



BELFAST CITY COUNCIL RESPONSE

DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

Belfast City Council (the Council) welcomes the opportunity to consider and input into the development of the new Programme for Government (PfG) 2016-2020 and associated draft Delivery Plans.

The draft PfG and delivery plans had been considered by the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 16 December with the enclosed corporate response agreed. This response remains subject to ratification by Full Council on 3 January 2017 and we will inform you at that stage if there are any changes made.

The response enclosed addresses itself not only to the PfG and associated delivery plans, it also seeks to inform the development of the key strategies which will underpin the PFG including the NI Investment Strategy, NI Economic Strategy and NI Social Strategy, which are still to emerge.

It is clear that these documents are interrelated and will collectively shape the future direction of public investment within Northern Ireland. The Council believe that these documents present a huge opportunity to redesign how we work together across government and sectors to create a new collaborative partnership which supports co-design and shared delivery.

The response is set out in two parts; the first is an overview of the key strategic issues which the Council would recommend be considered when finalising the PfG and related strategies under development. The second part sets out feedback on the emergent 'Delivery Plans' linked to the PFG outcomes and indicators. These comments will be submitted directly to the senior responsible officers for the relevant delivery plans.

1. Introduction and overview

The Council believes that the draft Programme for Government is presented at a time of both exciting opportunity and huge challenge for Northern Ireland. Given the growing trend towards greater globalisation and the uncertainties presented by the EU Referendum, there is a need to develop new integrated approaches to ensuring the region remains competitive on a national and international scale, ensure we continue to attract investment and connect economic growth and social wellbeing.

The Council looks forward to working in partnership with the NI Executive and government departments to co-design and support the delivery of the ambitious and challenging programmes of work that are required to achieve the outcomes set out within the PfG. Given the synergies between the PFG outcomes and the ambitions emerging from the Community Plan for the city (Belfast Agenda), there is a real opportunity to co-design impactful programmes and initiatives which will help address many of the entrenched societal and economic issues impacting upon local communities across Northern Ireland.

(i) Supporting Regional Growth & Prosperity

The Council welcomes the recognition and commitment given within the PfG and commitment "strengthening Belfast as the regional economic driver". Over the past twenty-five years successful cities have become the main source of both national and global economic productivity. This is also true here in Northern Ireland where Belfast's role has become pivotal to the health and success of the wider regional economy. A successful Belfast is critical to the future wellbeing of everyone living in the region.

As recognised in the Regional Development Strategy, Belfast provides key networking and connectivity functions for the region as a whole. Combined with its offer of retail, cultural, entertainment, educational and visitor opportunities, Belfast is a key attractor and anchor for Foreign Direct Investment – the benefits of which extend across the NI Region. The ‘clustering’ of specific types of economic activity in and around Belfast provides beneficial agglomeration effects which are vital to increased productivity in the city-region and NI as a whole.

With an increasingly globalised economy, regional economic distinctiveness is a major source of comparative advantage. Belfast has its own functional metropolitan economic area extending to the adjacent councils of Lisburn & Castlereagh, Mid and East Antrim, Antrim and Newtownabbey, and Ards & North Down, accounting for over 51.6 per cent of the total population of Northern Ireland, 57 per cent of all jobs and 57 per cent of the region’s GVA. It is also important that the connections between cities (e.g Belfast, Derry/Londonderry and Newry) and key economic drivers, such as the Eastern Corridor, are strengthened if the economic benefits and associated growth are to be delivered.

The argument is not being made here that the focus should only be on the cities, or that these trends, if not carefully managed, are all healthy. It is recognised that whilst people and certain parts of the FDI market will focus on cities as a place to locate there is a distinct role for regional and local government to work together to deliver a sustainable and inclusive model of growth for those key urban areas as well as ensuring that the wider region benefits and competes for specific sectors.

Creating a city-region focus at scale provides the critical mass to deliver many of the economic and social outcomes listed in the PfG. It is important to recognise that more than half of those employed in Belfast travel from outside the council boundary; the economic growth created within Belfast is distributed across the region.

Belfast is therefore a vital asset with the most potential to drive the regional economy. However, in terms of growth and productivity the statistics show that Belfast is not maximising its potential, and consequently lags behind other cities in the UK, Europe and other developed countries. If current levels of performance are maintained Belfast and, in turn, Northern Ireland will fall further behind its global competitors.

(ii) Co-Designing Place-Based Interventions

While there are clear signs of recovery in the Belfast economy, there are a number of challenges around economic growth which need to be addressed including, an over reliance on public sector jobs; an underdeveloped business start-up environment with low entrepreneurship levels; a workforce which is strongly divided between the highly educated and the unskilled; an aging city urban infrastructure that needs renewed if it is to meet the demands of a twenty-first century economy.

While certain parts of the city has benefited from growth, our most deprived neighbourhoods remain marginalised and disconnected from wider success. 9 out of the 10 most deprived SOA’s in Northern Ireland are in Belfast. Division and segregation continue to put a brake on the potential of many people and communities. In particular health, education and economic inequalities remain high with deprivation and need continuing to be a major stressor and contributor to marginalisation within the city.

Again, the Council would wish to work in partnership with central government in developing the specific delivery plans and co-designing place-based solutions to deliver the PfG outcomes and improving people’s wellbeing.

In compiling our response to this consultation, we found it easier to identify those areas where the Council is keen to work with the Executive to deliver the ambitions within the Programme for Government and also those areas where we have a specific ‘ask’ for further support. A summary of those is provided in the following section and is arranged around the main themes of the Programme for Government. Later sections provide more detail on your specific outcomes.

Executive Summary

Growing the Economy	Programme for Government Outcomes: 01) We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy 02) We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment 03) We have a more equal society 05) We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential 06) We have more people working in better jobs 12) We have created a place where people want to live, to work, to visit and invest
Priority Asks and Co-design opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City-Regional Growth Deal which will bring benefits to the whole region - Transfer of Regeneration Powers and supporting integrated approaches to regeneration - City Centre Development and Infrastructure Investment (including new Tourism Infrastructure, North East Quarter, Belfast Streets Ahead, East Bank , North Foreshore, Grade A Office Space and Hotels) - Harnessing innovation to drive growth – use of information technology and better data management to support future economic growth. The SMART Cities approach is both scalable and transferable to other cities and towns across the region and should be included in the PfG - Digital Connectivity –investment in important digital infrastructure and enabling online access for businesses, communities and citizens across the city. - Inclusive Growth Programme – ensuring that as many people as possible contribute to and benefit from economic success - Local Pathways to Skills and Employability– building upon the emerging Belfast Works model - Potential devolution of funding to support local employment and skills development including any opportunities presented by the Apprentice Levy. - Urban Resilience – ability of cities to respond to economic, social and environmental shocks & stresses. - Supporting business start-up /growth, entrepreneurship & innovation - inc. infrastructure investment - Supporting International Relations and Foreign Direct Investment - Culture and Arts participation – development of an integrated cultural and arts strategy for Belfast - New World Class Visitor Attraction – wish to work in partnership to bring forward a second major world class tourism attraction (the Belfast Story) to the region 	

Sustainability & Environment	Programme for Government Outcomes: 02) We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment
Priority Asks and Co-design opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waste Infrastructure - maximising opportunities presented by the circular economy to transform approach to waste management; supporting economic growth, innovation and job creation. - Energy from Waste – opportunity to transform waste into other usable energies (e.g. electricity, fuel) - Biodiversity – cross-government approach and financial commitment required - Flood Protection – high risk for the city and region with significant financial consequences 	

Infrastructure Investment	Programme for Government Outcomes: 13) We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure
Priority Asks and Co-design opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infrastructure Plan for City-Region and Economic Corridors – linked to regional framework - Financing Infrastructure – utilising innovative funding models including private/public co-financing - Infrastructure Priorities - including Belfast Transport Hub, York Street Interchange, Living with Water, Digital Infrastructure, Energy Security, Belfast Rapid Transit, City Centre Parking & Connectivity, enhancing cycle network, improving streetscape - One public estate - better use of public assets to unlocking development and regeneration opportunities and potentially financing infrastructure investment. - Transport – commitment from DfI on the implementation of policies to reduce congestion in Belfast and encourage a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport - Housing – ensuring future supply of housing matches projected need in terms of population growth, location, house sizes, types and tenures. Linkages to planning and emerging Local Development Plan. 	

Addressing Inequalities	Programme for Government Outcomes: 03) We have a more equal society 04) We enjoy long, healthy, active lives 06) We have more people working in better jobs 08) We care for others and we help those in need 11) We have high quality public services
Priority Asks and Co-design opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Addressing Life inequalities – working with partners through the delivery of a ‘Making Life Better’ Strategy to co-design placed-based approaches to addressing education, health and employment inequalities - Co-design local skills and ‘employability pipeline’ – building upon the Belfast Works emerging model - Development of a cross government and cross-sectoral approach to address poverty and social inequalities – linked to the emerging Regional Social Strategy. - Integrated Services - Opportunities to co-locate public services in public owned assets (e.g. Girdwood Community Hub) - Access to suitable housing – highlight the crucial role of local government through our planning functions and the zoning of land for housing through our local development plan process. - Wish to work with all partners to develop an integrated programme to address health inequalities, including enhancing mental well-being and reducing social inclusion. - Co-design measures to ensure an Age-Friendly Belfast and plan effectively to meet the needs of older people in the city, addressing social isolation, poverty, access to suitable housing and healthy aging. - Age discrimination legislation – call upon the Executive Office to extend Age Discrimination legislation to include the provision of goods, services and facilities. - Suggest that PfG make explicit reference to respecting and protecting the wellbeing of older people given the changing demographics of our society and the fact that other groups are referred to. 	

Safe, Equal and Inclusive Society	Programme for Government Outcomes: 07) We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other 09) We are a shared society that respects diversity 10) We are a confident, welcoming, outward looking society 14) We give our children and young people the best start in life
Priority Asks and Co-design opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-design local interventions with the Council and the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships to support community safety and develop community confidence. - Integrated Shared Space and Interfaces Programmes - creation of shared space (and multi-use places) - better alignment of funding integration with other physical investment schemes within the city. - Use of social innovation to unlock service transformation – working with city partners and residents to co-design and deliver socially innovative solutions that can be adopted at scale across the city and beyond. - Co-design an integrated, inter-agency approach to early intervention including early years support and family programmes. - Right to play – recognition of the UNCRC Article 31 right to play to be included in the PfG alongside measures to assess how departments and agencies are meeting this right - Co-delivery of programmes such as the Ask First model, aimed at ensuring our young people are listened to and are valued, and that they are given the opportunity to confidently shape their own future - Co-design the proposed Respect Index 	

Comments on Specific PfG Outcomes

Outcome 1: ‘We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy’

The Council believes that a thriving and prosperous economy will be a key contributor to delivering many of the outcomes set out within the PfG. As the region’s capital city, major population centre and the hub for business and employment, Belfast City-Region has a critical role in driving forward Northern Ireland’s future economic competitiveness and growth.

Belfast already has a proven track record in attracting foreign direct investment. The city continues to offer favourable economic conditions including competitive labour costs; a pool of skilled graduates; and a growing international reputation as a venue for major events and tourism. Global trends tell us of the importance of growth in new sectors including financial technologies, cyber security, film and animation, connected health, advanced engineering, film/creative industries etc.

To build on our strengths and prepare for the future, systemic issues need to be addressed by all partners. For example, the city continues to suffer from high economic inactivity and relatively low rates of business start-up. And whilst we do have high skills levels in some areas in others, too many people don’t have the skills they need to succeed. There is still a substantial fiscal deficit demonstrating that the city needs higher levels of productivity. Northern Ireland still has an imbalance between our private and public sector. It is important to recognise that economic inactivity will not be addressed by economic means alone, rather a ‘whole system’ approach considering societal issues, refocusing cultural expectations and building ambitions is needed.

As a result Belfast has shown limited improvement in its competitiveness in the past five years when compared to 40 European cities. To be competitive at an international level, Belfast needs to tackle these underlying and inter-connected issues with innovative and collective action.

The Council believes that rebalancing the economy by encouraging private sector investment and supporting market diversification is essential for generating sustainable growth, increasing productivity and creating diverse and well paid jobs not only in Belfast but across the region. Central to this is improving the skills and employability levels. It is important that as many people as possible benefit from growth and the city's success – extending well beyond the city boundaries.

The Belfast Agenda (community plan for the city), currently out for consultation, sets out the following economic goals for the next four years.

- Create 15,000 new jobs
- Attract £1billion of private sector Foreign Direct Investment
- Support 4,000 small business start-ups
- Double the economic value of out-of-state tourism
- Welcome 1.5million overnight tourists stays per year

We want to work alongside our partners including the NI Executive to ensure delivery and bring significant benefit to the wider city-region.

Priority Asks / Co-Design Opportunities

The Council believes that the following could act as key catalysts for change and help further enhance the economic competitiveness of the region and should be built into the PfG.

- (i) **City-Region Growth Deal** – we are working with our local government colleagues (economic geographies can create the conditions to unlock future growth potential within the city-region, help deliver economic growth, transform public services and close the gap on inequalities.

Real opportunity to work in partnership with the Executive and Treasury to secure necessary funding, including the ability of council to borrow against growth, to plug deficits in key infrastructure and regeneration development schemes. The ability to access innovative financial mechanisms available in other cities (such as Land Value Capture, earn back rates growth schemes, ensuring public and private sector investment is integrated through co-invest Ventures, Asset backed Vehicles, use of Financial Transactions Capital etc.) could help accelerate infrastructure modernisation including sewage and energy security, and address connectivity issues.

- (ii) **Regeneration Powers** – despite the recent announcement by the Communities Minister that regeneration powers will not transfer to local government, the Council would strongly advocate that there is a commitment within the PfG that these important place-shaping functions transfer and complement the existing planning and economic development functions of councils.

If Belfast and Northern Ireland are to remain competitive and continue to attract investment, it will be important that we can respond to the needs and demands of potential investors. Experience has shown that such investors are seeking a one-stop shop approach to bringing forward development schemes in liaison with local councils instead of having to engage with multiple agencies.

- (iii) **Economic Forum** – in pursuance of a solid, partnership-based delivery approach to stimulating and driving economic growth for the city and city-region, the Council is in the process of forming an economic forum with the NI Executive, other city partners including the private sector. This forum will drive forward the achievement of our common economic goals and develop joint solutions to shared challenges.

This partnership will create an effective economic strategy for Belfast and the city-region, which supports and complements the Executive's strategy for economic growth. It will build a coherent

and evidence-based approach to improving city competitiveness, job creation and support for business. It will deliver long-term strategies for key growth sectors, including retail, hotel, office development, financial tech and creative industries, as well as export-led strategies to support business growth.

- (iv) **Inclusive Growth Programme** – The Council welcomes the commitment to adopt a ‘Local Works’ approach to improving employability and skills and would wish to work alongside central government and employers to ensure that people have the right skills to access and progress through employment and ensure a better match to business needs.

The Council is already developing an inclusive growth programme that fosters placed based growth which seeks to maximise the social and economic benefits of our investment; creating jobs and opportunities for residents to enter the workforce alongside providing accessible routes to employment through training and skills development.

The Council is aware that when the city’s economy grows it doesn’t mean that everyone is better off. Growth can pass many people and communities by unless we take steps to link that growth to better outcomes for everyone. The Council is already working with partners to develop and roll-out **a Belfast Works Employability Pathway** which is scalable and transferrable.

The Council would also recommend that consideration be given to the emerging findings of the RSA Inclusive Growth Commission (<https://www.thersa.org/action-and-research/rsa-projects/public-services-and-communities-folder/inclusive-growth-commission>) and the potential transferrable lessons for Northern Ireland.

- (v) **Resilience** – the Council believes that resilience is a key issue cutting across many of the PfG outcomes and can directly affect the economic, social and environmentally well-being of society and should therefore be given specific focus within the PfG.

The ability of localities to be able to bounce back from significant shocks and stresses as well as addressing many of the interconnected challenges that is restricting future success – systematic weaknesses in our economy, generational deprivation and inequalities and our aging infrastructure needs to be given attention.

The Council has been selected to join the Rockefeller Foundation’s 100 Resilient Cities who will support the city to create its first resilience strategy. This work will draw upon world-class expertise to explore the long term critical social, environmental and economic resilience issues in the city including unemployment, social unrest, energy, transport systems and water management. The Council would wish to work in partnership with the NI Executive and local government colleagues to bring this work forward and share any emerging learning and new approaches.

- (vi) **Business Start-Up and Growth** – The Council would wish to work in partnership with the NI Executive and Department for the Economy to develop a growth strategy to support key economic sectors and create an environment that fosters business start-up and growth which can be scalable and transferable across the region. The Council is committed to supporting innovation and has recently invested £9.2m (with ERDF support) in a new Innovative Factory that supports growth across the innovation eco-system.

