

BEFAST CITY COUNCIL RESPONSE

Belfast City Council has identified older people as a priority within its current corporate plan and has fully committed to Belfast becoming an Age-friendly City. The Council therefore welcomes the production of this 3 year plan to improve the Age-friendliness of this city and fully commits to working through the Healthy Aging Strategic Partnership to deliver the actions agreed. The Councils contribution shall be overseen and monitored by its All Party Reference group on Older People.

The Council considers that implementation of this plan will make a significant improvement to the lives of all of our citizens, irrespective of their age and fully supports its implementation.

The Council wish to make the following further response:

Question 1

Do you agree with the vision of Age-friendly Belfast?

Our vision is that Belfast will be a city where older people live life to the full

Yes No If no, please give reasons

Belfast City Council agrees the overall vision proposed for Age-friendly Belfast.

Question 2

Do you agree with the 3 key themes and aims as set out below?

Theme: Age-friendly Image

Aim: Create and promote a positive view of ageing

Theme: Age-friendly Lives

Aim: Reduce life inequalities and isolation, and to encourage participation

Theme: Age-friendly Neighbourhoods

Aim: Create age-friendly neighbourhoods where older people participate, get active, feel safe, influence local decisions and where there are no barriers to active travel.

Yes No If no, please state which aim/s and give reasons

Belfast City Council supports the 3 themes and aims as set out in the Age-friendly Belfast Plan and believes working collaboratively towards these will help improve the city for all our citizens irrespective of their age. The Council recognises that the Age-friendly Plan supports and compliments many of the existing priorities for the city that the Council and partners are seeking to address. In particular encouraging respect, addressing poverty, reducing life inequalities, encouraging participation, giving communities more control of the decisions affecting them, improving neighbourhoods, activity and use of outdoor spaces.

Question 3

Do you support the Age-friendly actions we have secured commitment for under **Age-friendly Image?**

Yes No If no, please give reasoning

The Council recognises the importance of promoting respect across generations and in particular older people should be celebrated as a diverse and valuable resource to the city, economically, socially and culturally.

Following the pilot intergenerational project involving the Council's Youth forum it is recognised that the key to future success of intergenerational work is an age friendly city for all ages (as per WHO definition) which is a mutually beneficial approach to addressing a universal/ shared outcome, Council officers agreed they could develop an intergenerational protocol which will outline the terms for engagement across the age spectrum and in partnership in particular to safeguard both children and adults.

As part of the delivery of the Council's Children and Young People priority there is a focus on a key outcome for the council to deliver upon a city where CYP feel it is a place to be. Both the Youth Forum and Belfast Seniors shared and prioritised many universal issues therefore there is greater merit in the longer term ensuring an Age Friendly Belfast is both child friendly, older people friendly, in short friendly for all ages.

The Council is of the opinion that the commitment to intergenerational work is more than just delivery of a specific project. It is the role of the Council to champion and coordinate a range of intergenerational work. It is suggested that the action should be reworded as follows:

'Belfast City Council and the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership should champion intergenerational work and deliver a coordinated city wide approach building on the success of work between Belfast City Council Youth Forum and the Greater Belfast Seniors forum'

Question 4

Do you support the Age-friendly actions we have secured commitment for under **Age-friendly Lives?**

Yes No If no, please give reasoning

The actions planned to secure Age-friendly Lives are consistent and complementary to the existing priorities agreed within the Belfast Strategic Partnership's "Framework for Action to reduce life inequalities." The Council supports the proposed actions.

The following additions should be considered for inclusion under work already underway:

- Belfast City Councils free home safety check scheme for older people.
- Belfast City Council's Investment Programme 2012-2015, in particular the council's commitment to providing placement opportunities over the three year programme and the potential to work in partnership with older people's groups to assist with employability initiatives.

Question 5

Do you support the Age-friendly actions we have secured commitment for under **Age-friendly Neighbourhoods**?

Yes No If no, please give reasoning

The Council supports the actions proposed to develop Age- friendly neighbourhoods.

The Council suggests the following additions for inclusion under work already underway:

- Belfast City Council, through its Investment Programme, has committed over £250 million during 2012 -2015 to help improve the city. This programme includes physical investments, health and well being programmes and the Active Belfast initiative which will improve quality of life for all citizens including older people.
- Belfast City Council's "Leisure Transformation" programme represents a significant investment in leisure provision and centres across the city and will help to improve health and well-being; including for older people.
- Investment in Belfast City Council Community Centre IT suites will improve access to the internet and social media in local areas.

Question 6

Are you aware of other work that is taking place that you feel will link to the Age-friendly Plan, please describe?

See comments in questions 4 and 5

Question 7

Do you agree with the areas of research that need to be taken forward within the Age-friendly Plan?

Yes No If no, please give reasoning

It was suggested to include LGBT groups on the area of research point below. Whilst a focus group session was carried out with LGBT groups more information is required.

- Identify and research the current and future needs of minority groups in the city, including black and minority ethnic and LGBT older people, in Belfast

Question 8

Do you feel the actions outlined in the Age-friendly Plan will achieve the vision of Belfast being a city where older people live life to the full?

Yes it was agreed that the Age-friendly Plan will achieve the vision of Belfast being a city where older people live life to the full.

Question 9

Do you think the themes and aims outlined in the Action Plan will help promote equality of opportunity and/or promote good relations?

Yes No If no, please give reasoning

Yes, equality screening in line with Belfast City Council policies has been carried out.

Question 10

Do have any further comments for this plan?

Belfast City Council would like the plan to highlight the positive impact many of the initiatives shall have in promoting good relations across the City. The following paragraph is suggested for inclusion in the context section of the plan.

“The city of Belfast has undergone a process of transformation following years of conflict; the diversity of the city’s population continues to increase, however, segregation remains high. Many of the initiatives within this action plan will make a positive contribution to how we tackle these challenges and address respect, social inclusion and civic participation to develop the opportunities which an Age-friendly city brings.”

Please send your completed response to:

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