10 In relation to economic development and support for business the Council wishes to highlight the work of our Economic Development services and our Renewing the Routes Programme. These council services are available across the city. We try to promote them in specific local areas through local organisations but turnout is often poor. Given the resources available, large-scale programmes in each area are not feasible.
- 3.11 In relation to improved skills/linkages with employers, this is a focus for the Belfast Skills and Employability group but they cannot deliver this without the financial and resource commitments of DEL in particular. The Belfast Employability and Skills Plan has been developed and we would keen to talk to the Partnership further about this.
- 3.12 One of the key initiatives that has been identified in this SRF to realise their vision is: Forth River Community Greenway – fully realising the potential of Shankill’s natural assets of the hills and river by establishing a high quality and sustainable greenway. This will establish a new connection between the city of Belfast and its hills, whilst providing the focus for development along its length. The council would be keen to talk further to the Partnership regarding their plans for this Greenway and how it envisages taking this concept forward and its connections to developments at Woodvale Park.
- 3.13 The Shankill leisure centre is mentioned as a well known and prominent facility. However, its condition and architectural style are indicative of a rapidly aging building in need of improving. A clear reference is made to developing a new leisure facility at the existing site. This recommendation does not consider the population, trends or other facilities in the surrounding area. It should be noted that the Belfast Trust is developing a Health and Wellbeing centre opposite the leisure centre site on the main Shankill road.
- 3.14 In addition to this, the plan also requests that the Shankill Leisure Centre is provided with investment to make it similar to the Falls Leisure Centre. It is recommended that work is undertaken to

encourage people to look at the Falls Leisure Centre as a nearby facility for the area. The Parks and Leisure Department are currently undertaking a strategy for leisure which is outcome focused, takes into account other provision in the City, reflects best practice and allows for future decisions on Council provision for leisure.

- 3.15 Particular reference to council facilities includes Woodvale Park where ongoing improvements are recommended to preserve the status of the Victorian park. The Hybrid use building (HUB) idea is referred to in the report to animate Woodvale Park. Park rangers and improved lighting in the park are all recommended. The Council has also agreed to commit £1 million towards the refurbishment of Woodvale Park and BRO hopes to be able to commit a similar amount. This will make significant progress towards achieving aspirations for Woodvale Park and impact positively on quality of life, community safety, health and well-being and by working with the community on the refurbishment we hope that this can create greater community ownership and involvement.
- 3.16 It is important that there is an understanding of the capital requirements for developing existing space or new space, including leisure facilities and upgrading to the parks and open spaces. The Council is keenly aware of the desirability of these objectives but is constrained by an ever decreasing budget.
- 3.17 The Council also recommends that the SRF gives consideration to the real opportunities for the area to benefit from the Crumlin Road Gaol and the Courthouse development. Council welcomes this approach and would also recommend that consideration is given to other strategic developments such as the Titanic Quarter and North Foreshore
- 3.18 The Council also recommends that the SRF takes into account the Lower Shankill Masterplan.
- 3.19 The council commends the Greater Shankill SRF for having the aspiration to create an outward looking regeneration framework that offers the Shankill the best chance to connect with opportunities in Belfast. It is recommended that rather than searching for solutions and resources within areas there needs to be recognition of how areas can connect outwardly to the rest of the city. One limitation of an inward-looking approach is that it could lead to service duplication and a plethora of initiatives that stretches resources and ultimately dilutes the impact of potential actions and outputs.