

**Draft framework for employability and skills in
Belfast**

Executive summary for consultation

May 2015

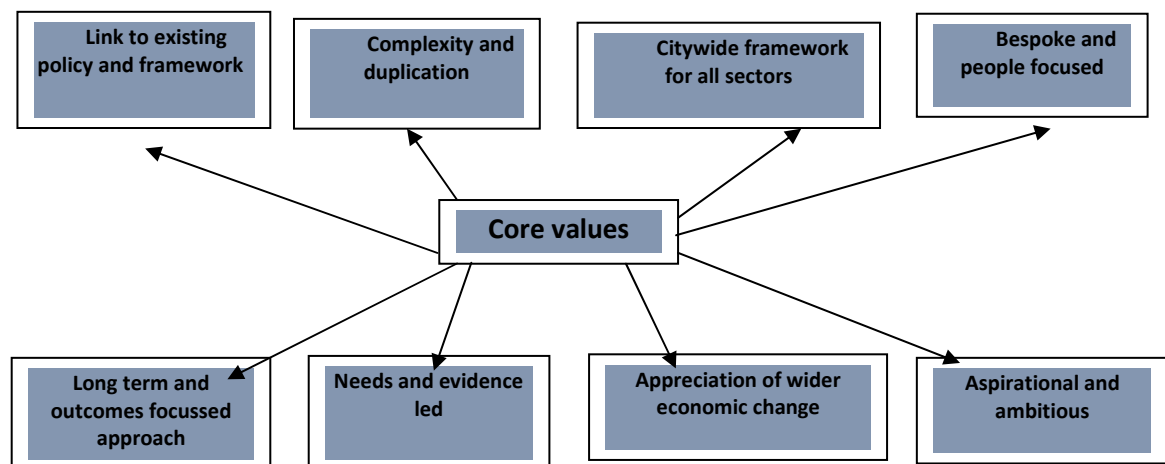
This Belfast Employability and Skills Framework and Action Plan for the period 2015 to 2025 details a suite of aims, objectives and activities that will drive the governance and delivery of employability and skills activities at a city wide level. The Executive Summary follows the structure of the main framework and action plan and details the key points.

Drivers of framework

There are four key drivers of the framework:

- The recently produced Integrated Economic Framework for Belfast and the emerging priorities of the Belfast Agenda
- The boundary changes associated with Local Government Reform and particularly new areas of deprivation
- The economic development and regeneration powers coming under Belfast City Council control in 2015 and 2016
- The long term challenges Belfast faces around employability and skills.

Core values of framework



The development of the employability and skills framework and action plan is framed by a number of core values in terms of the local context and the wider strategic fit.

First, it is framed by an intrinsic understanding of the intricacies of economic policy making in Northern Ireland, including contemporary debates about Corporation Tax. It links strategically therefore to existing policy and framework at regional government department and city level.

Second, it recognises that the existing strategic and delivery approach around employability and skills is complex in Northern Ireland and Belfast and there are a range of partners and associated significant duplication. There is poor alignment of funding streams which can lead to duplication of service and a skills mismatch.

Third, it is a framework and action plan for Belfast as a place and not just for Belfast City Council. It is therefore city wide with identified key roles for public, commercial and social sector organisations. The City Council has a key role however as a steward and enabler of framework and delivery activity.

Fourth, it is bespoke to Belfast and effectively challenges the common approach to employability and skills which is about attracting investment. It seeks to balance this investment approach with one focusing on people.

Fifth, it adopts an outcomes focused approach. It is therefore embedded in the priorities of the Programme for Government (2011-2015) and importantly the core outcomes of the Belfast Agenda of: a strong economy; happy people and communities; and a great place. It recognises that addressing employability and skills challenges is a significant and long term job and there are not necessarily any quick fixes. It is therefore a framework for a long term approach to employability and skills in Belfast and one which starts at year 0 in an individual's life.

Sixth, it is needs based recognising that demand and supply needs to be aligned to ensure labour market skills match employer demands, informed by labour market intelligence.

