



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Belfast Healthy Cities – Phase VI (2014-2019) World Health Organization Designation
Date:	21 st March 2014
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Director of Health and Environmental Services
Contact Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Head of Environmental Health

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Belfast was first designated to the WHO European Healthy Cities Network in 1988; the city has been a key member of the five phases of the Network and recently celebrated its 25 th anniversary with a key event, at which Dr Agis Tsouros, Head of WHO European Healthy Cities, presented WHO Healthy City Awards to a range of projects across Belfast.
1.2	Belfast Healthy Cities, which operates through a Board of Directors from various statutory and voluntary agencies and a small staff team, has worked over the five phases of the initiative to place health and wellbeing on the policy agenda of all agencies within the city; to create an intersectoral approach across sectors; and to promote understanding and action to address inequity in health throughout the city.
1.3	The current WHO Healthy Cities Network phase came to an end in December 2013 and Phase VI of the Network will operate from 2014 – 2019. There are two stages to the application process. As a first stage, an expression of interest letter was presented jointly on behalf of Belfast by Dr Eddie Rooney and the Lord Mayor to Dr Agis Tsouros, whilst he was in Belfast on 28 November 2013, following approval by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting in November 2013. The expression of interest letter was accepted by WHO and Belfast was invited to submit an application as a city that had been active in delivering on the Phase V themes. The second stage involved the Lord Mayor hosting a workshop on 10 January with key stakeholders in the city to identify the priorities in the Belfast Phase VI application.
1.4	Belfast Healthy Cities (BHC) complements the work of the Belfast Strategic Partnership and other organisations advocating the linkages between health, improving quality of life and inequalities. Given the changing role of local government with the review and new functions coming into Council during this new Phase VI (2014-2019) period may provide opportunities for BHC to support the Council in specific work programmes. BHC also supports specific work programmes within the Belfast Strategic Partnership, leading the work on Regeneration & Healthy Urban Environments and contributing to the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership and to the Active Belfast/Active Travel group.
1.5	It is important that the work of Healthy Cities moving forward continues to build more complementarity with the work of the Belfast Strategic Partnership and the future community planning process to be led by the Council.

1.6	A benefit of being a member of the World Health Organization European Healthy Cities Network is the promotion of Belfast on the international stage as a leading example of innovative practice in intersectoral working. BHC is very successful in bringing expert speakers to build knowledge within the city on key health and equity issues.
1.7	The World Health Organisation (WHO) European Healthy Cities Network was established in 1987, initially with just 11 cities committed to collaborating with WHO, focused on local action for health and health equity. Twenty five years on, the Network has a limit of 100 cities as designated members, alongside some 30 national members involving more than 1,400 cities and towns similarly committed to Healthy Cities values and ways of working.
1.8	The Head of Environmental Health is currently a member of the Belfast Healthy Cities Board of Directors. The Chair of the Health and Environmental Services Committee is considered to be the lead politician representing Belfast at the European business meetings. The Council is also one of the core funders of the organisation and its programmes. Other key funders are the Public Health Agency, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Belfast Health & Social Care Trust.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The two strategic goals of Phase VI are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving health for all and reducing health inequalities ▪ Improving leadership & participatory governance
2.2	There are four core themes to be addressed during the Phase VI period and the Phase VI workshop identified the following priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Theme 1: Life course and empowering people - the priorities will include early life; older people and health literacy ▪ Theme 2: Public health priorities - the priorities will be mental well-being; physical activity, obesity and transport ▪ Theme 3: Strengthening people city services and public health capacity – the priority will be to strengthen the capacity of officers and politicians across sectors ▪ Theme 4: Creating resilient communities & supportive environments - the priorities will be healthy urban planning & design; climate change & healthy transport
2.3	The detailed action plans will be finalised during the coming months with key stakeholders across the city.
2.4	WHO requires that the Phase VI application by the city is endorsed by the City Council through the Lord Mayor's office. The Committee is therefore asked to support the application for Belfast to apply for re-designation to the WHO healthy cities network Phase VI (2014-2019). The application to be submitted by the BHC office on behalf of the Lord Mayor is attached as Appendix 1

3	Resource Implications
3.1	Financial: At the 5 September 2012 Health & Environmental Services Committee, it was approved that funding to Belfast Healthy Cities should be maintained for three years at £89,586 until March 2016. The approval of the provision of this funding within the Revenue Estimates for 2015/16 will, however, now need to be given by the Shadow Council. Healthy Cities also intends to make a further bid for funding for the full Phase VI project at a later date. However, further reports will need to be brought through the appropriate governance structures in this regard.
3.2	Human Resources: These can be accommodated within current workloads.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None

5	Recommendations
	<p>It is recommended that the Committee</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supports the application of Belfast to the World Health Organisation for re designation to Phase VI (2014-2019) of the European Healthy Cites Network. 2. Recommends that the lord Mayor formally supports the application on behalf of the city

6	Decision Tracking
	None required

7	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>WHO – World Health Organization BHC – Belfast Healthy Cities</p>

8	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 Belfast WHO application Phase VI