- (vii) **International Relations and Foreign Direct Investment** – The Council welcomes the focus on enhancing international relations and trade connections and would wish to work alongside the NI Executive and Invest NI to ensure alignment and complementarity with our Belfast International Relations Framework to build on the success to date to maximise the future economic growth, FDI and export potential of Northern Ireland.

- (viii) **Harnessing innovation to drive growth** - The Council believes that utilising information technologies and better data management can support future economic growth. Work is underway with local universities, digital SMEs and the third sector to design and deliver a ‘**Smart Belfast Framework**’ that will build the necessary foundations required to generate innovative solutions to address major city challenges while also supporting the SME sector to develop world class products. Again, the Council believe that the **SMART Cities approach** would be a model which is scalable and transferable to other cities and towns across the region and should be included in the PfG.

Also impacts positively on the following PfG outcomes:

- Outcome 2 We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment
- Outcome 3 We have a more equal society
- Outcome 6 We have more people working in better jobs
- Outcome 10 We are a confident, welcoming outward looking society
- Outcome 12 We have created a place where people want to live, to work, to visit and invest

Outcome 2: ‘We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment

The Council has a significant role in supporting the delivery of this outcome in terms of delivering its statutory duties and services, its role as the planning authority and preparing the new Local Development Plan (spatial) which will have creating a sustainable city at its core.

Priority Asks / Co-Design Opportunities

- (i) **Waste Infrastructure & Circular Economy** - Whilst waste management is a statutory duty of councils it incurs significant costs for both local and central government. There is a real opportunity to rethink our approach to waste management to move beyond the current focus on simply achieving landfill and recycling targets to maximising the potential presented through the circular economy to support business growth, innovation and job creation.

The Council notes the passing reference to the Circular Economy contained within the PfG document but believes that there should be a stronger commitment to developing a cross-government approach. Provides major opportunities to transform the way in which waste is managed in Northern Ireland but also drive economic growth and create employment opportunities. A circular economy approach will:

- reduce waste
- drive greater resource productivity
- deliver a more competitive economy
- position NI to better address emerging resource security/scarcity issues in the future
- help reduce the environmental impacts of our production and consumption

The core vision of the circular economy is of replacing the current largely linear economy of ‘make, use, dispose’ in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recover and regenerate products and materials and the end of each service life. This approach recognises and realises the true value of waste as a resource; the potential increased income generated helping to offset costs to local government. It will also help drive economic and business growth across the region by providing wider economic opportunities for the private and third sectors, by supporting innovation, job creation and increased profitability across the industry.

A recent report prepared by WRAP, commissioned by ReNEW (Resource Innovation Network for European Waste), examining the future employment prospects of the Circular Economy for Northern Ireland indicates that at an optimum case a transition to Circular Economy methods and models could be expected to create between 5,500 and 13,000 new jobs by 2030.

- (ii) **Waste Targets** - The Council note that there are no waste targets in the PfG but that these are contained within the Delivery Plans. The Council would recommend that the relevant target (EU Waste Framework Directive target of 50% waste from households recycled / composted by 2020) be highlighted in the main body of the PfG and not just in the relevant delivery plan.
- (iii) **Biodiversity** - The move to include an indicator on water quality and to develop a biodiversity indicator is welcomed and is seen as a very positive progression.

The Council note however that NI is failing on biodiversity targets and that the trend is downward. There is a critical need to invest in the environment to ensure economic prosperity, for example, investment in upland habitat management can alleviate flooding and reduce the costs of water purification.

The Council would like to see a commitment within the PfG for significant investment in biodiversity. A commitment to mainstreaming biodiversity across all government departments and capacity building within both central and local government is required in order to address these issues.

- (iv) **Energy from Waste (EfW)** - A commitment to supporting the strategic infrastructure for waste could be more clearly defined and expanded upon within the PfG. Whilst EfW, as a form of waste treatment can result in additional recycling (and help meet waste related targets), one of its major benefits is that the energy produced can be a valuable domestic energy source related to energy security.
- (v) **Levies to change consumer behaviour** - The Council feel that consideration should be given to using levies to encourage either a change in consumers' waste generating behaviour (as per the plastic bag levy) or to entice new developments such as a subsidy for 'good' products.
- (vi) **Flood Protection** - It is also suggested that specific measures to manage flood risk are included under this outcome. The Scottish model makes reference to 'well-designed, sustainable places' and includes a sustainable approach to flood risk management within this. There is a similar NI indicator to 'improve the supply of suitable housing' however it is proposed that specific references to increasing the number of homes and businesses which are not at risk of flooding and sustainable flood risk management are also important indicators. According to the NI Regional Risk Register (compiled by Civil Contingencies Group NI) flooding remains one of the top risks in Northern Ireland and should be included in the PfG.

By way of example the 2015 Belfast Tidal Flood Risk Study produced by Atkins identified that constructing a coastal flood defence for Belfast would cost £12million but it is estimated that it would save £120m each time it prevented Belfast from flooding. This is alongside preventing the significant non-financial impacts on residents, businesses and protecting the reputation of Belfast and Northern Ireland.

Also impacts positively on the following PfG outcomes:

- Outcome 1 We prosper through a strong, competitive regionally competitive economy
- Outcome 5 We are an innovative creative society where people can fulfil their potential
- Outcome 6 We have more people working in better jobs
- Outcome 11 We have high quality public services
- Outcome 13 We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure

Outcome 3: 'We have more equal society'

The Council welcomes and supports the focus on this outcome and its definition. Belfast must provide the opportunity for all its residents to lead healthy, engaged and fulfilling lives and are empowered to reach their full potential at every stage of life. Despite the growth experienced by the city over recent decades there still remains significant long-standing societal challenges which require a step-change in approach to addressing including concentrations of economic, educational and health inequalities.

Seven of the ten most deprived wards and nine of the most deprived Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland are in Belfast. This has a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of our residents. Suicide rates in the 10 per cent most deprived areas are almost five times higher than those in 10 per cent least deprived. Similarly, the gap in the life expectancy between the 10 per cent most and least deprived areas in Northern Ireland is approximately 10.7 years for Males and 7.7 years for females.

It is important that measures are taken to create a more equal society and to ensure people enjoy a high quality of life.

The Programme for Government rightly emphasizes the importance of place-based solutions to deal with long-standing problems particularly in terms of economic, educational and health inequalities. It is important that measures are taken to create a more equal society and have more people working in better jobs reflect the concentration of issues in urban areas - simply focusing on addressing the urban/rural distribution of jobs will not have the impact needed to turn the curve.

The Council is fully committed to providing the opportunity for all of our citizens to lead healthy, engaged and fulfilling lives as part of a vibrant

Priority Asks/ Co-Design Opportunities

- (i) **Addressing Life Inequalities** – The Council believes that working with our partners (including central government) through the delivery of the 'Making Life Better' strategy within the context of the Belfast Agenda provides a real opportunity to address many of these inequalities and achieving improved wellbeing outcomes for people – which underpins the PfG ambitions.
- (ii) **Whole System approach to Community Planning** - The Council welcomes the recognition within the PfG of the significant opportunity provided by the community planning process to support integrated place-based interventions. However, if this opportunity is to be realized it will require more than the will to do it, specific pieces of co-design are necessary so that there are connected approaches to developing and implementing economic and social policy. Whilst the economy features extensively in both the Programme for Government and local community plans; there is a danger that economic strategies will be developed separately at regional and local level when what is needed is a whole system approach designed to play to the strengths of the many stakeholders needed to effect change.

The Council must be involved in the design as well as the delivery of the economic, social and infrastructure strategies. We need to plan specific engagement to make this happen and whilst we welcome the opportunity to feed directly into SROS on draft proposals, the co-design approach needs to be explicit throughout final delivery plans.

The Council have included examples within the Delivery Plans highlighting our range of provision across the social and economic strata of the whole community – through our assets (community centres) and funding provision; best in class engagement with both young and old people; support for employability and skills through our Super Connected Communities outreach; support of the voluntary sector as a 'Learning City' and the lessons which we are taking from our emerging Resilience Strategy which aims to build a confident population and peaceful city.

- (iii) **Employability Pipeline** - The Council supports the proposal to design and implement an “employability pipeline” model in which jobs in growth sectors are ring-fenced for economically inactive clients who are then supported to access these through skills building, employability and mentoring provision and welcomes the opportunity to co-design this and sees this as a good example of the “whole system” approach to achieving outcomes and ensuring people are supported to access better jobs.

Work has been underway within Belfast to develop a placed-based employability and skills pathway ‘Belfast Works’, referred to earlier, which the council believes is scalable and transferrable. Partners in Belfast feel that it is important that resources are effectively targeted in order that we can achieve momentum with the project and quickly demonstrate potential; therefore it is proposed that the first focus would be on those aged 16-24 with low or no qualifications and no job.

- (iv) **Age Discrimination Legislation** - The Council recently passed a notice of motion to call upon the Northern Ireland Executive Office to take immediate steps to extend Age Discrimination Legislation to include the provision of goods, services and facilities. The Council would welcome that consideration be given to this within the PfG document and relevant delivery plan.

Also impacts positively on the following PfG outcomes:

- Outcome 1 We prosper through a strong, competitive regionally competitive economy
- Outcome 5 We are an innovative creative society where people can fulfil their potential
- Outcome 6 We have more people working in better jobs

Outcome 4: 'We enjoy long, healthy lives'

The Council supports the proposals to work with people to empower them to live healthier lives, improve service provision in support of better health outcomes, and work collaboratively to support positive health impacts from social programmes. We also welcome the focus given to supporting citizens to lead long, healthy and active lives through: prevention and early intervention; improving access to health and social care services; tackling health inequalities; and, delivering better outcomes from the Executive's investment in health and social care.

The Council has a key role to play in supporting this, providing a range of age-targeted programmes which are aligned to the delivery of this outcome including, for example, Leisure, Health, Parks and Open Spaces, Educational Outreach and Community Services and support.

Priority Asks / Co-Design Opportunities

- Again the Council would wish to work alongside central government and other public agencies to develop a whole system approach to supporting healthy living and wellbeing.
- (i) **Reduce life inequalities** – The Council recognise the importance of taking inter-sectoral approach to addressing the root causes of health and life inequalities within Belfast and the wider region. The Belfast Strategic Partnership was established to address the life inequalities that impact on Belfast, developing effective plans and interventions to help all residents. Supported by the Belfast Health Development Unit which is made up of staff from Belfast City Council, the Public Health Agency and the Belfast Health and Social Services Trust.

The BSP has developed a 'Framework for Action on life inequalities' which includes joint inter-agency work on mental health, alcohol and drug related health issues, life-long learning and early years/early years interventions. They are also seeking to bring forward interventions and support in cross-cutting issues such as

- **Addressing health inequalities** – in the context of the community plan for the city (Belfast Agenda) we will work with our partners including the Belfast Strategic Partnership to develop an integrated programme to address health inequalities, including enhancing mental wellbeing and reducing social inclusion. This will seek to build upon and maximise the impact of the regional 'Making Life Better Strategy' within Belfast addressing many aspects of physical health (physical activity, active travel), and mental wellbeing (particularly issues of social cohesion, community vulnerability and isolation). We will also seek to maximise the health impact of the **Council's £105million leisure transformation programme**.

In May 2016, a cross-party delegation from council meet with the Head of Fuel Poverty & Private Grants Team within DfC (Martin McDermott) to explore some of the key concerns relating to fuel poverty, some of which include:

- **Healthy Aging** - Belfast was the first city in Northern Ireland to join the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities. An age-friendly city is one in which organisations work together to make sure the quality of life for people is enhanced as they age.

We are also part of the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) which has been working for the last 18 months, consulting with over 700 older people. Specific concerns were highlighted around maintenance of pavements, public toilets and outdoor seating and home heating.

HASP, which is part of the Belfast Strategic Partnership, has developed an 'Age-friendly plan 2-14-17' to address these issues. These include, for example running an arts festival for older people; continuing with the Older Volunteer Awards; working with housing providers to communicate housing options; developing several age-friendly outdoor spaces; and developing an Age-friendly Belfast standard for businesses, and services to strive towards.

An intergenerational toolkit has been produced a guide and toolkit which is seeks to bring younger and older generations together and helping to support better engagement with younger and older people, promote participation and sense of belonging.

- **Active Belfast** - promoting healthy living and physical activity through targeted health and wellbeing programmes and utilising our assets (i.e. parks) and facilities (e.g. leisure centres, community centres). Working with the Healthy Aging Strategic Partnership, the Council is also committed to develop and deliver an 'active aging programme which informs future partner service design and planning.

(ii) **Older People / Age Friendly NI**– Most of our residents are living longer, healthier lives. People over 60 already make-up one fifth of our population and this is forecast to increase dramatically to over one third by 2050. Giving the changing demographics with an aging population with diverse needs, we believe that older people are of huge importance and should share in the progress towards each of the PfG outcomes along with other groups in our society. The Council believes that the PfG should make explicit reference to respecting and protecting the wellbeing of older people.

The Council notes that under Outcome 5 (fulfilling potential) there is a commitment to implementing the active aging strategy and the fact that specific delivery plans give focus to older people and creating an **Age Friendly NI**. The Council would seek clarification, perhaps within the delivery plans, as to how the Department will lead and drive the delivery of the active acting aging strategy including working collaboratively with local government, Trusts, Public Health Authority and others to create an Age Friendly NI.

Also impacts positively on the following PfG outcomes:

- Outcome 5 We are an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their lives
- Outcome 8 We care for others and help those in need

OUTCOME 5 – We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential

The Council welcomes the Executive's aim to create an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential and supports the issues identified in the PfG under this outcome. We believe that it is important that a clear definition of what is meant by innovation be communicated through the NI Innovation Brand to ensure that all stakeholders work towards a common goal throughout the delivery plans.

Priority Asks / Co-Design Opportunities

- (i) **Harnessing innovation to drive growth** - The Council believes that utilising information technologies and better data management can support future economic growth. Work is underway with local universities, digital SMEs and the third sector to design and deliver a '**Smart Belfast Framework**' that will build the necessary foundations required to generate innovative solutions to address major city challenges while also supporting the SME sector to develop world class products. Again, the Council believe that the **SMART Cities approach** would be a model which is scalable and transferable to other cities and towns across the region and should be included in the PfG.
- (ii) **Definition of Innovation** - The definition of innovation needs to be further defined through the Innovation NI brand with a shared understanding across all stakeholders. At present, many companies and third party organisations, see innovation as science and technology based, however innovation is wider than this and covers a wide range of sectors which are often overlooked including music, games, film and television / animation.
- (iii) **Infrastructure Investment** - The Council believes that the provision of appropriate infrastructure to encourage and support innovation including innovation hubs / co-working space – to house innovative and creative company start-ups and growth. Consideration also needs to be given to ensuring that there is the appropriate eco-system to support business growth and Council would call for a joined up approach in addressing this. Such infrastructure can also provide a dual purpose as potential 'soft-landing' for new FDI. The Council would reference by way of good practice the recent investment in a new £9.2m innovation Factory within the city.
- (iv) **Digital Connectivity** –important for driving economic growth, competitiveness and supporting the development of the knowledge based /technology based start-ups. There is currently a mismatch between the data protection policies and speed of action within the public sector and the needs of private sector companies (i.e. the innovators and solution providers) which constrains somewhat potential collaborative initiatives. In relation to innovative public sector procurement and opportunities for supporting Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) type programmes and innovation, it will be important that government seeks to removes unnecessary barriers.

The Council's Super-Connected Cities project has proved popular and is an example of how focus intervention and investment can provide necessary digital infrastructure and enabling online access for businesses, communities and citizens across the city. Such alternative programmes which invest in making are citizens digitally literate should be explored.

- (v) **Innovation Council** – the work of the Matrix panel and key stakeholders in the NI ecosystem should be recognised to avoid creating another unnecessary layer of complexity which may have the effect of delaying and hindering innovation rather than stimulating it. Caution should be exercised to avoid duplication. There should be a greater focus on place-based approaches and ensuring connections to an overall regional eco-system supporting innovation and creativity.

- (vi) **NI Innovation Brand** - While branding can be a useful exercise in terms of showcasing and internationalism, it can also confine and restrain. Providing finance to support companies who we know are innovating to showcase at local / international markets would be a better use of finance rather than creating a specific brand.
- (vii) **Innovation accreditation** – the Council would wish to further explore the scope of such an accreditation and whether or not it is recognised internationally
- (viii) **Educational Outcomes** - Increasing integration of education and work has been outlined as a key action within the school environment. Better connectivity between colleges, universities and employers would ensure skills and learning are aligned to employer needs. The Council believes that there is a need to link education, skills and careers advice with entrepreneurship and build a stronger local support package for business start-ups. Entrepreneurship is currently low within Belfast and Northern Ireland; creating an entrepreneurial culture is a goal within the Council's Employability & Skills Framework and needs to be built into career choices and embedded at an early stage in education. An enhanced curriculum to create a culture of innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship in the class-room, including increased exposure to positive role-models will be essential to create entrepreneurs of the future.
- (ix) **Cultural & Arts participation** - The Council note that research from the Continuous Household Survey and by Audiences NI suggests that the majority of people here are infrequent arts consumers. We would like to see further development of projects and measures that increase the frequency of cultural engagement.