Seventh, it is based upon a recognition that Belfast sits within the wider context of global economic change. There are sectors of job growth and sectors of decline. The framework and action plan is considerate of this global economic change.

Eighth, it is aspirational and ambitious. It sets out a series of proposed interventions and actions which will lead to a fundamental shift in outcomes around employability and skills and which are linked to wider ambitions for the city around business growth and investment. Additionally, it sets targets which are stretching in relation to projections. The projections are assumptions of what will happen in the current economic and policy environment, without further interventions. The targets represent the additionality of what the framework will aim to achieve.

The role of Belfast City Council

Without the drive and will of the Council to secure buy in, and without processes to develop its effective delivery, the framework will not instigate the scale of change that is needed. Belfast City Council is in a unique position within the city, and is ideally placed to utilise its key strategic role to influence, cajole and drive forward the framework and action plan. Therefore the role of Belfast City Council must be one of strong stewardship, enabling and coordination. This is reflected in clearly defined ways:

- Coordination of governance: take the lead in drawing together the various partners involved in employability and skills, to ensure activity is coordinated.
- Coordination of delivery: to play the lead role in coordinating programmes of activity around employability and skills, where there are gaps in the market and gaps in the quality of provision (actual delivery will be through a range of partners).

Policy context

The Employability and Skills Framework is set in the context of Northern Ireland and Belfast level policy and framework. The diagram below illustrates the range of strategies which relate to the framework.



Baseline

The framework has a comprehensive baseline detailing the nature of employability and skills issues now and into the future. This draws on existing information and forecasts provided by Oxford Economics.

Economic overview

Belfast is a growing international centre and up to the economic downturn was one of fastest growing regional economies in the UK. Between 2002 and 2012, the total GVA of Belfast rose by 1.5% each year, and in 2012, 30.2% of Northern Ireland's economic output was attributed to Belfast.

However, despite the relatively strong growth of the city economy, there is still a very marked polarisation of those who are well qualified and those who have no qualifications or who are low skilled.

Job growth between 2012 and 2025 is forecast to be relatively limited at 4%, but there is forecast to be growth in the city employment rate to 70%.

In addition to the new growth in employment, it is important to consider that there will still be considerable demand across all sectors for replacement of staff who have left their jobs, meaning significant vacancy levels even in those sectors which are not going as rapidly.

The sectors of ICT; Professional, Scientific and Technical activities; Administrative and Support Services; and Human Health and Social Work activities are forecast to account for 76% of employment growth up to 2025.

Skills and employability issues

23% of the working age population in Belfast has no qualifications in 2012, according to Oxford Economics.

There is a significant over supply of lower skilled residents in Belfast, with more demand in the future being for higher skilled labour across many sectors. However there will be an improvement in the reduction in people with no qualifications (a continuation of the improvement over the last decade), and the supply of working age residents qualified to

Level 4 and above (graduate level and higher) will also increase, forecast at 34% compared to 28% in 2012. The challenge is to further accelerate these improvements.

The increase in supply of higher skilled residents however, will not match demand, and this will inevitably lead to an increase in net commuters with Level 4 qualifications or above.

Skills and employability issues are a continuing concern for Belfast employers. In 2013 a third of employers had difficulty recruiting, half of those due to lack of skills. Skills shortages are more acute in certain sectors and roles, notably skilled trades and also in professional, associate professional, caring and leisure, and elementary roles. Employability skills such as team working, planning/organisation, problem solving, and communication are a particular gap, whilst work experience and attitude are a much more frequent obstacle for young job seekers (and would be employers) than qualifications.

68,000 Belfast residents are classed as economically inactive (30.8%). Notably over half of this cohort are claiming out of work or 'other' benefits. Welfare reform will impact considerably upon these groups. Many of this inactive population are lower skilled and therefore less likely to be employed.

Only 9.3% of the working age population are self-employed. This is significantly lower than the 14.7% figure for Northern Ireland. This is also lower than in other UK cities such as Liverpool (10.8%), Manchester (14.4%), Newcastle (11.7%), Leeds (12.1%), and Sheffield (10.7%).

It is important to consider that post Local Government Reform, there will be an increased challenge for Belfast with more residents who have either no skills or are low skilled, with an additional 13,000 people who are economically inactive. This will present significant policy and delivery challenges.

The challenges associated with employability and skills

There are six key challenges associated with employability and skills in Belfast which were highlighted by the labour market assessment and the consultation:

1. The lack of employability skills across all sections of the working age population. These combine basic attitudes and abilities that are essential to work, as well as crucial generic skills that contribute to productivity and success from basic to high level roles. This is affecting not only those who are most marginalised from the labour market but also those leaving college and notably university. This is having knock-on effects for access to lower level jobs.
 2. Family cultures around schooling, education and the world of work are also affecting employability. In particular this has knock on effects for the ability to tackle the cycle of decline in some neighbourhoods, and for people to move into even the lowest levels of employment opportunity.
 3. The demographic aged over 25 lack general technical skills. A significant proportion of the working age population (aged over 25) have left school with no formal qualifications and have subsequently found it very difficult to move into employment. Similarly, there is a large number of over 40 year olds who have been affected by the decline of heavy primary industry and manufacturing, and have been unable to move back into employment with limited skill sets.
 4. The low levels of entrepreneurship in Belfast - a constrained entrepreneurial culture means that people are reliant on employment as a route into work. There is a need to link entrepreneurship in education and careers advice offers, and to build a stronger local support package for start-ups.
 5. Careers advice and access to work experience opportunities is poor. There is too little quality provision which enables young people in particular to get informed advice about their future.
 6. There is a significant amount of complexity and duplication in relation to provision around employability and skills. Interventions are being delivered by a wide range of stakeholders, with no real sense of joining up.
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Strategic framework

The following principles guide the Belfast Employability and Skills Framework and associated Action Plan. The principles are:

Ambition

Belfast's long term goal is to maintain and improve its position as the economic driver for Northern Ireland. This is as challenging as it is important, and it will only be achieved if it is ambitious and seeks radical change for the good of the whole city. Belfast must adopt a supportive and far sighted approach whereby the bigger picture is concentrated upon, and where there is the confidence to take the measured risks needed to catalyse change and innovation, learn from mistakes and celebrate progress.

Long term

An ambitious and transformative approach will require time, so Belfast must look ahead at future trends, issues and opportunities and plan for the long term. Belfast City Council will look to put in place approaches, projects and programmes that cover longer time spans, rather than short term interventions that chop and change and leave projects and organisations balancing delivery with the need to constantly search for future funding.

Joined up and holistic

Belfast City Council and its partners will develop strategies and deliver action in a joined up and integrated way that connects all the relevant organisations, plans and issues. That includes connections between Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland Government departments as well as across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors. For this employability and skills framework, connections to the new Belfast Integrated Economic Framework are vital, as are those to the Northern Ireland Skills Framework, and the forthcoming Belfast Agenda. For example, there are strong two way links between health and wellbeing and employment and skills, with issues like mental health and resilience important to both.

Outcome driven

Belfast City Council will focus on delivering tangible outcomes that contribute to wider goals and vision and which visibly benefit the people of Belfast – progress to the aspirational employment rate target being the prime example. Belfast City Council will factor this outcome led approach into decision making, resource allocations and monitoring. This