The Council would wish to work alongside central government and other partners to deliver an integrated cultural and arts strategy which seeks to enhance the city's distinctive culture, encourage and enable access to cultural and arts activities, providing opportunities for participation in activities, events and festivals.

OUTCOME 6 – We have more people working in better jobs

The Council welcomes this Outcome and the current focus of activity as set out. Improving life chances and growth depends on the skills of citizens – and almost a third of the adult population in Belfast has no qualifications. Skill levels have a significant impact upon employment prospects: people with no qualifications are five times more likely to be unemployed than those who have higher levels of formal education. It should be recognised that to be truly effective in providing opportunities for career progression to better jobs, there is a need to consider the pipeline of skills at all levels for example via a 'skills escalator'.

The Council believes that Employability and Skills is a complex and multifaceted issue. Addressing the employability and skills challenges at all levels is a core element determining the region's future sustainable economic growth. Economic forecasts suggest that around 1 in 6 jobs in the future will be available for those with no skills.

At the other end of the employment and skills spectrum, Belfast and the region have been recognised as gaining a reputation for the high growth sectors of Cyber, Fintech and Creative Industries creating demand for higher skill levels. Addressing these diverging employment and skills needs will require a long-term strategic approach across a range of organisations. To that end, Council have developed its Employability & Skills Framework with four key aims including increasing access to jobs through entry and low level skills; generating higher level skills; career progression routes and developing a culture of entrepreneurship.

Priority Asks / Co-Design Opportunities

- (i) **Supporting Employability and Skills** - The Council would highlight the strong linkages and dependencies with Outcome 1 and the associated commitment to develop with councils a 'Local Works' approach to improving employability. The Council would welcome this approach and would wish to work alongside the Executive and other partners to ensure that such an approach is flexible enough to take account of local circumstances, priority target audiences and adequately resourced to have affect and be sustainable.

The Council is already working with central government, education institutions and employers to develop an **Employability and Skills Pathway (i.e. Belfast Works)** which seeks to support people into employment and better match skills to emerging industry needs. This will be an integrated whole life programme that will support those furthest from the labour market though to employment. We will work with employers to identify, plan and prepare for emerging job opportunities and to create effective pathways to employment.

The Council believes that this approach is both scalable and transferrable and would welcome an opportunity to work in partnership with the Executive to co-design the policy framework for improving skills and employability and to explore the potential for incorporating Belfast's Skills & Employability Strategy within a regional framework.

A shared understanding of how to target those furthest from the labour market would allow the Executive and the city to work together to engage neighbourhood-level providers to deliver employment programmes within a formal outcomes-led rather than process driven commissioning process. Joint work could be carried out to explore how existing employment and skills programmes could be streamlined at the local level as well as the potential for a city-regional apprenticeships scheme.

- (ii) **Funding for employability support** – the Council would wish to explore the potential for greater devolution of funding to support local employment and skills development including any potential offered by the **Apprentice Levy**. Making existing funding more effective is essential if the Executive is to meet its ambitious skills and growth targets, and is important for improving the life chances of all citizens. The outcomes based approach offers the opportunity for government to shape community-based services around people, identifying and dealing with their needs intensively in a holistic way with a single point of contact.

Also impacts positively on the following PfG outcomes:

- Outcome 1 We prosper through a strong, competitive regionally competitive economy
- Outcome 5 We are an innovative creative society where people can fulfil their potential
- Outcome 12 We have created a place where people want to live & work, to visit & invest
- Outcome 14 We give our children and young people the best start in life

Outcome 7: We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other & Outcome 9: We are a shared society that respects diversity

The Council believes that the two outcomes above are so closely linked and complementary that they are best addressed in a single response. The Council welcomes the proposed actions as set out to create a safe community including early intervention, increasing shared spaces, improving the justice process, strategies to reduce inequality, testing of pilots, and delivering flagship projects to address issues such as organised crime and the legacy of the past.

We also support the focus on creating a community which promotes mutual respect and understanding, which is strengthened by its diversity and where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced. We also support the creation of more shared space within the city and would commend that a cross-government space that can be used by anyone from any community; and to tackle the perceived barriers that stop people taking part.

Priority Asks / Co-Design opportunities

Addressing issues impacting on the sense of safety and creating community confidence happens at a local level. The Council and the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships have a key role to play in delivering these outcomes including supporting placed-based approaches and early intervention programmes which are preventative rather than remedial in nature.

- (i) **Shared Space** – The Council is committed to working with the Shared City Partnership to deliver an integrated plan to improve good relations and developing a sustainable, transferable and scalable approach to the management of shared space. We welcome the PfG commitment to bringing forward flagship transformational programmes to increase shared space and create multi-use places in local neighborhoods. We would be keen to work alongside the Executive to maximise potential opportunities for the city and explore potential synergies with other emerging physical investment schemes.

The Council has developed a bid for resources under the PEACE IV programme which includes a specific shared space theme. We would seek to develop a transferable approach to the identification, design, programming and management of shared space with a focus on improving community relations, physical and social regeneration and ensuring the sustainability of local neighbourhoods. We would welcome the opportunity to share this work and to develop an action plan to support a more ambitious agenda for shared space in NI.

The Council also intends to invest, under the PEACE Plan, in developing resilient networks for meaningful purposeful and sustainable engagement between individuals and communities as well as facilitating and supporting effective leadership at all levels and within all sectors of the city. This will seek to build the capacity of disengaged and marginalised communities to participate in shared space programming and enable their increased involvement in peace and reconciliation activities within wider society. In addition we will seek to develop increased skills and capacity within different sectors to facilitate increased collaboration and partnership working on developing Good Relations and shared space outcomes.

- (ii) **Respect Index** – The Council also notes the proposal to develop a Respect Index and potential for development of a Reconciliation index and would be keen to be involved in co-developing and piloting this approach in collaboration with partners in central government.
- (iii) **Together Building Sustainable Communities** – The Council welcomes the continued commitment by the Executive to TBUC and wish to continue to work with central government and other stakeholders in delivering supporting programmes including e.g. District Councils Good Relations Programme, summer camps and intervention activities. The Council believes that a specific focus should be given to better aligning all available funding streams to maximise the good relations outcomes.

- (iv) **Offending** - whilst the Council believe that the broad issues have been captured in relation to anti-social behaviour and crime; further consideration and focus needs to be given to the links between offending/ risk of offending and underlying drugs and alcohol issues. There is also a close alignment to Outcome 4 on this matter (health).

The Council would highlight the need to develop a 'whole system approach' to managing young offending (and the risk of offending) which seeks to address the root causes (e.g. substance abuse, education and employment inequalities etc) rather than taking remedial action (links outcomes 1 and 5).

Also impacts positively on the following PfG outcomes:

- Outcome 9 We are a shared society that respects diversity
- Outcome 10 We are a confident, welcoming, outward looking society
- Outcome 12 We have created a place where people want to live & work, to visit and invest

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Outcome 8: We care for others and we help those in need

The Council endorses plans to help and care for the most vulnerable in our society, ensuring provision is adequate to meet their needs and where appropriate, giving people the opportunity and means to help themselves. We welcome the proposed actions including supporting people with disabilities to live more independent lives, reducing the inequalities faced by people with disabilities, helping people get access to suitable housing, ensuring housing is of a suitable standard, and assisting those living with the most difficult conditions.

Priority Asks

- (i) **Reduce poverty and social Inequalities** – There is a need to adopt a cross-government and cross-sectoral approach to addressing poverty and social inequalities help alleviate many of the social pressures which exist across region and particularly within Belfast as an urban area. The Council would wish to work alongside the Executive, Department for Communities and other stakeholders in bringing forward the delivery plans attached to this PfG Outcome as well as the new Social Strategy which is to emerge.

Addressing fuel poverty is a key area of concern for the council and elected Members; who have previously highlighted the need for a more targeted and sustainable approach to the development and delivery of support schemes such as (or example, the Affordable Warmth Scheme funded by the Department for Communities and administered by local government, the bolder replacement scheme administered by the NIHE); developing preventative measures and financial assistance.

- (ii) **Age Friendly NI** - The Council believes that this outcome being closely linked to Outcome 4 and therefore would again recommend that the PfG should make explicit reference to respecting and protecting the wellbeing of older people. Giving the changing demographics with an aging population with diverse needs, we believe that older people are of huge importance and should share in the progress towards each of the PfG outcomes along with other groups in our society.

The Council notes that under Outcome 5 (fulfilling potential) there is a commitment to implementing the active aging strategy and the fact that specific delivery plans give focus to older people and creating an Age Friendly NI. The Council would seek clarification, perhaps within the delivery plans, as to how the Department will lead and drive the delivery of the active acting aging strategy including working collaboratively with local government, Trusts, Public Health Authority and others to create an Age Friendly NI.

- (iii) **Housing Provision** – Housing is a key issue in creating sustainable communities. Affordable and safe housing is fundamental to the quality of life of our residents. In 2015, there were over 6,900 people stress in the city. The Council welcomes the commitment given to helping people get access to suitable housing and would highlight the role of local government in supporting this process through its planning functions, the zoning of land for housing and different types of tenure through the **Local Development Plan process**.

The Council is committed to working with central government, the NIHE and other partners to maximise the benefits of housing investment in the city, increasing the tenure mix, growing the population of the city and city centre and helping create sustainable, safe and cohesive communities.

Also impacts positively on the following PfG outcomes:

- Outcome 4 We enjoy long, healthy, active lives
- Outcome 13 We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure.

Outcome 10: We are confident, welcoming, outward-looking society &

Outcome 12: We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest

The Council believe that the two outcomes above are so closely linked and complementary that they are best addressed in a single response. We support the PfG plans towards creating a confident, welcoming and outward-looking society and a place where people would want to leave and work, to visit and invest. The Council believe that the actions identified within the delivery plans supporting these two outcomes are wide in scope and will deliver against a number of the outcomes identified across the Programme for Government.

The Council believe that the importance of Belfast as a regional gateway, an investment location and key driver for economic growth must not be overlooked. It is the face we present to the world and provides the impetus to those thinking of investing, living and starting businesses here. Its success drives the prosperity of the whole city and region.

Key Asks / Opportunities for Co-delivery

- (i) **Tourism & Events** – We would see value in Government agencies and Councils working together to determine event and festival priorities, and also to seek an agreed position in relation to liquor licensing and hospitality opening hours to promote the region globally in terms of tourism and events. A commitment to support a second major tourist attraction in Belfast would also be welcomed.

The Council would recommend that there is a more streamlined and co-ordinated approach across Departments to assist cities and the wider region in regard to staging major international events. This will avoid delays which may impact whether such projects are staged in NI.

The Council acknowledge that much work is already underway. We are engaged with Tourism NI on the NI Tourism Strategy work and InvestNI's international work, and with both universities and the Belfast Met (exchanging strategies and agree KPIS, etc.). The Council feel that they are best placed to lead on some sectoral developments where the critical mass of companies/research resides – for e.g. cyber security, business tourism, creative industries, green technologies.

- (ii) **New World-Class Visitor Attraction (Belfast Story)** – the Council would wish to work in partnership with the Executive and private sector partners to bring forward plans to create a second major world-class tourism attraction which would be a regional asset; complementing and transforming our current tourism offer and attracting large numbers of new and repeat visitors who will spend across the regional economy.

Given the significance of this project to the regional economy in terms investment, economic growth, employment creation, tourism offer and international profile, the Council would ask that this be including the PfG and emerging Investment Strategy. The Council will work with Executive to progress considerations around detailed design, masterplanning, governance arrangements, delivery and funding models.

The significant benefits and success of a collaborative approach between central/ local government and the private sector has already been proven with the success of the Titanic Signature Project which has experience record visitor numbers and was recently winning 'World Leading Tourism Attraction' at the prestigious World Travel Awards. Titanic Belfast is making a significant contribution to the regional economy and to a positive profile of Northern Ireland across the world.

(iii) Economic Growth and Investment

- **Europe and USA:** Additional issues and uncertainties include the impact of Brexit and US President Elect's statements relating to Corporation Tax which will influence the future economic performance of NI.
- **Attracting FDI and Increasing International Trade:** The proposed actions relating to External Visitors and National Brands focus on attracting foreign investment and increasing international trade; however there are no direct indicators within the applicable delivery plan at present.
- **International Relations:** Although implicitly referenced with regards to this outcome (and also in the context of outcomes 1 (economy) and 12 (live, work, visit and invest), BCC would welcome a stronger focus on this matter. Building our place on the international stage, and actively promoting NI as an investment and tourist destination will be a key catalyst for economic growth. The Council is also investigating options for developing a City Investment Advice Service and support scheme to identify a package of measures and supports that the city can offer to business start-ups, businesses wishing to grow and those wishing to invest in Belfast. This is being developed with input from Incest NI to ensure that it augments existing services, and we would welcome the opportunity to work with the NI Executive to develop this for the benefit of the whole region.
- **Partnerships:** Agreements and international connections between local government and sister city partners can provide a unique platform to open doors for stakeholders, and would also have a positive effect on the outcome, and should be considered within the applicable delivery plans.

(iv) City Centre Regeneration

The importance of the city centre as a regional gateway, an investment location and key driver for economic growth cannot be overlooked. It is the face we present to the world and provides the impetus to those thinking of investing, living and starting businesses here. **Its success drives the prosperity of the whole city and region.**

The **Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy** sets out our ambition for the continued growth and regeneration of the city core and its surrounding areas up until 2030 and sets the key drivers change and investment priorities. It seeks to deliver transformational change by co-ordinating major capital projects mobilising available funding to address areas of market failure.

The Council would want to work with the Executive and the relevant Departments to **agree prioritisation and joint financing models** to bring forward the key schemes outlined within the Strategy which will impact on the prosperity of both the city and the wider region and would request that these investment opportunities find expression in the emerging NI Investment Strategy and Economic Strategy.

- **The North East Quarter (Royal Exchange)** – would seek to develop a partnership with the private sector to ensure delivery of high quality investment into this currently underdeveloped but key strategic gateway into the city. The project will integrate the mixed use plans with Belfast city centre's wider retail, leisure and cultural offer and link the established Victoria Square and CastleCourt shopping centres.
- **Delivery of Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3** – £32million regeneration scheme which will revitalise the city centre, creating new streetscape, open space and connect with other key developments including the University of Ulster scheme. The Council has already committed £5m contribution towards the redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens.

- **East Bank** – working with partners, including the private sector to maximise the investment potential of this key development area (which includes Queens Quay and Sirocco). There is an opportunity to attract significant investment and jobs into this area and to reconnect what was once a thriving industrial site with the city centre, Titanic Quarter, the Harbour as well as to the adjoining neighbourhoods and communities.
- **North Foreshore** – 340 acres (138ha) former landfill site. Largest regeneration site in Belfast. £9.5million infrastructure investment nearing completion (part ERDF funded) and future potential around cleantech hub/environmental resource park and private sector lead commercial leisure/mixed use scheme (200acres). £20m investment in new Film Studio currently underway.
- **Bel Tel Joint Venture** - The Council have, for the first time, undertaken a Joint Venture with a private sector partner and acquired a key city centre building with the intention of redeveloping the site as a regeneration catalyst for the wider area and proposing it as a new location for BBC NI HQ. The aspiration is to build upon the Ulster University £250 million investment (and 12,000 students) and unlock other investment such as he planned £40 million investment and extension to our City Centre Library, the Belfast Story attraction, and other private sector-led development in Royal Exchange and in the retail core
- Increasing demand for **Grade A Office Space** in the city. If we are to ensure Northern Ireland prospers as a foreign direct investment location, we must meet the demands of the major city investors who require modernised buildings with excellent natural light, generous common areas and enhanced environmental credentials which in turn help to reduce office running costs.
- We have developed a vision for our traditional office area -**The Linen Quarter** – which seeks to inform and shape the many planning applications coming forward for hotel and office developments and link this emerging activity to the planned transport hub project. We are also developing **Planning Frameworks** for the **East Bank** area and the river as well as the **Inner North** of the city centre.
- **Hotel developments** - the recent **£30 million** extension to our Waterfront Hall exhibition centre has enabled the city to accommodate large scale conferences in the heart fo the city centre. As a result of this and our already burgeoning tourist offer our Hotel sector has responded with 9 applications for new hotels, all of which are approved by our Members, 5 are already under construction and one has recently opened (The Bullit).

Outcomes 10 and 12 also impact positively on the following PfG outcomes:

- Outcome 1 We prosper through a strong, competitive regionally competitive economy
- Outcome 4 We enjoy long, healthy, active lives
- Outcome 6 We have more people working in better jobs
- Outcome 13 We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure

Outcome 11: We have high quality public services

The Council welcomes this outcome which is about ensuring that the public services we provide for people are responsive, efficient and effective, that they are shaped to meet the needs of people, and that they are accessible in ways and at times that fit into people's lives.