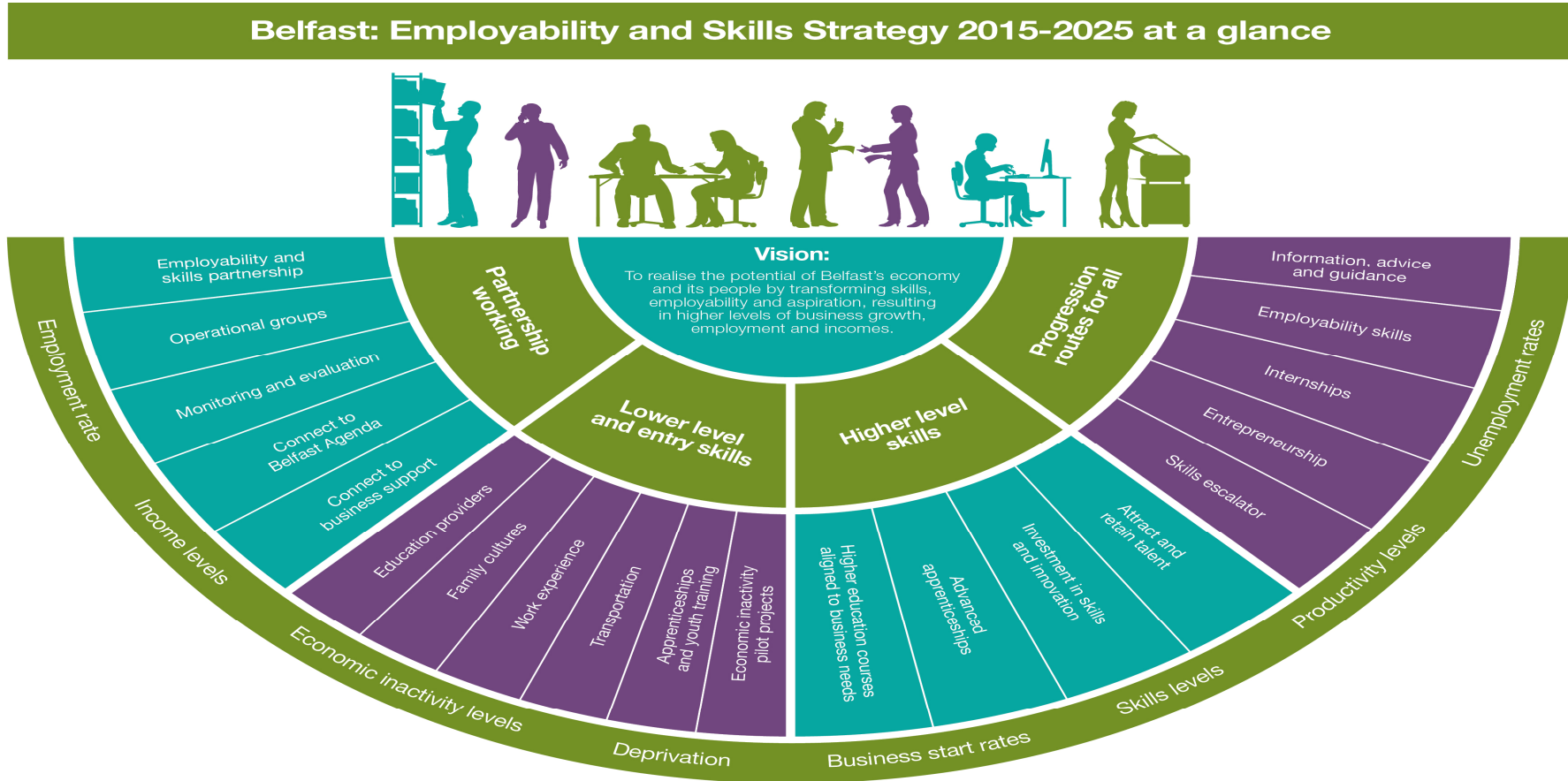
framework is therefore driven by the outcomes of the Belfast agenda and notably the overarching aims of: a strong economy; happy people and communities; and a great place.

City-wide

A strategic and joined up approach must also be a city-wide one. Delivering overall programmes for Belfast will be more efficient and effective than a myriad of smaller ones which risk duplicating activity, as is the case now where there is a confusing landscape of provision. Whilst the overall vision and programmes will be city-wide it is important to deliver through a 'hub and spoke' model that is sensitive to local challenges and opportunities, and can work with local organisations and communities in meeting specific needs. This approach will build on collaborative approaches between the voluntary and community sector across the city, as well as the role of central organisations which can deliver and manage programmes for the whole city.

Summary of vision, overarching aims, and objectives

This diagram summarises the vision, overarching aims, and objectives of the Belfast Employability and Skills Framework. A more detailed explanation of the overarching aims and individual objectives follow (please note any reference to Northern Ireland Regional Departments relates to existing structures).