Priority Asks / Opportunities for Co-Design

The broad issues relating to service quality, responsiveness, the need to reduce duplication, focus on the frontline delivery, and digitisation have been captured.

- (i) **Placed-Based Approaches** – the Council has previously highlighted how regional and sub-regional data can mask issues such as clusters of deprived communities, economic inactivity and poverty. With this in mind it is important that public service delivery considers the localised needs of communities in urban areas.

The Council would support in particular the focus on **responsive** and **citizen-focused** services which are co-designed in association with local and community expertise with the end-user in mind; and looks forward to seeing the detail of how this will be achieved across the relevant delivery plans.

The Council would support in particular the focus on **responsive** and **citizen-focused** services which are co-designed in association with local and community expertise with the end-user in mind; and looks forward to seeing the detail of how this will be achieved across the relevant delivery plans.

- (ii) **Maximising the impact of local assets** – partners across the city are investing in important community assets, while communities themselves are bringing forward and delivering investment projects. The Council would highlight the importance of physical assets being brought forward with a focus on delivering outcomes. Agency's need to work together to maximise the benefits of local assets and where possible use them as a means of making services more integrated and accessible.

There are a number of programmes seeking to improve community assets as a driver for regeneration including the Council's Local Investment and Belfast Investment Funds, Urban Villages and Building Sustainable Communities. It is important that we take a strategic overview to ensure that interventions are planned and managed in a way that maximises their benefit to local people. The Council is conscious that in the years ahead community planning partners will be building houses, schools, health-care assets, new leisure centres and many other community based assets.

Again, the Council believe that there is a real opportunity to work across government and sectors to better plan, maximise opportunities for co-location of services and in turn provide better services, deliver monetary savings and achieve better outcomes for local people.

- (iii) **Use social innovation to unlock service transformation** – the Council would wish to work with the Executive and city partners to explore how we can maximise social innovation tools and techniques to help transform and improve the way we plan and deliver services at both the city and local level. Through our smart cities work we will explore how we can work with residents and partners to co-design and deliver more effective service provision. We believe that this approach can be adopted at scale in other parts of the region.

Also impacts positively on the following PfG outcomes:

- Outcome 3 We have a more equal society
- Outcome 4 We enjoy long, health, active lives

Outcome 13: We connect our people and opportunities through our infrastructure

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to meet today with the Committee for Infrastructure. It is our desire to work in partnership with central and local government as well as the private and third sectors to create a resilient, sustainable and inclusive city-region.

The Council strongly believes that if Belfast and Northern Ireland is to make a further step change and compete on a global scale there is a need for targeted investment in the physical, economic and social infrastructure of the city-region. Having modern infrastructure in place will enable and support economic growth and ensure that the city-region remains competitive in terms of being an attractive place to live, work and invest. It is also important in terms of supporting future development and plans for growth.

Understanding Northern Ireland's priority infrastructure needs, and planning to address these on an affordable and property sequenced basis, should be at the heart of the PfG and new Investment Strategy We wish to work in partnership with central and local government as well as the private sector to ensure that critical infrastructure schemes are identified, prioritised and importantly finance to ensure delivery.

Priority Asks / Opportunities for Co-Design

Whilst the Council clearly welcomes the commitment within the PfG to progress the Belfast Rapid Transit and Belfast Integrated Transport Hub, we would recommend that the following is given specific consideration in finalising the PfG and associated draft Investment Strategy.

- (i) **Infrastructure Plan for the City-Region** - the Council would wish to work in partnership with the NI Executive, the Department for Infrastructure and other government to develop an Infrastructure Plan for the city-region and connections with other economic corridors. This will seek to identify the key infrastructure priorities and will complement any regional infrastructure plan which may be brought forward.
- (ii) **Financing Infrastructure Investment** – the Council would wish to wish to work in partnership with the NI Executive, Department for Infrastructure and Department to explore and identify potential new financial mechanisms and vehicles which could be utilised to deliver critical city infrastructure projects and support economic growth and job creation across the region (e.g. joint ventures with private sector, European Investment Bank investment, asset backed vehicles, land value capture, financial transactions capital, social impact bonds, earn-back incentive schemes).

The DoF and Executive are proactively looking at the practicalities and merits of other funding vehicles - in the context of the emerging new Programme for Government, NI Investment Strategy and the deliverability of Executive priorities. Initial discussions have already taken place with DoF officials who are keen to work with council, the Strategic Investment Board and other partners to co-commission a specific piece of work around innovative financing models. This will seek to identify options and examine their merits and practicalities of implementation.

It is important to recognise the financial tools available to the council, including, for example, ability to borrow to invest in capital schemes, ability to access other funds, and the ability to enter into Joint Ventures with the private sector to unlock major investment and development opportunities.

The Council would also wish to explore with DFI, DoF, the NI Executive, other Departments and the Strategic Investment Board the potential to utilise government assets to incentivise investment and unlock major development and infrastructure schemes. We would also wish to explore more commercial alternatives to bringing forward and financing important such schemes. This is linked to the earlier discussions on the agenda regarding the possible creation of an 'Infrastructure Plan for the City'.

(iii) **City Infrastructure Priorities** – to meet the infrastructure needs of the city, the Council would wish to work with the Executive and Department for Infrastructure and other partners, including the private sector, to bring forward the following schemes:

- Belfast Transport Hub
- York Street Interchange
- Transportation Infrastructure
- Car Parking Strategy
- Living with Water Programme
- Energy Security Programme
- Digital Infrastructure
- Belfast Rapid Transit
- City Centre Parking & Connectivity
- Enhanced Cycle Network
- Streetscape

- **York Street Interchange** – the Council welcomes the recent announcement by the Infrastructure Minister that this important scheme will be taken forward but are concerned about the current uncertainty around financing. Given the significance of this scheme to supporting the regional economy and improving connectivity between Belfast (and Port) to the rest of the region, the Council believes that this £160million scheme should be explicitly referenced within the Programme for Government and prioritised within the emerging NI Investment Strategy.

It is recognised that the York Street Interchange proposal will alleviate a significant bottleneck at the M2/Westlink junction which adversely impacts on city centre traffic volumes and congestion on a daily basis. The Council believes that this scheme is critical in supporting regional economic growth and competitiveness, accommodating 1000,000 vehicles each day, mostly commuters to and from Belfast as well as connecting freight /haulage transport through the port of Belfast to the strategic road network throughout the wider region.

- **Transport Infrastructure** – ensuring that the city and city-region has appropriate transportation infrastructure which supports and enables access, mobility and connectivity is a key priority. Effective infrastructure and transportation planning will be critical components of the Local Development Plan and the creation of a sustainable land-use strategy for the city and city-region.

Within the Belfast Agenda, we are committed to developing an integrated city transport plan which will seek to maximise the opportunities presented by the £150million investment in the Belfast Transport Hub and Rapid Transit System. It will also seek to address under-use of public transport, particularly in relation to commuter patterns and work to promote active travel.

The Council would wish to work closely with the Executive and Department for Infrastructure to bring this forward and ensure alignment with regional priorities which may emerge in the Investment Strategy and revised Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan. It will be important that we establish shared transport objectives and priorities.

- **City Centre Transport and Parking** – Again, we would wish to work with the Executive and DfI in bringing forward a Car Parking Strategy for the city which will include a comprehensive solution to addressing city centre transportation and parking related pressures.

- The delivery of the **Belfast Rapid Transit Phase I** in the West and East of the city and developing proposals for **Phase II for the North and South of the city**.
- **Enhancing the cycle network** – develop strategy for cycling, securing necessary funding and ensuring that cycling is a consideration within planning processes.
- **Living with Water Programme** – ensuring that the drainage infrastructure within Belfast is fit-for-purpose and alleviates potential risks around flooding and pollution. The ‘Living with Water Programme’ has identified that Belfast has the worst drainage infrastructure in Northern Ireland and a failing to act could result in significant consequences including e.g. financial impact, reputational damage, impeding housing and business growth and adversely impacting on construction. Estimates to deliver the necessary infrastructure are around £750m for Belfast alone.
- **An energy security programme** – The Council would wish to work alongside the NI Executive, other city partners and utility providers to develop a city-region energy programme. We will work with partners to better manage energy usage across the city’s public estate and support better acquisition, management and finance of energy. We will build opportunities with partners, including the private sector and local communities, to encourage investment and deployment of renewable sources in order to make the city more attractive to investors and to tackle fuel poverty.
- **Housing Provision** – Again the Council would highlight the fact that housing is a key issue in creating sustainable communities. Affordable and safe housing is fundamental to the quality of life of our residents. In 2015, there were over 6,900 people stress in the city. The Council welcomes the commitment given to helping people get access to suitable housing and would highlight the role of local government in supporting this process through its planning functions, the zoning of land for housing and different types of tenure through the **Local Development Plan process**.

The Council is committed to working with central government, the NIHE and other partners to maximise the benefits of housing investment in the city, increasing the tenure mix, growing the population of the city and city centre and helping create sustainable, safe and cohesive communities.

- **Digital infrastructure** – important for driving economic growth and competitiveness and enhancing international connectivity and proposition as an investment location. Also supports the development of the knowledge based and technology start-ups. The region also has a strong record of staying at the forefront of communications technology. It became the first region in Europe to achieve 100 per cent broadband coverage and one of the first to operate and experience high speed, next generation services with a new 40-gigabyte per second transatlantic and terrestrial telecommunications link between Northern Ireland, North America and Europe. This is providing secure, reliable service and delivering prices up to 20 per cent below market rates in London, Dublin, Manchester and Glasgow.
- **Streetscape** – Investment in high-quality streetscape which creates a sense of place, improves the attractiveness and animation of localities and helps attract tourism and inward investment, including the potential future use of developer contributions to fund this.

Also impacts positively on the following PfG outcomes:

- Outcome 3 We have a more equal society
- Outcome 4 We enjoy long, health, active lives

Outcome 14: We give our children the best start in life

The Council welcome this outcome which is about ensuring that all of our children and young people grow up safely and happily in a society where they receive the support they need to achieve their full potential, and where they have the opportunity to express their views and have a say in decisions that affect them. We would commend the focus on early intervention and the proposal to strengthen relationships and partnership working to integrate health, education and community assets to meet the needs of children.

The Council delivers a range of age-targeted programmes to support this outcome through our provision for example in Leisure, Health, Parks and Open Spaces, Educational Outreach and Community Services. These services deliver a variety of interventions designed to promote active and healthy lifestyles for the breadth of age-groups.

In addition, Council administers a significant grant aid programme to support local community and voluntary organisations to deliver initiatives which will advance this outcome in their local communities. We have a dedicated Children and Young People's Unit which has a remit not only to deliver direct services to children and young people via the Play Service, but also to champion their needs and enable them to have a voice in the city via the Belfast City Council Youth Forum. The Council would therefore welcome the opportunity to work more closely in partnership with other key stakeholders to ensure that our services are targeting those children who are in greatest need.

Priority Asks / Opportunities for Co-Design

- (i) **Early intervention up to 18 years of age** – Belfast City Council has adopted an outcomes framework for our work with children and young people which is aligned to the outcomes for the Programme for Government. The Council is making a commitment as part of the Belfast Agenda to enable children and young people to play their part in shaping their city and communities, and aims to contribute to children being healthy, happy and achieving at each stage of life. We also aim to support children to feel safe in their community and encourage them to reach their full potential.

There are a number of points in a child's life particularly when transitioning to post-primary education, or experiencing adversity where they are at greater risk of becoming involved in risk-taking behaviours, or where they are more susceptible to poor mental health, or experiencing poor educational attainment. However the focus of the PfG is very much on early year's provision. **We would welcome a greater recognition of the importance of early intervention for all children up to the age of 18 years.**

- (ii) **A fully integrated, inter-agency approach to family support** - building on the work already done by the Executive and partners we will work together to ensure we see the whole picture of a child's development so that they have the continual support they need to reach their potential. We will encourage a focus on support for families in the city through an integrated family early intervention programme. Our aim is for an integrated service provision to support families facing challenges, maximising the impact of the city's ten Family Support Hubs. The Council believe that this type of intervention is both scalable and transferable to the wider community sector and should be considered within the PfG.

- (iii) **Right to play** - within the intervention to ensure that every child, whose parents want it can access a funded place in the Pre-school Education Programme in their immediate pre-school year, it would be helpful if a commitment could be given to ensuring that each child attending this provision has access to freely chosen play opportunities. Article 31 of the UNCRC formally enshrines the child's right to play and the right to engage in other recreational activities including participation in cultural activities and the arts. It states:
- State Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
 - State Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational leisure activity.

The Council would welcome greater recognition of this right to play within the PfG and the inclusion of outcome measures to assess how departments and agencies are meeting this.

- (iv) **Co-delivery of Play Programmes** – The Council would be keen to work in partnership with the Health and Social Care Trust, Belfast Childcare Partnership and Community and Voluntary organisations to design and deliver play programmes for parents and pre-school children. Council would also welcome opportunities to engage with hard to reach / at risk families / parents perhaps via the Family Nurse Partnership to introduce play opportunities and contribute to supporting parents as the first educators of children. **Council would welcome opportunities to work more collaboratively and co-design interventions with local grant-aided groups which are aimed at giving children the best start in life**
- (v) **Youth Forum and Ask First model** – the Council recognises the importance of engaging young people in meaningful and constructive activities and creating opportunities for them to make a contribution to civic life and gain valuable employability skills. Our Belfast City Council Youth Forum provides opportunities for young people to do this. The Council has adopted the Ask First principles of participation as advocated by the Participation Network (CINI) to ensure that we consult effectively with children and young people.

The Council is committed to working with a range of city and regional partners to safeguard everyone, address child poverty and ensure effective family services are available at each stage of a child or young person's life. We will encourage our children and young people to have the best start in life by providing 1000's of free, accessible play opportunities across the city through our outreach and After-schools provision, organising activities and events in our parks, delivering summer schemes, community centre programmes, city events and festivals. We will support our Belfast Youth Forum members to be the city's young advocates and provide high quality safe open spaces in parks and play areas for our children and young people.

The Council believe that the Programme for Government should consider adopting the Ask First model for consultation with children and young people to ensure that their voices are heard and feedback is given as to how their responses have been acted upon.

Also impacts positively on the following PfG outcomes:

- Outcome 3 We have a more equal society
- Outcome 6 We have more people working in better jobs

DRAFT

Section 3:

Comments on specific Programme for Government Delivery Plans.

DRAFT



Outcome(s): 1. We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy

Delivery Plan: Indicator 21 **External Sales** (BCC ref 2)

PfG SRO: Derek Baker, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Policy Group, DfE
NI-Economic-Strategy@economy-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	<p>Yes the main issues have been addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belfast City Council welcome the focus on targeting those businesses that are not currently exporting due to their sector or size and outside of INI's radar. This is in line with the Belfast Agenda commitments to grow the economy to support businesses to deliver export led strategies to encourage business growth and maximising new and existing international connections.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need a clear definition with regards to what is meant by a regionally balanced economy. It should be clearly articulated that a strong Belfast is necessary to support a strong regionally balanced economy. As the region's capital city, major population centre and the hub for business and employment, Belfast is critical to Northern Ireland's economic future. Need to consider the potential impact of the new US presidency on FDI. Exporting and US relations should be included along with the plans for dealing with Brexit in light of the Autumn Statement and the implications with exporting to the EU. Councils will have a key role in terms of communicating Brexit implications locally to the business sector and to international city partners. For companies seeking investment (VC, Private equity etc) from the US, additional specialist support is required to help them do so. Legal, Visa, and company set up support for companies looking to expand and grow in the US is essential and can often be expensive for smaller companies to action. Ad-hoc support has been provided in the past as and when an outward trade mission is organised, however, providing this support on a rotational basis will enable companies to be better prepared and more informed in relation to their expansion goals. Exporting to the EU should include reference to exploration of the economic potential of the Belfast-Dublin economic corridor in improving transport connections and boosting trade which is in line with Belfast City Council's relationship commitments. Further information required on future measures that Invest NI will adapt in relation to their Access to Finance initiative (Techstart NI, Co-Fund NI and the Development Funds which are part financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the EU Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014-2020) and what measures they will put in place when these funds cease or new measures proposed to support exporters. There are issues around productivity, NI now has the lowest levels in the Western World. Belfast is more productive than other parts of NI (we would refer to INI Stats in Economic Briefing: CG&R 12.10.16)
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	<p>The Council believes that the actions as set out with the exceptions of the following points:-</p> <p>Proposal 2 – Provide authoritative information and guidance to inform and consult with NI businesses on trade related issues during the European Union exit process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> US / North America should be included as a track alongside the EU / Brexit preparations. INI has contacted 1000 businesses to date to gain understanding of issues – this is a very low number and Council would like to ensure that all companies (from business start to established) are consulted to ensure that they are all fully supported in terms of their export aspirations and issues, no matter how small.



	<p>Proposal 4 - Increase support for market diversification through continued investment in a global network of in-market trade advisors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest NI's in-market resource / trade advisors are too generic in nature and often provide basic information and advice to companies in relation to the specific market and sector they are working in and targeting. Having support on the ground in terms of organising meetings, briefings and addressing specific company issues would be of greater value if they have engaged more fully with the exporting company. <p>Proposal 7 - Review and refresh the plans under Export Matters for a new suite of actions commencing no later than April 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> US / North America should be included as a track alongside the EU / Brexit preparations.
<p>Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?</p>	<p>Proposal 1 - Develop, promote and embed the "Export Pathway" and "Support Escalator" models with delivery partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council believes that rebalancing the economy by encouraging private sector investment and supporting market diversification is essential for generating sustainable growth, increasing productivity and creating diverse and well paid jobs not only in Belfast but across the region. Central to this is improving the skills and employability levels. It is important that as many people as possible benefit from growth and the city's success – extending well beyond the city boundaries. To provide bespoke support to companies planning on attending new market visits and participating on trade missions (post and pre visit). Providing companies as much specific and one to one support prior to export visits will enhance their time and success in the proposed market. With the number of businesses exporting identified as reducing, potential to consider this as an indicator for monitoring. There is a need for a more active inclusion of BCC in economic development.
<p>Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?</p>	<p>Proposal 1 - Develop, promote and embed the "Export Pathway" and "Support Escalator" models with delivery partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Belfast Agenda includes a commitment to develop a collaborative approach to raising entrepreneurship levels and business start-ups, providing a continuum of support from business start to growth and export. This is a key area where there is value in co-designing. Belfast City Council is able to work with many SMEs who perhaps due to their size or stage of growth fall outside the INI remit. We can provide valuable export support to these companies to prepare them for making their first plans to enter export markets for the first time. For more established companies, who are planning on visiting new markets (outside of INI's trade programme and identified markets), Council can provide the necessary support to prepare them for new market visits and post market follow up. For Belfast based companies attending INI's trade missions / availing of market support (travel and accommodation), Council can provide the post market support that is not provided by INI and will enable greater success and focus for the participating companies. In line with the Belfast Agenda, under the Growing the Economy theme, initiatives such as a clear city business proposition and a concierge service for investors should be considered.
<p>Other Comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for company participation and export related support from INI should be aligned with the Council's international activity E.g. Boston and Nashville are key sister cities for Belfast City Council and are not identified areas by INI (as part of their trade programme). Supporting Council in realising the economic opportunities in (these) new international locales for Belfast based companies would enhance the overall relationships between the participating cities. Include fostering stronger trade links with China and India in line with Belfast City Council's plans to discuss investment opportunities and establish business leads and developing stronger relationships. Also consider the City's role in developing partnerships with Dublin, London as well as the Sister Cities. Belfast's City Centre Regeneration Strategy suggests boosting tourism by "identifying and implementing 'quick wins' such as changes to licensing laws and encouraging businesses to open on Sunday mornings." This has implications in terms of attracting international events that provide a global platform for NI. Need to be cognisant of our current liquor licensing and hospitality opening hours which are externally viewed as archaic and out-of-step with a modern international city. There is a need for an agreed position on the changes to liquor licensing and hospitality opening hours. Much of the detail around the Delivery Plan appears to be reliant on other strategies [Export Matters framework 2016-25]. However the action plan included will be reviewed at 2018, to take stock. While the Export Matters plan was published before Brexit, the PfG delivery plan indicates that this will be used as an opportunity to assess the changes resulting from the UKs exit from the EU and refocus. As Council's now have responsibility for Regional Start Initiative and business start-ups, Councils should have a key role in the communication plan and process regarding the implications for Brexit and changes within the US on local businesses. Consideration should also be given to understanding why investment doesn't come at all (losses) as well as businesses leaving.



Outcome(s): 1. A strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy. 5. An innovative, creative society.

Delivery Plan: Indicator 22 **Rate of innovation activity** (BCC ref 3)

PfG SRO: Derek Baker, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Policy Group, DfE
NI-Economic-Strategy@economy-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main issues are identified, however the definition of what innovation is and refers to, needs to be made clearer. At present, many companies and third party organisations, see innovation as science and technology based, however, innovation is wider than this and covers a wide range of sectors (which are often overlooked as being innovative – e.g. music, games, film and television / animation). One issue not addressed is that of innovation space / co-working space. Having space that can help innovate companies and host events / networking / competitions / hackathons and house innovative company start-ups (aligned with the re-definition) would help accelerate innovation growth and provide a much needed focal point for the proposed activities to take place. This may also provide a ‘soft landing space’ for new FDI. Increasing integration of education and work has been outlined as a key action within the school environment. However there should be more focus on working with academic institutions (starting at school level) to raise awareness of entrepreneurship as a viable career option for graduates and providing them with the support to take positive steps towards starting up.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data protection policies and speed of action with the public sector is not currently aligned with the speed and needs of private sector companies i.e. the innovators and solution providers. In relation to innovative public sector procurement and SBRI type programmes, both the data and public sector broadband speed requirements need to be relevant, readily available and provided in a suitable format. A more detailed definition of what Innovation is should be included. This would be further defined through the development of the Innovation NI brand strategy. This needs to be streamlined across all stakeholders.
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	<p>Most actions are suitable with a few noted exceptions:</p> <p>Create an NI Innovation Brand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While branding can be a useful exercise in terms of showcasing and internationalisation, it can also confine and restrain. Providing finance to support companies who we know are innovating (e.g. immersive tech) to showcase at local / international markets would be a better use of finance rather than create a specific brand. <p>Innovation accreditation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What good will this really achieve and how well recognised is this internationally / what impacts does it have? <p>Innovation Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work of the Matrix panel and key stakeholders in the NI ecosystem should be recognised to avoid creating another layer in the ecosystem which may have the effect of delaying and hindering innovation rather than stimulating it. Caution should be exercised to ensure that work is not being duplicated and that the creation of additional bodies adds value. The definition of Innovation should be included as part of the new Innovation NI Brand and communication strategy on Innovation. This is an opportunity to ensure that all stakeholders continue to work under the same definition throughout the delivery of the action plan.
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?	<p>Harnessing innovation to drive growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council believes that utilising information technologies and better data management can support future economic growth. Work is underway with local universities, digital SMEs and the third sector to design and deliver a ‘Smart Belfast Framework’ that will build the necessary foundations required to generate innovative solutions to address major city challenges while also supporting the SME sector to develop world class products. Again, the Council believe that the SMART Cities approach would be a model which is scalable and transferable to other cities and towns across the region and should be included in the PfG.



Definition of Innovation

- The definition of innovation needs to be further defined through the Innovation NI brand with a shared understanding across all stakeholders. At present, many companies and third party organisations, see innovation as science and technology based, however innovation is wider than this and covers a wide range of sectors which are often overlooked including music, games, film and television / animation.

Infrastructure Investment

- The Council believes that the provision of appropriate infrastructure to encourage and support innovation including innovation hubs / co-working space – to house innovative and creative company start-ups and growth. Consideration also needs to be given to ensuring that the appropriate eco-system to support business growth. Such infrastructure can also provide a dual purpose as potential ‘soft-landing’ for new FDI. The Council would reference by way of good practice the recent investment in a new £9.2m innovation Factory within the city.

Digital Connectivity

- Important for driving economic growth, competitiveness and supporting the development of the knowledge based /technology based start-ups. There is currently a miss-match between the data protection policies and speed of action within the public sector and the needs of private sector companies (i.e. the innovators and solution providers) which constrains somewhat potential collaborative initiatives. In relation to innovative public sector procurement and opportunities for supporting Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) type programmes and innovation, it will be important that government seeks to removes unnecessary barriers.
- The Council’s Super-Connected Cities project has proved popular and is an example of how focus intervention and investment can provide necessary digital infrastructure and enabling online access for businesses, communities and citizens across the city. Such alternative programmes which invest in making are citizens digitally literate should be explored.

Cultural & Arts participation

- The Council note that research from the Continuous Household Survey and by Audiences NI suggests that the majority of people here are infrequent arts consumers. We would like to see further development of projects and measures that increase the frequency of cultural engagement.
- The Council would wish to work alongside central government and other partners to deliver an integrated cultural and arts strategy which seeks to enhance the city’s distinctive culture, encourage and enable access to cultural and arts activities, providing opportunities for participation in activities, events and festivals.

Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?

Establishment of a Data Analytics Research and Exploitation Centre:

- The Belfast Agenda identifies the need to work with partners to design and deliver a Smart Belfast framework which will build the necessary foundation required to generate innovative solutions to address city challenges. A key opportunity is Belfast’s participation in the 100 Resilient Cities programme which will develop a targeted approach to address issues that pose greatest risk to the city and its economy.
- BCC are active in supporting local SMEs in terms of showcasing, collaboration and networking. The Council is currently supporting the Immersive Tech Cluster and Digital Catapult NI in these areas.
- BCC can introduce local SMEs to attaining the Innovation accreditation (if relevant) and facilitate competition type activity such as the SBRI, were relevant to BCC data and objectives.
- The Council should also provide input into the following:
 - NI Innovation Brand, Communication & Definition
 - NI Innovation Fund: Under the new Community Planning Powers, this could present a good opportunity to allow Councils to make investments in high growth innovative companies. It could present a great opportunity in light of Brexit.
 - Increase focus on entrepreneurship, collaboration and creativity within the education system. Having an input into this and knowing what is happening in terms of entrepreneurship in education will allow us to make more informed decisions regarding the support that we provide under our remit of enterprise awareness, in particular the regular sponsorship requests that we receive for support in this area.

Other Comments:

- The new Community Planning Powers provides an excellent opportunity for Councils to make bolder decisions and to take a ‘higher risk, higher return’ approach. This would mean providing better, more tailored support targeting growth sectors including innovative companies.
- The Council would be keen to ensure that the support for innovation is not limited to science and technology but also considers other sectors such as music, animation, film and television.



Outcome(s): 1. A strong, competitive, regionally balanced **economy**, 3. A more **equal** society, 6. More people working in **better jobs**

Delivery Plan: Indicator 16, 18, 34 **Employment rate** (BCC ref 4)
PfG SRO: Derek Baker, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Policy Group, DfE
NI-Economic-Strategy@economy-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	<p>Yes, the Council welcomes this Outcome and the current focus of activity as set out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is however a need to understanding the current and future skill base of the various sector clusters and the opportunities to address the needs of new clusters. This should take into account the pace of technological and industry development to ensure our local labour market possess the right combination of skills required in the future by FDI and indigenous businesses. • Working closely with the FE and HE sectors is key to preparing the potential workforce for new high growth industries – their role and impact should be highlighted more in the actions. Consideration should be given to the provision of academic but also vocational skills, as well as employability and enterprise skills. • The roles and responsibilities of key partners need to be clearly communicated from the outset to streamline and ensure co-ordinated future delivery i.e. support for high growth start-ups. This is an area where both Council and Invest NI provide support, therefore it is critical that co-ordinated design and delivery is programmed to maximise impact. • How we monitor success / progress across the various stakeholder organisations needs to be better aligned to ensure we are supporting business growth across all sectors, including high growth areas. This will require a pipeline approach recognising each stakeholders’ responsibilities in each stage of a business’ creation and development journey, requiring key stakeholders to work collaboratively to ensure that where support gaps are lacking that these can be addressed. Equally whilst business support is one mechanism through which businesses can prosper and grow consideration needs to be given to creating an environment which enables and encourages economic growth. • Council support the data development agenda and would suggest that more appropriate indicators of success could be developed rather than relying on the production of business plans.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving life chances and growth depends on the skills of citizens – and almost a third of the adult population in Belfast has no qualifications. Skill levels have a significant impact upon employment prospects: people with no qualifications are five times more likely to be unemployed than those who have higher levels of formal education. • Need to provide support to the new innovation company growth starts with small teams, limited finance but high growth ambitions. Support at this stage is limited across a number of public and private stakeholders such as Catalyst Inc, Council and INI. Scaling support is aimed at companies from high turnover levels (£10mill +) to those turning over between £1m - £3m. More needs to be done to be open, inclusive and risk averse to help these companies grow. As highlighted above better coordination and collaboration is required across regional and local stakeholders to create a pipeline of support which facilitates business growth throughout their development journey. • Flexibility is required in business support structures to provide a business centred approach which reflects the growth potential of individual businesses and the growth ambition of the entrepreneur and/or management team. The structure of supports need to enable business creation and innovation this will only be achieved if flexibility is allowed for within support interventions. • Consideration to the non-impact of current schemes such as ESF.
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	<p>Most actions are suitable with a few noted exceptions:</p> <p>Access to Finance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and innovative finance / investment models need to be considered to reflect the original business idea / sustainability and enable risks to be taken. The critical point of a company development cycle is missing and only when a company can show some success will support be given. We can increase the number and scale of high growth start-ups at this stage, in turn leading to greater innovation and confidence.



Availability of a skilled workforce:

- Sector specific skills programmes need to be aligned with needs of the private sector. They need to be agile in terms of adapting to rapidly changing needs and focus on those companies needing to employ small numbers but at higher wages as well as the large numbers at a basic wage.

Science Park (Catalyst Inc):

- The Council would welcome the creation of better coordination and collaboration amongst support providers including the Science Park. The Council’s new Innovation Factory and North Foreshore development are two existing initiatives the Council is developing, potential exists to collaborate with the Science Park to cross pollinate and create specialisms. However plans to extend services should ensure that new activities do not duplicate existing provision and is relevant to all high growth potential start-ups.
- Reference is made to the local Councils ‘new and tailored programmes to support business start-ups at a local level’. There needs to be a move away from business plan development to measure business start and more of a focus on creating businesses that are sustainable. Councils are uniquely placed to coordinate local enterprise delivery whilst providing mainstream and bespoke support to encourage start-up activity within their locality, reflecting local government’s new enterprise and business start powers transferred through Local Government Reform.

Support to Underrepresented Groups

- The levels of business start-up are low when compared to other regions and Belfast is consistently ranked the lowest performing in relation to the levels of starts when compared to 63 other UK Cities (Centre for Cities). The proposed Delivery Plan incorporates a district programme for female entrepreneurship, whilst we recognise females are underrepresented, they are not the only underrepresented group. Others, such as students, graduates, migrants and young people are also underrepresented, consideration should therefore be given to how all underrepresented groups should be supported. The Council would consider itself to have a key role in this area, given the LGR transfer and would wish to be involved in any development work to inform provision in this area. It should also be understood as to the level of provision across departments and local government.

Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?

Access to Finance

- Previous support delivered under ‘Access to finance’ hasn’t necessarily been that accessible for new businesses. Further work needs to be done to make this more accessible for those organisations that do not meet the criteria of the support provided by Invest NI to further support the development of new high potential start-ups.
- **Funding for employability support** - the Council would wish to explore the potential for greater devolution of funding to support local employment and skills development including any potential offered by the **Apprentice Levy**. Making existing funding more effective is essential if the Executive is to meet its ambitious skills and growth targets, and is important for improving the life chances of all citizens. The outcomes based approach offers the opportunity for government to shape community-based services around people, identifying and dealing with their needs intensively in a holistic way with a single point of contact.

Supporting Employability and Skills

- The Council would highlight the strong linkages and dependencies with Outcome 1 and the associated commitment to develop with councils a ‘Local Works’ approach to improving employability. The Council would welcome this approach and would wish to work alongside the Executive and other partners to ensure that such an approach is flexible enough to take account of local circumstances, priority target audiences and adequately resourced to have affect and be sustainable.
- The Council is already working with central government, education institutions and employers to develop an **Employability and Skills Pathway (i.e. Belfast Works)** which seeks to support people into employment and better match skills to emerging industry needs. This will be an integrated whole life programme that will support those furthest from the labour market though to employment. We will work with employers to identify, plan and prepare for emerging job opportunities and to create effective pathways to employment.
- The Council believes that this approach is both scalable and transferrable and would welcome an opportunity to work in partnership with the Executive to co-design the policy framework for improving skills and employability and to explore the potential for incorporating Belfast’s Skills & Employability Strategy within a regional framework.
- A shared understanding of how to target those furthest from the labour market would allow the Executive and the city to work together to engage neighbourhood-level providers to deliver employment programmes within a formal outcomes-led rather than process driven commissioning process. Joint work could be carried out to explore how existing employment and skills programmes could be streamlined at the local level as well as the potential for a city-regional apprenticeships scheme.