Vision, targets and aims

The **vision** for the Belfast Employability and Skills Framework is:

‘To realise the potential of Belfast’s economy and its people by transforming skills, employability and aspiration, resulting in higher levels of business growth, employment and incomes’

Backing up this vision, the headline **target** is:

To achieve an employment rate that reaches at least 72% by 2025. The Oxford Economics baseline forecast is for a 70% employment rate by 2025.

This increase of 4.4 percentage points from 67.6% in 2013 to 72% in 2025 would mean moving an estimated 17,500 Belfast residents into work. When assessing the 2015-2025 period of this framework, it would mean moving an estimated 14,200 Belfast residents into work that pays (an average increase of approximately 1,400 per year over the ten year period/0.37 percentage points per year).

The overarching vision and target is supported by three supplementary stretching **sub-targets**:

- To reduce the proportion of the working age population with no qualifications from the 2012 baseline of 23% to between 9% and 12% by 2025. The Oxford Economics projection is 16% with no qualifications for 2025.
- To increase the proportion of the working age population with level two qualifications and above from the 2012 baseline of 64% to between 76% and 79% by 2025. The Oxford Economics projection is 72% for 2025.
- To increase the proportion of the working age population with level 4 qualifications and above from the 2012 baseline of 28% to between 37% and 39% by 2025. The Oxford Economics projection is 34% for 2025.

The baseline projections from Oxford Economics are assumptions of what will happen in the current economic and policy environment, without further interventions. The targets represent the additionality of what the framework will aim to achieve. The framework has four key aims, each supported by a suite of objectives. Actions associated with these aims

and objectives are specified in a comprehensive action plan. Actions identified are indicative and are subject to agreement by the relevant partnerships, once established.

Aims

1. To develop a coherent and city wide employability and skills partnership: The consultation and other desk based activities undertaken as part of this work has identified that whilst there is a myriad of activity going on around employability and skills in Belfast, there is little coordination, too much fragmentation and complexity. What is required is a means of joining together this disparate activity and providing a strategic, coherent and city wide approach to employability and skills, through an employability and skills partnership.
2. To provide a rounded and whole-life package of entry and lower level skills development and provision: a significant proportion of the Belfast resident population lack the very basic skills required to move into, and sustain employment. This is a whole life issue and is being affected by the culture in which children are brought up; the technical nature of the education sector; and the restructuring of traditional industry. There is therefore a need for Belfast City Council and other stakeholders to start at Year 0 in a person's life and provide a rounded and whole-life package of entry and lower level skills development and provision.
3. To generate higher level skills which meet the demands of employers and investors: the increase in the supply of labour with high level skills is not currently forecast to match the pace of demand. The consequence, based on previous trends, will be increased reliance on higher skilled commuters into the city over the next decade. This imbalance in the supply and demand of high level skills therefore requires action and is the focus of this aim - to develop more highly skilled Belfast residents.
4. To enable progression routes and employability skills for all: this aim is focused on ensuring that there are clear and accessible progression routes between entry/lower level skills and higher level skills, so that individuals can make the most of their potential through upskilling. This will bring developmental, career advancement and income benefits for individuals, and productivity benefits for their employers.

ACTION PLANS**Aim 1: to develop a coherent and city wide employability and skills partnership****Action plan for aim 1**

Objective	Activity	Time frame	Partners	Resource	Measure
Develop a strategic employability and skills partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agree partners – Engage key partners – Develop partnership and terms of reference and remit (identify Chair) – Meet on quarterly basis 	Short term	DEL, DSD, DE, Belfast City Council, Sector Skills Agencies, Higher and Further Education providers, recruitment agencies, business representative bodies, training providers, area partnerships, VCS	Existing Belfast City Council budget and in-kind partner time	Process evaluation of Partnership and its function
Develop an operational group to manage objectives 2, 3 and 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop resource structure to run operational group – Identify lead person with responsibility for partner engagement and pooling existing resource – Develop sub-group(s) – Identify and secure new resource – Design and commission activities – Monitoring and evaluation 	Short term	Employability and Skills Partnership (accountable body) Belfast City Council (coordinators)	Existing Belfast City Council budget and in-kind partner time	Evaluation plus performance against wider outcomes
Monitor and evaluate performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review performance framework for framework (linked to the Belfast Agenda), and monitor partnership and operational group 	Long term	Employability and Skills Partnership and operational group	Through existing budget (officer time) and targeted resource for MIS and programme	