	<p>Inclusive Growth Programme</p> <p>The Council welcomes the commitment to adopt a ‘Local Works’ approach to improving employability and skills and would wish to work alongside central government and employers to ensure that people have the right skills to access and progress through the labour market – matching skills with business needs.</p> <p>The Council is already developing an inclusive growth programme that fosters placed based growth which seeks to maximise the social and economic benefits of our investment; creating jobs and opportunities for residents to enter the workforce alongside providing accessible routes to employment through training and skills development.</p> <p>The Council is aware that when the city’s economy grows it doesn’t mean that everyone is better off. Growth can pass many people and communities by unless we take steps to link that growth to better outcomes for everyone. The Council is already working with partners to develop and roll-out a Belfast Works Employability Pathway which is scalable and transferrable.</p> <p>The Council would also recommend that consideration be given to the emerging findings of the RSA Inclusive Growth Commission (https://www.thersa.org/action-and-research/rsa-projects/public-services-and-communities-folder/inclusive-growth-commission) and the potential transferrable lessons for Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Economic Forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council notes reference to the proposed creation of an Employment Forum. In pursuance of a solid, partnership-based delivery approach to stimulating and driving economic growth for the city and city-region, the Council is in the process of forming an economic forum with the NI Executive, other city partners including the private sector. This forum will drive forward the achievement of our common economic goals and develop joint solutions to shared challenges. • This partnership will create an effective economic strategy for Belfast and the city-region, which supports and complements the Executive’s strategy for economic growth. It will build a coherent and evidence-based approach to improving city competitiveness, job creation and support for business. It will deliver long-term strategies for key growth sectors, including retail, hotel, office development, financial tech and creative industries, as well as export-led strategies to support business growth.
<p>Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?</p>	<p>Belfast City Council’s International Relations Framework and priorities grow the Belfast economy by promoting entrepreneurship and provide several opportunities for co-design and co-delivery for more regional benefit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade missions such as South by Southwest. • BCC can help support INI in relation to FDI requests / visits in relation to civic meetings and presentations on Council business related activity. • BCC can help identify and support scalable businesses in the Belfast City Council area with a focus on start-ups and those with high grow potential. • BCC can support the development of key sectoral clusters e.g. creative digital industries. • BCC can support the development of initiatives such as City Proposition and Concierge Service. • BCC should provide input to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business start-up support programme - High Potential start up programmes - Female Entrepreneurship Initiative - Scaling business support programmes - Lessing the regulatory burden on businesses through our own procurement practises, at above and below threshold level. - Supply chain enhancement - Access to finance
<p>Other Comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to ensure that access to finance programmes are aligned to the new and rapidly changing digital industry platforms and business models. • Need to ensure skill development programmes are aligned with key industry clusters and requirements. • Whist the actions aim to lessen the regulatory burden on businesses the executive could also consider working with Local Councils to enable the development and delivery of initiatives that are appropriate to meet the needs of local entrepreneurs/business base and have a greater impact. • The delivery plan does not allude to any focus on support for the Social Economy Sector. As a key provider of social economy support, the Council would welcome working with the Department to create a joined up approach to supporting future social enterprise development. • There is a need for collaborative working on key sectors and clusters e.g. Cyber.



Outcome(s): 1. We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced **economy**

Delivery Plan: Indicator 43 (% change in energy security of supply margin) (BCC ref 5)

PfG SRO: Chris Stewart, Deputy Secretary, Operational Policy, Infrastructure and Regulation, DfE
NI-Economic-Strategy@economy-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	The move to include an indicator on energy security is welcomed; however as the Delivery Plan is not available at the time of consultation, BCC have provided comments below in relation to issues and potential actions.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy from Waste (EfW)/ Renewable Energy: Outcomes 1 (regionally balanced economy) and 2 (protecting the environment) could be linked within the PfG much more clearly while contributing to Northern Ireland’s future sustainability by disconnecting from fossil fuel reliance and increasing its resilience • BCC notes that the consultation document state that the electricity supply margin currently meets security standards and that in terms of generation adequacy, the level is sufficient in Northern Ireland in the medium term. We would seek clarification as there has been local media reporting to the contrary
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	Note at the time of preparing consultation feedback, the relevant Delivery Plan is not available.
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?	An energy security programme - The Council would wish to work alongside the NI Executive, other city partners and utility providers to develop a city-region energy programme. We will work with partners to better manage energy usage across the city’s public estate and support better acquisition, management and finance of energy. We will build opportunities with partners, including the private sector and local communities, to encourage investment and deployment of renewable sources in order to make the city more attractive to investors and to tackle fuel poverty.
Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?	<p>Potential opportunity in relation to economy/ energy/ environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An energy security programme - The Council would wish to work alongside the NI Executive, other city partners and utility providers to develop a city-region energy programme. We will work with partners to better manage energy usage across the city’s public estate and support better acquisition, management and finance of energy. We will build opportunities with partners, including the private sector and local communities, to encourage investment and deployment of renewable sources in order to make the city more attractive to investors and to tackle fuel poverty. • North Foreshore – 340 acres (138ha) former landfill site. Infrastructure investment nearing completion and future potential around cleantech hub/ environmental resource park.
Other Comments:	



Outcome(s): 2. We live and work sustainably – protecting the **environment**

Delivery Plan: Indicators 45 (Biodiversity) - (BCC ref 11)

PfG SRO: David Small, Deputy Secretary of the Environment Marine and Fisheries Group
Chief Executive Northern Ireland Environment Agency, DAERA
pfg.emfg@daera-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	The move to include an indicator on water quality and develop a biodiversity indicator is welcomed and a very positive progression; however as the Delivery Plan for Biodiversity is not available at the time of consultation, BCC have provided comments below in relation to issues and actions.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI is failing on biodiversity targets and the trend is downward. Only 1 of NI’s 49 European Priority Habitats is at favourable status and long term decline in populations of species of plants and animals continues. • There is a critical need to invest in the environment to ensure economic prosperity. For example investment in upland habitat management can alleviate flooding and costs of water purification. • Mainstreaming biodiversity across all government departments and capacity building within central and local government is required as there has been significant loss in intellectual capital within government due to redundancies. A sectoral approach is also necessary rather than the historic reliance on environmental NGOs. • We know we are failing in terms of targets, but we don’t know by how much or why. We need to measure in order to manage, and therefore action on data collation and promotion of standardised monitoring across central and local government would be welcomed. Also promoting the recording of citizen science projects should be encouraged. • There has been no published report on the NI Biodiversity Strategy. Actions should be monitored and reported upon to ascertain their effectiveness and to inform future progress.
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The identified actions (within the Biodiversity Strategy) are not adequate to address the issues as biodiversity has been declining, with resultant economic and health implications. • There is too much emphasis on designated sites and agriculture. An emphasis on designated sites has not historically or currently conserved biodiversity. • Much broader and wide ranging actions are required. Actions should not just be at National level but also incorporate issues at a local level. Local Biodiversity Action Plans can help address this. • Urban environments must be taken into account and people in particular reconnecting them with nature. • Criteria needs to be developed to ensure that a sustainable long term and holistic approach is applied to natural capital. Whilst a focus on natural capital may be useful given that Agriculture is responsible for 28% of total NI Greenhouse Gas emissions, BCC would welcome clarification on how provisioning services such as food production can be balanced and assessed against regulating services such as carbon sequestration or purification of water and air. Rather than setting up a Forum on Natural Capital it would be a better use of resources to support and utilise established structures such as the Northern Ireland Biodiversity GrOup.
Q4 Are there any additional actions	Yes, the Council would suggest that consideration be given to the following:



we wish to raise?
And associated
case around these?

- **Additional actions on soils** should be included in particular the physical and biological components. The Sustainable Agriculture Land Use Strategy does not address this as it simply focuses on soil PH. Improved soil structure and biodiversity will help address issues by increasing carbon storage and reducing above ground run off resulting in water eutrophication.
- There is a need for effective National legislation on **Invasive Alien Species (IAS)** to ensure effective action can be undertaken. The current NI legislation framework is inadequate to deal with this complex and wide ranging issue. Without this we will accrue future costs and indeed many species will become established and too costly to address.
- Need action on biodiversity outside of designated sites and within the **urban environment**.
- Include actions on **priority habitats and species** in the wider countryside, and look at connectivity and **building resilience across landscapes**.

Q5. What areas
/actions does
Council wish to co-
design / co-deliver?

- Yes, the Council would be keen to be directly involved in the development of the biodiversity indicator and delivery plan.

Other Comments:

Sustainable Water - A long Term Water Strategy for NI (2015-2040) : Draft Strategy Implementation Plan

- The Council would note that at time of responding to this delivery plan, we are also consideration and responding Note that at the time of consultation, BCC are also providing feedback in relation to the 'Sustainable Water – A Long-Term Water Strategy for NI (2015-2040) – Draft Strategy Implementation Plan'
 - Drinking water supply and demand
 - Flood risk management and drainage
 - Environmental protection and improvement
 - Water and sewerage services.

In particular BCC are commenting on roles suggested for local government within the implementation plan and would welcome consideration to be given within the applicable PfG Delivery Plans. For example it is Council's understanding that, under the Living with Water Programme, discussions have taken place regarding the use of Council's parks and open spaces to support the delivery of sustainable flood resilient development. It is essential that the appropriate officers, both operational and planning are involved in future discussions with DfI, if Council are to support this aim, given that any actions implemented will have a significant impact on the use of Councils parks and open spaces and again any potential impacts of a capital or revenue nature that may require further discussion



Outcome(s): 2. We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment

Delivery Plan: Indicators 29 (Greenhouse gas emissions), 36 (% household waste that is reused, recycled or composted), 37 (Annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentration at monitored urban roadside locations) - (BCC ref 7, 8, 9)

PfG SRO: David Small, Deputy Secretary of the Environment Marine and Fisheries Group
Chief Executive Northern Ireland Environment Agency, DAERA
pfg.emfg@daera-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	<p>The Council welcomes the outcomes based approach and would highlight the commonalities with our own approach to development the community plan for the city (Belfast Agenda). We would highlight the following for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Delivery Plan highlights that in NI, over 6 million tonnes of waste are produced annually and of this, household waste accounts for just over 839,000. It would have been encouraging to see some commitment to dealing with other waste streams in NI that aren't household waste – e.g. commercial, industrial and C&D waste. The plan refers to the EU 65% target of 65% recycling of <i>municipal waste</i> by 2030, but in terms of Northern Ireland, it references “waste from households” recycling rates and targets. The indicator specifies “percentage household waste”. The plan should be clear and consistent with its terminology around “municipal” and “household” waste so as to avoid any confusion. The commitment to supporting the development of strategic infrastructure for waste could be more clearly defined and expanded upon within the Programme. Whilst Energy from Waste (EfW), as a form of waste treatment can add additional recycling, (and help meet waste related targets), one of its major benefits is that the energy produced can be a valuable domestic energy source contributing to energy security. This is another example where Outcomes 1 (regionally balanced economy) and 2 (protecting the environment) could be linked within the PfG much more clearly while contributing to Northern Ireland’s future sustainability by disconnecting from fossil fuel reliance and increasing its resilience. BCC notes that the consultation document state that the electricity supply margin currently meets security standards and that in terms of generation adequacy, the level is sufficient in Northern Ireland in the medium term. We would seek clarification as there has been local media reporting to the contrary. As a partially renewable energy source EfW could also contribute to renewable energy targets. Beyond electricity, CHP plants and other technologies that could transform waste into other energy products (such as transport fuels or substitute natural gas) all have the potential to contribute towards a range of the outcomes under the PfG and there is a real opportunity here to highlight that.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<p>Waste Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste management is a statutory duty of councils it incurs significant costs for both local and central government. There do not appear to be an explicit link between outcome 2 (protecting the environment) and outcome 1 (regionally balanced economy). A number of respondents to the first stage of the consultation highlighted the importance of links between the two outcomes, including in respect to the Circular Economy. However, this does not appear to have been given consideration within this second phase of the consultation (this was referenced on page 104 of the Framework consultation). It is disappointing that overall, there is minimal focus on the Circular Economy within the Programme and where it is mentioned, it is very generalised e.g. <i>Increased recycling will contribute to the development of the circular economy concept within Northern Ireland by keeping our natural resources in use for as long as possible.</i> BCC would welcome a specific target to create XXX jobs directly related to increase recycling. The Council believes that the circular economy provides a real opportunity to rethink our approach to waste management to move beyond the current focus on simply achieving landfill and recycling targets to maximising the potential presented through the circular economy to support business growth, innovation and job creation. The core vision of the circular economy is of replacing the current largely linear economy of ‘make, use, dispose’ in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recover and regenerate products and materials and the end of each service life. This approach recognises and realises the true value of waste as a resource; the potential increased income generated helping to offset costs to local government. It will also help drive economic and business growth across the region by providing wider economic opportunities for the private and third sectors, by supporting innovation, job creation and increased profitability across the industry. A recent report prepared by WRAP, commissioned by ReNEW (Resource Innovation Network for European Waste), examining the future employment prospects of the Circular Economy for Northern Ireland indicates that at an optimum case a transition to Circular Economy methods and models could be expected to create between 5,500 and 13,000 new jobs by 2030.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need to capture the targets in the delivery plans in the main document. E.g. the EU WFD target - 50% “waste from households” recycling/composting by 2020. <p>Air Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As previously mentioned, the PfG delivery plans fall short at times in providing Belfast only comparisons and the delivery plans opt for regionalised actions. This is of particular relevance to indicator 37 which reports a regional annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentration at monitored urban roadside locations. We have concern that a wider regional indicator dilutes the existing issues in Belfast and may bring about funding cuts which could compromise any air quality improvements. There is a need for the indicator to reflect more clearly how a regional approach will address existing localised problems within identified Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA). In addition to a primary indicator, it may be useful to have a secondary indicator identifying exceedences at individual monitoring locations and associated actions. Under the plan, as a district council we are required to draw up actions plans to deal with air quality problems at localised level. We have developed an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2015-2020 to achieve compliance with relevant nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) objectives in AQMAs and also to reduce NO₂ background concentrations city wide. Many of the actions within Belfast AQAP are transport related and we have no powers to implement these actions. Despite efforts on our part, engagement with key partners responsible for implementing transport related actions in our plan has been difficult. We would therefore support establishment of a NI Air Quality Forum.
<p>Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to the comments above relating to dealing with waste from other streams, and development of strategic infrastructure from waste.
<p>Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated costs around these?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BCC would like consideration to be given to using levies to encourage either a change in consumers’ waste generating behaviour (as per the plastic bag levy) or to entice new developments such as a subsidy for “good” products.
<p>Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?</p>	<p>BCC welcomes continued partnership working in relation to waste.</p>
<p>Other Comments:</p>	

Outcome(s): **2.** We live and work sustainably – protecting the **environment**, **13.** We connect people and opportunities through our **infrastructure**



Delivery Plan: Indicators 23 (Average journey time on key economic corridors), 25 (% of all journeys which are made by walking/cycling/public transport) - (BCC ref 6)

PfG SRO: John McGrath, Deputy Secretary, Transport and Resources, DfI
pfg@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	Yes, the key issues are addressed.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average journey time on key economic corridors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is unlikely to reduce the growing dependency on private vehicles. It is unclear if this includes public transport journeys. Government and the Council have a large amount of Private Non Residential (staff and other) car parking spaces in Belfast City Centre. These are often used by commuting staff adding to peak congestion. There are too many small low density surface car parks in Belfast and a lack of information systems, which mean vehicles are driven around looking for car parking. This in turn increases congestion and perception of insufficient parking availability.
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	Yes, the proposed actions are suitable; however some additional suggestions are outlined below.
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?	<p>The Council would seek consideration and inclusion of the following issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport Infrastructure – ensuring that the city and city-region has appropriate transportation infrastructure which supports and enables access, mobility and connectivity is a key priority. Effective infrastructure and transportation planning will be critical components of the Local Development Plan and the creation of a sustainable land-use strategy for the city and city-region. <p>Within the Belfast Agenda, we are committed to developing an integrated city transport plan which will seek to maximise the opportunities presented by the £150million investment in the Belfast Transport Hub and Rapid Transit System. It will also seek to address under-use of public transport, particularly in relation to commuter patters and work to promote active travel.</p> <p>The Council would wish to work closely with the Executive and Department for Infrastructure to bring this forward and ensure alignment with regional priorities which may emerge in the Investment Strategy and revised Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan. It will be important that we establish shared transport objectives and priorities.</p> City Centre Transport and Parking – Again, we would wish to work with the Executive and DfI in bringing forward a Car Parking Strategy for the city which will include a comprehensive solution to addressing city centre transportation and parking related pressures. BCC would welcome a commitment from DfI to implementing policies that will encourage a modal shift in relation to car usage and public transport; that transfers users to more sustainable mode of transport e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government bodies could remove or reduce their parking provision within Belfast City and consider charging for use.



- Currently evidence is that drivers drive around large numbers of small surface car parks looking for spaces - develop better use of technology and signposting to efficiently direct drivers to available car parking in Belfast.
- Work with BCC and other stakeholders to consolidate small surface car park into multi storey car parks.
- Work with BCC to implement the councils Car Parking Strategy for the City.

• **York Street Interchange** – the Council welcomes the recent announcement by the Infrastructure Minister that this important scheme will be taken forward but are concerned about the current uncertainty around financing. Given the significance of this scheme to supporting the regional economy and improving connectivity between Belfast (and Port) to the rest of the region, the Council believes that this £160million scheme should be explicitly referenced within the Programme for Government and prioritised within the emerging NI Investment Strategy.

• It is recognised that the York Street Interchange proposal will alleviate a significant bottleneck at the M2/Westlink junction which adversely impacts on city centre traffic volumes and congestion on a daily basis. The Council believes that this scheme is critical in supporting regional economic growth and competitiveness, accommodating 1000,000 vehicles each day, mostly commuters to and from Belfast as well as connecting freight /haulage transport through the port of Belfast to the strategic road network throughout the wider region.

• **Local Development Plan** - The planning function and role of Councils in integrating land use and transportation is important here.

• **Infrastructure Plan for the City-Region** - the Council would wish to work in partnership with the NI Executive, the Department for Infrastructure and other government to develop an Infrastructure Plan for the city-region and connections with other economic corridors. This will seek to identify the key infrastructure priorities and will complement any regional infrastructure plan which may be brought forward.

• **Financing Infrastructure Investment** – the Council would wish to wish to work in partnership with the NI Executive, Department for Infrastructure and Department to explore and identify potential new financial mechanisms and vehicles which could be utilised to deliver critical city infrastructure projects and support economic growth and job creation across the region (e.g. joint ventures with private sector, European Investment Bank investment, asset backed vehicles, land value capture, financial transactions capital, social impact bonds, earn-back incentive schemes).

The DoF and Executive are proactively looking at the practicalities and merits of other funding vehicles - in the context of the emerging new Programme for Government, NI Investment Strategy and the deliverability of Executive priorities. Initial discussions have already taken place with DoF officials who are keen to work with council, the Strategic Investment Board and other partners to co-commission a specific piece of work around innovative financing models. This will seek to identify options and examine their merits and practicalities of implementation.

It is important to recognise the financial tools available to the council, including, for example, ability to borrow to invest in capital schemes, ability to access other funds, and the ability to enter into Joint Ventures with the private sector to unlock major investment and development opportunities.

The Council would also wish to explore with DFI, DoF, the NI Executive, other Departments and the Strategic Investment Board the potential to utilise government assets to incentivise investment and unlock major development and infrastructure schemes. We would also wish to explore more commercial alternatives to bringing forward and financing important such schemes. This is linked to the earlier disc

Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?

The delivery, with government bodies and other stakeholders, of an agreed Car Parking Strategy for the City.

Other Comments:

- BCC’s responsibility for car parking and the Belfast Bike Share Scheme are referenced with the Delivery Plan for journey times (Indictors 23 & 25 / Outcomes 2 & 13); however this is limited to 6% of car parking spaces in the city. DfI’s responsibility for On Street parking should also be referenced.
- Both DfI/TNI and BCC should review tariffs together to encourage short stay car parking.
- Increased enforcement is mentioned - this should perhaps include enforcement of over staying as there is evidence of “Feeding the Meter” in priority parking areas

Outcome(s): 2. We live and work sustainably – protecting the **environment**

Delivery Plan: Indicator 44 (% water bodies at ‘good’ status) (BCC ref 10)



PfG SRO: David Small, Deputy Secretary of the Environment Marine and Fisheries Group/
Chief Executive Northern Ireland Environment Agency, DAERA
pfg.emfg@daera-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	As the Delivery Plan is not available at the time of consultation, BCC have provided comments below in relation to issues and potential actions.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	Note at the time of preparing consultation feedback, the relevant Delivery Plan is not available. BCC assumes that actions would relate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring catchments are managed economically and efficiently; Reducing agricultural pollution; Controlling urban pollution; Monitoring and reducing chemical pollutants; and Managing waste-water, sludge and septic tanks.
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?	<p>Flood Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BCC would welcome specific measures to manage flood risk under outcomes 2 (environment) and/ or 13 (infrastructure), and therefore within this or other delivery plans. The Scottish Programme for Government/ Outcomes Model makes reference to ‘well-designed, sustainable places’ and includes a sustainable approach to flood risk management within this. There is a similar NI indicator to ‘improve the supply of suitable housing’ however it is proposed that specific references to increasing the number of homes and businesses which are not at risk of flooding and sustainable flood risk management are also important indicators. According to the NI Regional Risk Register (compiled by Civil Contingencies Group NI) flooding remains one of the top risks in Northern Ireland and should be included in the PfG. By way of example the 2015 Belfast Tidal Flood Risk Study produced by Atkins identified that constructing a coastal flood defence for Belfast would cost £12million, but it is estimated that it would save £120m each time it prevented Belfast from flooding. This is alongside preventing the significant non-financial impacts on residents, businesses and protecting the reputation of Belfast and Northern Ireland. <p>Living with Water Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BCC would like the PfG Delivery Plans to take account of the drainage infrastructure within Belfast is fit-for-purpose and alleviates potential risks around flooding and pollution. The ‘Living with Water Programme’ has identified that Belfast has the worst drainage infrastructure in Northern Ireland and a failing to act could result in significant consequences including e.g. financial impact, reputational damage, impeding housing and business growth and adversely impacting on construction. Estimates to deliver the necessary infrastructure are around £750m for Belfast alone. <p>Infrastructure Plan for the City-Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council would wish to work in partnership with the NI Executive, the Department for Infrastructure and other government to develop an Infrastructure Plan (including Waste) for the city-region and connections with other economic corridors. This will seek to identify the key infrastructure priorities and will complement any regional infrastructure plan which may be brought forward. <p>Financing Infrastructure Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council would wish to wish to work in partnership with the NI Executive, Department for Infrastructure and Department to explore and identify potential new financial mechanisms and vehicles which could be utilised to deliver critical city infrastructure projects and support economic growth and job creation across the region (e.g. joint ventures with private sector, European Investment Bank investment, asset backed vehicles, land value capture, financial transactions capital, social impact bonds, earn-back incentive schemes).



The DoF and Executive are proactively looking at the practicalities and merits of other funding vehicles - in the context of the emerging new Programme for Government, NI Investment Strategy and the deliverability of Executive priorities. Initial discussions have already taken place with DoF officials who are keen to work with council, the Strategic Investment Board and other partners to co-commission a specific piece of work around innovative financing models. This will seek to identify options and examine their merits and practicalities of implementation.

It is important to recognise the financial tools available to the council, including, for example, ability to borrow to invest in capital schemes, ability to access other funds, and the ability to enter into Joint Ventures with the private sector to unlock major investment and development opportunities.

The Council would also wish to explore with DFI, DoF, the NI Executive, other Departments and the Strategic Investment Board the potential to utilise government assets to incentivise investment and unlock major development and infrastructure schemes. We would also wish to explore more commercial alternatives to bringing forward and financing important such schemes. This is linked to the earlier disc

Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?

Sustainable Water - A long Term Water Strategy for NI (2015-2040) : Draft Strategy Implementation Plan

- The Council would note that at time of responding to this delivery plan, we are also consideration and responding Note that at the time of consultation, BCC are also providing feedback in relation to the 'Sustainable Water – A Long-Term Water Strategy for NI (2015-2040) – Draft Strategy Implementation Plan'
 - Drinking water supply and demand
 - Flood risk management and drainage
 - Environmental protection and improvement
 - Water and sewerage services.
- In particular BCC are commenting on roles suggested for local government within the implementation plan and would welcome consideration to be given within the applicable PfG Delivery Plans. For example it is Council's understanding that, under the Living with Water Programme, discussions have taken place regarding the use of Council's parks and open spaces to support the delivery of sustainable flood resilient development. It is essential that the appropriate officers, both operational and planning are involved in future discussions with DfI, if Council are to support this aim, given that any actions implemented will have a significant impact on the use of Councils parks and open spaces and again any potential impacts of a capital or revenue nature that may require further discussion

Outcome(s): **3.** We have a more **equal** society, **5.** We are an **innovative, creative society** where people can fulfil their potential,

11. We have high quality **public services**, **14.** We give our **children** and young people the best start in life

Delivery Plan: Indicators 11 (% school leavers achieving at level 2 or above including English and Maths), 12 (Gap between % non-FSME school leavers and % FSME school leavers achieving level 2 or above including English and Maths), 13 (% schools found to be good or better) - (BCC ref **13**)

PfG SRO: **Dr David Hughes**, Director of Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards, DoE
PfGconsultation@education-ni.gov.uk



The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst not a direct provider of formal educational programmes for children and young people, BCC have a range of services targeted at different age groups which all work to support the identified outcomes and contribute to supporting people to fulfil their potential. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivered through our community and play centres (direct provision of play services to children and young people) outreach programmes in schools and communities and our parks and open spaces provision of after-schools services for Primary School aged children (BCC seek to work with children in deprived communities across the city) <p>Our services make effective connections between schools and communities and provide access to free non-formal education opportunities. We would be keen to strengthen those connections to reach out to schools more directly, explore how we target those children and families in greatest need, help them access our services, and play a greater role in supporting children and young people achieve their potential.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Article 12 of the UNCRC recognises that the opinions of children and young people matter and that they should be consulted on decisions that impact on them. It states: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”</i> <p>Council is committed to supporting young people to articulate their own priorities and to ensure that they have a voice in influencing the development of policies and the strategic direction of the organisation for example influencing the Belfast Agenda and ensuring that our consultation with children and young people is in line with the best practice guidance Ask First for participation as promoted by Children in NI (CINI).</p>
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BCC welcomes the inclusion of indicators relating to achievement of formal qualifications in English and Maths, but would also want to highlight the achievement of Open College Network qualifications which suit many young people for whom the traditional education model does not appear to work. Young people need to be supported to achieve success and to recognise that they have a range of skills and talents. One example of this is the BCC Youth Forum where young people from across Belfast have an opportunity to debate and campaign on those issues that impact on the lives of children and young people across the city. The young people set their own priorities and to date they have focused on issues such as youth homelessness, poverty and emotional health & well-being and have sought to influence policy-makers and decision-makers to have regard to the needs and wishes of young people. In addition Council seeks to support the Youth Forum to act an engagement tool for other young people across Belfast to ensure that Council policies are informed by, and take account of, the needs of children and young people. During their term in office all Youth Forum members develop their employability skills and work towards achieving accreditation in an OCN award in Leading Change. Other forms of educational achievement like this are important to recognise. BCC plan to work with Youth Forum members to develop pathways to additional education, training or employment opportunities following their involvement in the Youth Forum and would welcome a collaboration with DE, DfE and FE colleges to explore what might be possible. This fits closely with BCC’s Employability and Skills Framework 2015 -25 which sets a vision of “realising the potential of Belfast’s people and its economy by transforming skills, employability and aspiration”. To this end we will seek to ensure our young people are supported to develop the skills that will match the needs of employers.
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	Yes
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated costs around these?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Employability and Skills - The Council would highlight the strong linkages and dependencies with Outcome 1 and the associated commitment to develop with councils a ‘Local Works’ approach to improving employability. The Council would welcome this approach and would wish to work alongside the Executive and other partners to ensure that such an approach is flexible enough to take account of local circumstances, priority target audiences and adequately resourced to have affect and be sustainable. <p>The Council is already working with central government, education institutions and employers to develop an Employability and Skills Pathway (i.e. Belfast Works) which seeks to support people into employment and better match skills to emerging industry needs. This will be an integrated whole life programme that will support those furthest from the labour market though to employment. We will work with employers to identify, plan and prepare for emerging job opportunities and to create effective pathways to employment.</p>



	<p>The Council believes that this approach is both scalable and transferrable and would welcome an opportunity to work in partnership with the Executive to co-design the policy framework for improving skills and employability and to explore the potential for incorporating Belfast’s Skills & Employability Strategy within a regional framework.</p> <p>A shared understanding of how to target those furthest from the labour market would allow the Executive and the city to work together to engage neighbourhood-level providers to deliver employment programmes within a formal outcomes-led rather than process driven commissioning process. Joint work could be carried out to explore how existing employment and skills programmes could be streamlined at the local level as well as the potential for a city-regional apprenticeships scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Youth Forum members have a remit to consult and engage with other children and young people within local communities in Belfast and to raise issues that are impacting on their lives. The Youth Forum campaigns on issues related to social disadvantage and inequality and makes recommendations for action - it would be very helpful if opportunities were created for these young people to lobby Executive Departments and have clear channels of communication with politicians and decision-makers. <p>Improving Public Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximising the impact of local assets – partners across the city are investing in important community assets, while communities themselves are bringing forward and delivering investment projects. The Council would highlight the importance of physical assets being brought forward with a focus on delivering outcomes. Agency’s need to work together to maximise the benefits of local assets and where possible use them as a means of making services more integrated and accessible. <p>There are a number of programmes seeking to improve community assets as a driver for regeneration including the Council’s Local Investment and Belfast Investment Funds, Urban Villages and Building Sustainable Communities. It is important that we take a strategic overview to ensure that interventions are planned and managed in a way that maximises their benefit to local people. The Council is conscious that in the years ahead community planning partners will be building houses, schools, health-care assets, new leisure centres and many other community based assets.</p> <p>Again, the Council believe that there is a real opportunity to work across government and sectors to better plan, maximise opportunities for co-location of services and in turn provide better services, deliver monetary savings and achieve better outcomes for local people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use social innovation to unlock service transformation – the Council would wish to work with the Executive and city partners to explore how we can maximise social innovation tools and techniques to help transform and improve the way we plan and deliver services at both the city and local level. Through our smart cities work we will explore how we can work with residents and partners to co-design and deliver more effective service provision. We believe that this approach can be adopted at scale in other parts of the region.
<p>Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish closer links with the Education Authority to ensure that Council services to school-aged children are targeted at those who are in greatest need. With area planning in education, there may be an option for Council to contribute to the development of plans and co-design / co-deliver interventions targeted at those in greatest need. Better match education curriculums with future skills and business needs.
<p>Other Comments:</p>	<p>In relation to outcomes 1 (regionally balanced economy) and outcome 3 (more equal society), the Council would highlighted how regional and sub-regional data can mask issues such as clusters of deprived communities, economic inactivity and poverty. With this in mind it is important that public service delivery considers the localised needs of communities in urban areas.</p>

Outcome(s): 3. We have a more equal society, 6. We have more people working in better jobs

Delivery Plan: Indicator 17, 32, 33 **Economic inactivity rate** (BCC ref 15)

PfG SRO: Derek Baker, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Policy Group, DfE
NI-Economic-Strategy@economy-ni.gov.uk

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Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	Yes - The delivery plan covers the majority of the key issues which would be expected.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills provision - whilst formal skills attainment is critical factor in moving individuals from economic inactivity towards employment, there is a need to look at the development of softer employability skills. These combine basic attitudes and abilities that are essential to work, as well as generic skills that contribute to productivity and success. Additionally consideration needs to be given to promoting alternative employment pathways such as through self-employment for those individuals for which this may be the most viable entry into the labour market. • Family cultures – consideration should be given to changing the mind-sets of individuals and the wider friends and family circle to change attitudes to employment. • Employer needs – it is recognised the delivery plan focuses on the supply of individuals into the labour market, however as referred to within the delivery plan, the supply of individuals needs to be aligned to employer needs and the availability of local employment opportunities. IT is therefore important interventions to address ‘supply’ are informed by and reactive to employer demands.
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – the actions are framed around the barriers to employment and provide a wide ranging approach to tackling the issues faced in addressing economic inactivity. • We welcome the recognition of the need for local area solutions and the recognition that individuals have different circumstances impacting upon their ability to enter employment necessitating the need for a personalised and individualised support journey. • Making Work Pay- We also welcome these proposals including the removal of the working hours cap and the accommodations for childcare provision, both of which impact the level of degree individuals can be engaged in the labour market.
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Work Pay - the inclusion of the Cost of Work allowance is also positive recognising the poverty trap faced by those on low incomes. To support this proposal consideration should be given to how low paid families can be supposed whilst in work to gain new skills to enable them to progress up the career ladder into well paid positions. • Skills for Work - whilst formal skills attainment is critical factor in moving individuals from economic inactivity towards employment, there is a need to look at the development of softer employability skills. These combine basic attitudes and abilities that are essential to work, as well as generic skills that contribute to productivity and success. Self-Employment support proposed, should align to existing support provision currently provided through local councils. • Long term Education & Awareness, Work is Good for You - consideration needs to be given to promoting alternative employment pathways such as through self-employment for those individuals for which this may be the most viable entry into the labour market. We also welcome the inclusion of the media outlets as a key partner in delivery.
Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?	<p>Taking into account the scale of deprivation, economic inactivity and poverty across Belfast, the Council would welcome the opportunity to co-deliver and co-design the plan in relation to its delivery across Belfast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Employability and Skills - The Council would highlight the strong linkages and dependencies with Outcome 1 and the associated commitment to develop with councils a ‘Local Works’ approach to improving employability. The Council would welcome this approach and would wish to work alongside the Executive and other partners to ensure that such an approach is flexible enough to take account of local circumstances, priority target audiences and adequately resourced to have affect and be sustainable. <p>The Council is already working with central government, education institutions and employers to develop an Employability and Skills Pathway (i.e. Belfast Works) which seeks to support people into employment and better match skills to emerging industry needs. The Council believes that this approach is both scalable and transferrable and would welcome an opportunity to work in partnership with the Executive to co-design the policy framework for improving skills and employability and to explore the potential for incorporating Belfast’s Skills & Employability Strategy within a regional framework.</p> <p>A shared understanding of how to target those furthest from the labour market would allow the Executive and the city to work together to engage neighbourhood-level providers to deliver employment programmes within a formal outcomes-led rather than process driven commissioning process. Joint work could be carried out to explore how existing employment and skills programmes could be streamlined at the local level as well as the potential for a city-regional apprenticeships scheme.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for employability support – the Council would wish to explore the potential for greater devolution of funding to support local employment and skills development including any potential offered by the Apprentice Levy. Making existing funding more effective is essential if the Executive is to meet its ambitious skills and growth targets, and is important for improving the life chances of all citizens. The outcomes based approach offers the opportunity for government to shape community-based services around people, identifying and dealing with their needs intensively in a holistic way with a single point of contact.
Other Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer needs – it is recognised the delivery plan focuses on the supply of individuals into the labour market, however as referred to within the delivery plan, the supply of individuals needs to be aligned to employer needs and the availability of local employment opportunities. It is therefore important interventions to address ‘supply’ are informed by and reactive to employer demands. Note that the reference to Job Density Index is helpful but it reinforces the importance of taking a demand and supply approach to tackling these issues as Belfast, while a major hub of employment, also ranks high in terms of the level of resident economic inactivity. • Age Discrimination - The Council recently passed a notice of motion to call upon the Northern Ireland Executive Office to take immediate steps to extend Age Discrimination Legislation to include the provision of goods, services and facilities. The Council would welcome that consideration is given to this within the PfG document.