Objective	Activity	Time frame	Partners	Resource	Measure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop common approach to data collection (Management Information System) 			coordination role within the Council.	
Connect to Belfast Agenda and economic framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure all activity is reflective of Programme for Government – Implement the Belfast Lifelong Learning Charter – Ensure all activity is framed within Belfast Agenda and connects to community planning and Integrated Economic Framework 	Short term	Employability and Skills Partnership and operational group	Through existing budget (officer time)	Belfast Agenda outcomes and bespoke measures
Connect into and influence business support system and Steps to Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Link into Strategic Economic Partnership and influence 	Medium term	Employability and Skill Partnership and operational group	Through existing budget (officer time)	Evidence of meaningful partnership working

Aim 2: to provide a rounded and whole-life package of entry and lower level skills development and provision**Action plan for aim 2**

Action	Activity	Time frame	Partners	Resource	Measure
To work collaboratively with DEL and DE to influence the attainment and attitudes of schools and further education providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage with DE, DEL and EA - Broker relationships between schools and business - Develop mentoring and meaningful work experience schemes - Use evidence to influence courses and teaching 	Long term	DE, DEL, EA, Schools, Further and Higher Education Providers, business representative bodies, sector skills agencies	Existing resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of Belfast schools engaging with businesses on a regular basis, for mentoring and work experience - Number of work experience opportunities offered to Belfast school children - Satisfaction levels of students and employers
To create a cultural shift in aspirations through engaging families with complex needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Link Belfast residents to family support programme 	Long term	DEL, DSD	Existing DEL family support programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of Belfast residents engaged in family support programme - Number of people entering, education, training or employment - Number of residents engaged who are employed for 6 months and over NEET levels - % of the population that are workless

Action	Activity	Time frame	Partners	Resource	Measure
To provide work experience opportunities and upskilling for those furthest away from the labour market and for those aged over 24, enhancing their employability skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review existing provision to support those furthest from the labour market. – Develop initiatives where gaps exists 	Medium term	Belfast City Council, voluntary and community sector, DEL, recruitment agencies, Steps2success providers and employers	Sizeable new resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Number of long term unemployed people gaining essential/basic skills – Number gaining job specific skills/qualifications; – Number entering work and are still employed after 6 and 12 months – Rising income levels
To join up with transport providers to connect people to skills and jobs opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engage with providers to explore feasibility of public transport incentives for selected demographics – Engage with providers and large investors to link neighbourhoods to job opportunities – Once established develop a citywide campaign, utilising local media 	Medium term	Translink	Existing resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Change in travel to work patterns of Belfast residents (e.g. increase and distance of public transport journeys) – Frequency, cost and directness of public transport linking disadvantaged areas and major centres of employment

Action	Activity	Time frame	Partners	Resource	Measure
To deliver more intermediate level apprenticeships and foster youth training through social clauses	Link employability and skills framework to investment framework	Medium term	Belfast City Council, further education providers and key investors and developers	Northern Ireland Apprenticeship Framework funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of apprenticeships created through capital investment and other development - Number of apprenticeships that result in full time paid employment - Number of apprentices in employment 6 months following its completion - % of employers having taken on an apprenticeship within the last 12 months - % of apprenticeships paying at least standard minimum wage for the age group - Youth unemployment/ NEET rates

<p>To work collaboratively with DEL & DETI, to support individuals identified as economically inactive into employment, taking account of all support measures required to assist</p>	<p>Link employability and skills framework to local aspect of Enabling Success Framework</p>	<p>Medium term</p>	<p>DEL, DETI</p>	<p>Enabling Success Framework funding, possible match funding from council and other partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of economically inactive people gaining employment - Number of economically inactive people developing new skills - Reduction in economic inactivity levels
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Aim 3: To generate higher level skills which meet the demands of employers and investors

Action plan for aim 3

Objective	Activity	Time frame	Partners	Resource	Measures
To work with Invest NI, employers and higher education providers to ensure course provision meets business needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broker relationship between business representative bodies and further and higher education providers - Increase direct employer involvement in design of HE course and sign off - Build on business-business forums which link with HEI - Increase work placements for undergraduate courses - Link into priority sectors identified in Integrated Economic Framework 	Medium term	Belfast City Council, universities, colleges, business representative bodies, sector skills agencies	Existing resource and 'in-kind' partner time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of, and participation levels on HEI/business knowledge exchange programmes and projects - Number of courses involving substantial local employer input into design - Number of degree courses with work placements of 6 months+ as standard, and number of placements completed annually - Number of graduates re-employed by placement employers at the end of the course - Number of graduates in graduate level jobs
To coordinate more higher and advanced level apprenticeships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local coordination of higher level apprenticeships through localised network - Engage with local businesses to drive up 		DEL, Belfast City Council, business representative bodies, Careers Information, Advice and Guidance Service (CIAGS), colleges, universities, DE.	Through existing budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of advanced and higher level apprenticeships started - Number (and %) of advanced and higher

Objective	Activity	Time frame	Partners	Resource	Measures
	apprenticeship numbers, particularly across key sectors.				apprenticeships completed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of advanced/higher apprentices moving into employment - Youth unemployment level
To attract and retain talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop cohesive and strong narrative espousing the 'offer' of Belfast for external talent pool and residents - Broker strong relationships with university careers services to promote the Belfast offer - Joined up approaches to developing graduate placements 		Belfast City Council, universities, business representative bodies, colleges, sector skills agencies	Existing budget and 'in kind partner time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of graduates in graduate level jobs - Number of jobs in knowledge intensive business sectors - Number of businesses offering work placements to graduates
To stimulate employers to invest in innovation, new markets and skills in order to close output gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Link into business support framework and influence to connect with skills - Scale up closer connections and networks between SMEs in key growth sectors and universities - Tap into business 		Belfast City Council, Invest NI, colleges, universities, business representative bodies	Primarily through existing budgets and 'in-kind partner time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of enrolments on leadership and management courses - Businesses assisted with skills needs - % of businesses training at least some of their workforce in the last 12 months - % of businesses

Objective	Activity	Time frame	Partners	Resource	Measures
	<p>networks (particularly SMEs) to further encourage local workforce participation in leadership and management courses, particularly those related to enterprise, managing innovation and organisational change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building local 'innovation networks' to provide mentoring, share ideas and articulate skills shortages 				<p>reporting innovation in product development or changes in internal processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % of graduates in graduate level jobs

Aim 4: To enable progression routes and employability skills for all**Action plan for aim 4**

Action	Activity	Time frame	Partners	Resource	Measures
Coordinate an enhanced programme of IAG with government departments, better connecting education and employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Training and briefing programme for IAG advisors on Belfast economy/businesses – Business visits and presentations to make pupils aware of career options and the skills they require – Produce & promote online fact sheets on jobs in different sectors (e.g. salaries, skills needed, competition for jobs) 	Medium term	Careers Information, Advice and Guidance Service (CIAGS), DEL, DE, businesses, schools, colleges, universities, sector skills agencies	Mainstream CIAGS resource, plus small resource to produce fact sheets and drive activity, and use of existing resources in schools/businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Number of pupils engaged in business visits/ presentations – More pupils choosing subjects required by Belfast businesses – Number of under graduates studying subjects required by businesses (e.g. STEM & ICT) – Qualitative satisfaction measures pupils, parents, schools, businesses
Coordinate and extend internships and placements with employers across the City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review existing mechanisms to coordinate and promote apprenticeships, internships and work placements – Develop new initiative (if required) to coordinate and promote apprenticeships, work placements and internships. 	Medium term	National Apprenticeship Service, DEL, Belfast City Council, business representatives, colleges, training providers and voluntary and community sector	To be determined, following a review of existing provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No. employers having taken on a placement in the last 12 months – Number of interns employed by their internship employer after completion and number in employment after 6 months + – % of placement students in employment or further study 6 months after graduating

Action	Activity	Time frame	Partners	Resource	Measures
Build enterprise, entrepreneurship and self-employment skills through targeted programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprise and business start up activity to be provided for aspiring and early stage business starts Create a referral services for individuals interested in starting a business from key employability partners to business start provision. 	Medium term	Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Task Force partners plus schools, DE and major providers (e.g. Young Enterprise NI)	Significant resource required for pre-enterprise, business start-up and sector specific start-up support. To be funded through existing council budgets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools and colleges delivering enterprise/self-employment education Number of pre-start engagements (events and activities) Number of people moving into self-employment and retained with Belfast Business start-up rates and number of start-ups by young people (18-24) Survival rates of new enterprises after 12 months and 3 years
Ensure opportunities for progression along the skills escalator at all levels, including individualised approaches	<p>Review existing mechanisms to support skill development along the skills escalator</p> <p>Develop new initiative (if required) to develop a 'person centred approach' with opportunities for a 'skills fund'.</p>	Short term Medium term (if required)	<p>Business representative organisations, businesses (including SMEs and key sectors)</p> <p>Belfast City Council, DEL, employers, universities, colleges and training providers, work programme providers, voluntary & community sector</p>	To be determined, following a review of existing provision. Potential for added value from council resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people gaining essential skills Number of people gaining job specific skills/qualifications Number of people entering work from unemployment and still in work 6 months later Number of people progressing into

Action	Activity	Time frame	Partners	Resource	Measures
					<p>higher skilled/higher paid work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of people who are workless and on health related out of work benefits - Number/% of businesses training at least some of their workforce within last 12 months - Higher median incomes

Action	Activity	Time frame	Partners	Resource	Measures
Enhance employability skills (pre and post-employment) and how they are developed through education, businesses and the voluntary and community sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop linkages between employers and educational partners to create core employability skills - Review the need to create specific initiatives to embed core employability skills 	Medium term	Schools, colleges, universities, employers, DEL, DE, Belfast City Council, sector skills councils	<p>Primarily through existing budgets and 'in-kind partner time.</p> <p>Resources to be identified for new initiatives, if required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of employers signing up to commitments as described by 'Employability Assured' - Number of skills gaps reported by employers - Levels of employment and average pay levels of jobs - Employer perceptions of the employability skills of new recruits - Unemployment level by age group - % of workless residents

Next steps

This employability and skills framework and action plan sets out an overarching framework for addressing the skills and employability challenge across Belfast. It can only be successful if implemented efficiently and effectively and with the buy-in of key partners across the city. Therefore, as outlined at the beginning of this document, Belfast City Council needs to take a lead role stewarding and coordinating, from the beginning of the process. The next key steps for the City Council and partners are as follows:

- Agree a governance structure: firstly, this means ensuring that partners across all sectors (public, commercial and social) become signed up to principles, aims and objectives of this framework. Concurrently a structure needs to be developed which determines the make-up and terms of conditions of the Employability and Skills Partnership, and determines the constitution of the operational group. In effect this means working to implement a number of the objectives of Aim 1.
- Develop key initiatives to deliver: the framework outlines a number of priority areas alongside the action plan, within which initiatives could be developed to create the step-change needed to deliver more effective and efficient employability and skills provision. Decisions will need to be made as to what extent initiatives developed and rolled out, to test the actions and initiatives within the framework.
- Development of an implementation plan: there needs to be an implementation plan drawn up which outlines how the framework and action plan will be delivered. This would incorporate the input of a number of partners but would be led and driven by Belfast City Council. It will link directly to the implementation plan of the Integrated Economic Framework, which details specific routes forward for a number of thematic areas, including employability and skills and enterprise and entrepreneurship.