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Outcome(s): 4. We enjoy long, healthy, active lives

Delivery Plan: Indicator 2 (Gap between highest and lowest deprivation quintile in healthy life expectancy at birth) 3 (Healthy life expectancy at birth), 4 (Preventable mortality), 5 (% of people who are satisfied with health and social care), 6 (% population with GHQ12 scores ≥ 4 [signifying possible mental health problem]), 7 (% babies born at low birth weight) - (BCC ref 12, 16 and 17)

PfG SRO: Dr Anne Kilgallen, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Public Health, Department of Health
Chris Matthews, Director of Mental Health, Disability & Older People, Department of Health
Professor Charlotte McArdle, Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health
ops@health-ni.gov.uk



The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	<p>The Council supports the proposals to work with people to empower them to live healthier lives, improve service provision in support of better health outcomes, and work collaboratively to support positive health impacts from social programmes. We also welcome the focus given to supporting citizens to lead long, healthy and active lives through: prevention and early intervention; improving access to health and social care services; tackling health inequalities; and, delivering better outcomes from the Executive’s investment in health and social care.</p> <p>The Council has a key role to play in supporting this, providing a range of age-targeted programmes which are aligned to the delivery of this outcome including, for example, Leisure, Health, Parks and Open Spaces, Educational Outreach and Community Services and support.</p>
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council supports the proposals to work with people to empower them to live healthier lives, improve service provision in support of better health outcomes, and work collaboratively to support positive health impacts from social programmes. However the Council would like to see commitment to creating an Age Friendly Northern Ireland within the PFG, and inclusion of an associated indicator relating to older people within the applicable delivery plan(s). This is also linked to outcome 8. • Again the Council would wish to work alongside central government and other public agencies to develop a whole system approach to supporting healthy living and wellbeing.
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce life inequalities – The Council recognise the importance of taking inter-sectoral approach to addressing the root causes of health and life inequalities within Belfast and the wider region. The Belfast Strategic Partnership was established to address the life inequalities that impact on Belfast, developing effective plans and interventions to help all residents. Supported by the Belfast Health Development Unit which is made up of staff from Belfast City Council, the Public Health Agency and the Belfast Health and Social Services Trust. The BSP has developed a ‘Framework for Action on life inequalities’ which includes joint inter-agency work on mental health, alcohol and drug related health issues, life-long learning and early years/early years interventions. They are also seeking to bring forward interventions and support in cross-cutting issues such as • Addressing health inequalities – in the context of the community plan for the city (Belfast Agenda) we will work with our partners including the Belfast Strategic Partnership to develop an integrated programme to address health inequalities, including enhancing mental wellbeing and reducing social inclusion. This will seek to build upon and maximise the impact of the regional ‘Making Life Better Strategy’ within Belfast addressing many aspects of physical health (physical activity, active travel), and mental wellbeing (particularly issues of social cohesion, community vulnerability and isolation). We will also seek to maximise the health impact of the Council’s £105million leisure transformation programme. <p>In May 2016, a cross-party delegation from council meet with the Head of Fuel Poverty & Private Grants Team within DfC (Martin McDermott) to explore some of the key concerns relating to fuel poverty, some of which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Aging - Belfast was the first city in Northern Ireland to join the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities. An age-friendly city is one in which organisations work together to make sure the quality of life for people is enhanced as they age. <p>We are also part of the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) which has been working for the last 18 months, consulting with over 700 older people. Specific concerns were highlighted around maintenance of pavements, public toilets and outdoor seating and home heating.</p> <p>HASP, which is part of the Belfast Strategic Partnership, has developed an ‘Age-friendly plan 2-14-17’ to address these issues. These include, for example running an arts festival for older people; continuing with the Older Volunteer Awards; working with housing providers to communicate housing options; developing several age-friendly outdoor spaces; and developing an Age-friendly Belfast standard for businesses, and services to strive towards.</p> <p>An intergenerational toolkit has been produced a guide and toolkit which is seeks to bring younger and older generations together and helping to support better engagement with younger and older people, promote participation and sense of belonging.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Belfast - promoting healthy living and physical activity through targeted health and wellbeing programmes and utilising our assets (i.e. parks) and facilities (e.g. leisure centres, community centres). Working with the Healthy Aging Strategic Partnership, the Council is also committed to develop and deliver an 'active aging programme which informs future partner service design and planning. • Older People / Age Friendly NI– Most of our residents are living longer, healthier lives. People over 60 already make-up one fifth of our population and this is forecast to increase dramatically to over one third by 2050. Giving the changing demographics with an aging population with diverse needs, we believe that older people are of huge importance and should share in the progress towards each of the PfG outcomes along with other groups in our society. The Council believes that the PfG should make explicit reference to respecting and protecting the wellbeing of older people. <p>The Council notes that under Outcome 5 (fulfilling potential) there is a commitment to implementing the active aging strategy and the fact that specific delivery plans give focus to older people and creating an Age Friendly NI. The Council would seek clarification, perhaps within the delivery plans, as to how the Department will lead and drive the delivery of the active acting aging strategy including working collaboratively with local government, Trusts, Public Health Authority and others to create an Age Friendly NI.</p>
<p>Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?</p>	<p>See comments above.</p>
<p>Other Comments:</p>	

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Outcome(s): [5. An innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential](#)

Delivery Plan: Indicator 27 **Engaging in arts** (BCC ref 19)

PfG SRO: Ian Maye, Deputy Secretary, Community Cohesion Group, Department for Communities communications@communities-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback



<p>Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?</p>	<p>The Council would highlight the following additional issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction of funding to arts and cultural organisations in recent years - Issues around lack of public funding to help sustain important cultural assets
<p>Q2. What additional issues are there?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If, as we accept, engagement with culture has a positive impact on individuals, communities and the population as a whole, it is likely that repeat engagement will have a greater impact and lead to a more sustained and sustainable culture of engagement. However, research from the Continuous Household Survey and by Audiences NI indicates that the majority of people are infrequent arts consumers. This is referred to briefly in the delivery plan “[We] will seek to ensure that cultural engagement is deepened”. We would welcome further development of projects and measures that increase the frequency of cultural engagement. • While the strong performance of film is to be congratulated, it should also be noted that this includes popular film. While we accept that it is difficult to develop more nuanced data taking in to account different film genres, we would welcome additional analysis of the data and targets for engagement excluding film. • We would also welcome targets based on separate analysis of arts participation and attendance. • The Continuous Household Survey contains evidence of differential impact among children from different demographic groups. We would welcome further analysis and target-setting based on this evidence. • There is limited research into differential cultural engagement based on sexuality, dependency and ethnicity. We would welcome further research in these areas. • It is important that we recognise that cultural engagement is already very high, and so we need to maintain engagement with existing audiences. In particular, there is a correlation between arts consumption as a child and likelihood of continuing to engage with the arts in to old age. Therefore, engagement with children is safeguarding future cultural audiences and reducing the impact of age on engagement. • The delivery plan references seeking to “ensure that cultural engagement is [...] enriched”. We would welcome further recognition of the importance of quality, if only that intrinsically high-quality arts are more likely to have a greater instrumental impact, for example, in terms of change in confidence, health and repeat engagement. • Overall, benchmarking performance against other comparable areas and further analysis of existing research on barriers to arts engagement would provide better context to the analysis of issues and proposed actions.
<p>Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is unclear how an overarching strategy will impact on or enhance the delivery plan. • We would welcome more outline actions beyond 2016/17. • Overall, it is unclear how a number of proposed actions will contribute to turning the curve. • While raising awareness of and ambitions for creative careers is welcome and would support the council’s Strengthening the sector action plan, it is unclear how this will impact on the indicator. In addition, it should also be noted that without further core support for organisations, it is likely that young people will need to travel to other parts of the UK or Ireland to find rewarding and secure creative jobs. • It is unclear why the music sector has been prioritised in the action plan above other arts forms which also have a substantial impact on young people. • While we are unsure what is meant by qualitative indicators, we welcome the intent to develop methodologies to measure the impact of the arts. We would draw your attention to the council’s Art affects, a research report co-designed by the arts sector which identifies over 40 arts outcomes and contains a population-level evidence collection framework and measurement toolkit for individual arts organisations. • We would caution against proposals to partner with individual culture and arts organisations at this stage of planning. There is a wealth of quality organisations in Belfast who will be able to contribute to delivery. • We welcome further capital investment in cultural buildings.
<p>Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cultural sector has been subject to a number of cuts and requires an increase in funding to enable it to sustain even current levels of performance. • We would draw your attention to Belfast City Council’s Cultural Framework for Belfast and associated action plan: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/tourism-venues/culture/culture-about.aspx. We would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with DfC and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in its delivery. • Given that PFG recognises that cultural engagement is intrinsic to quality of life, we would welcome seeing cultural actions embedded in other delivery plans where arts and culture has a recognised instrumental impact on personal, community and population wellbeing, e.g. outcomes 1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 12 and 14. • Need to recognise the role of local government in supporting culture and arts activity and providing support
<p>Q5. What areas /actions does</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to areas where local councils have been identified as a partner, Belfast City Council would wish to be involved in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Further data development, including qualitative research, indicator development and research in to barriers to participation ○ Any large-scale collaborative process and/or plans to become the NI Creative capital of Europe given that the majority of arts organisations are based within Belfast



<p>Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Any career development initiatives (subject to suitability) o Heritage skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural & Arts participation - The Council note that research from the Continuous Household Survey and by Audiences NI suggests that the majority of people here are infrequent arts consumers. We would like to see further development of projects and measures that increase the frequency of cultural engagement. <p>The Council would wish to work alongside central government and other partners to deliver an integrated cultural and arts strategy which seeks to enhance the city’s distinctive culture, encourage and enable access to cultural and arts activities, providing opportunities for participation in activities, events and festivals.</p>
<p>Other Comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges in addressing a sense of ‘passive listening and engagement’

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Outcome(s): 5. We are an **innovative, creative society** where people can fulfil their potential

Delivery Plan: Indicators 19 (% population living in absolute and relative poverty [before housing costs]), 28 (Self-efficacy) - (BCC ref 14)

PfG SRO: Dr Denis McMahon, Deputy Secretary, Social Inclusion Group, DfC
communications@communities-ni.gov.uk

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Feedback



<p>Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?</p>	<p>The Delivery Plan includes interventions relating to skills, digital literacy and inclusion etc. In relation to these BCC would welcome consideration to be given to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability/ Specific Skills development – attracting young people/unemployed into IT Industry using a credited course avenue rather than a university route. There are local companies willing to do this. • With so much investment going into making Belfast a Smart City there still needs to be investment in making our citizens smart i.e. getting people online and helping individuals reach their full innovation potential. It is not enough to invest in technology, we need to also invest at a local level in people meaning providing appropriate training for all ages and access to new technology so that they can prosper and grow. • Communities in Belfast are not making the most of technology and moving with the digital age - this needs to be explored in terms of open community platforms and better opportunities for democracy. This also means that our community workers need to learn to embrace and learn new technology skills to promote this and use them to understand how to find democratic solutions to complex community issues.
<p>Q2. What additional issues are there?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When counting digital participants, it is important to track their development and to acknowledge that one digital awareness session does not impart the skills needed to continue on with digital learning. • ‘Digital Learning in Schools’ would need to consist of a diverse range of digital skills in order to open future employment pathways for young people. Also digital learning at a community level for young people should be explored through Saturday Clubs and after schools for young people living in poverty rather than solely classroom based learning.
<p>Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCC’s Super Connected Communities Outreach Project is proving very popular and has enabled wider scope in the community through wifi enabled folds, sheltered housing, church groups and various clubs. It has also allowed BCC to facilitate groups that don’t normally engage in council led community projects. From this experience it would suggest do not solely concentrate on a school programme, but on any community setting using an adaptable digital programme.
<p>Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As more services are due to move online, particularly benefits, there still remains many who are still not online. There needs to be a fresh campaign to explain to people how this will affect them and why they need to get trained online and know where to access this facility.
<p>Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce poverty and social Inequalities – There is a need to adopt a cross-government and cross-sectoral approach to addressing poverty and social inequalities help alleviate many of the social pressures which exist across region and particularly within Belfast as an urban area. The Council would wish to work alongside the Executive, Department for Communities and other stakeholders in bringing forward the delivery plans attached to this PfG Outcome as well as the new Social Strategy which is to emerge. Addressing fuel poverty is a key area of concern for the council and elected Members; who have previously highlighted the need for a more targeted and sustainable approach to the development and delivery of support schemes such as (or example, the Affordable Warmth Scheme funded by the Department for Communities and administered by local government, the bolder replacement scheme administered by the NIHE); developing preventative measures and financial assistance. • Housing Provision – Housing is a key issue in creating sustainable communities. Affordable and safe housing is fundamental to the quality of life of our residents. In 2015, there were over 6,900 people stress in the city. The Council welcomes the commitment given to helping people get access to suitable housing and would highlight the role of local government in supporting this process through its planning functions, the zoning of land for housing and different types of tenure through the Local Development Plan process. The Council is committed to working with central government, the NIHE and other partners to maximise the benefits of housing investment in the city, increasing the tenure mix, growing the population of the city and city centre and helping create sustainable, safe and cohesive communities. • Digital Connectivity –important for driving economic growth, competitiveness and supporting the development of the knowledge based /technology based start-ups. There is currently a mismatch between the data protection policies and speed of action within the public sector and the needs of private sector companies (i.e. the innovators and solution providers) which constrains somewhat potential collaborative initiatives. In relation to innovative public sector procurement and opportunities for supporting Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) type programmes and innovation, it will be important that government seeks to removes unnecessary barriers. <p>The Council’s Super-Connected Cities project has proved popular and is an example of how focus intervention and investment can provide necessary digital infrastructure and enabling online access for businesses, communities and citizens across the city. The BCC Super Connected Communities project can be used as a springboard, as its success is largely owed to co-design and co-delivery. Buy-in has been secured from other public and private organisations such as DoF, other BCC departments, the IT industry and the traditional community sector. These partnerships demonstrate a willingness to work together to accomplish more, build collective data and create digital platforms as a channel to achieve a better way of doing business with our citizens. Such alternative programmes which invest in making are citizens digitally literate should be explored.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace IV – There is a delivery plan in place for this proposed pilot project focusing on fostering 21st century skills in an open society through easy access to technology and mentorship in shared spaces for the city’s young people. Through the exploration of free open and inclusive technology, the aim of this project is to future proof young people by encouraging them to build positive relations and become adaptable, thoughtful, open-minded adults.
Other Comments:	

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Outcome(s): 5. We are an innovative, **creative** society, where people can fulfil their potential, 13. We connect people and opportunities through our **infrastructure**
11. We have high quality public services

Delivery Plan: Indicator 24 (Proportion of premises with **access to broadband services** at speeds at or above 30Mbps) (BCC ref 18)
Indicator 46 (Usage of **online channels** to access public services (BCC ref 31)

PfG SRO: June Ingram, Director, Energy, Telecoms, Minerals and Petroleum Division, DfE
NI-Economic-Strategy@economy-ni.gov.uk
Paul Wickens, Chief Executive Officer, Enterprise Shared Services, DoF
ProgrammeforGovernment@finance-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.



Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<p>BCC would like to see this given priority within the PfG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Connectivity –important for driving economic growth, competitiveness and supporting the development of the knowledge based /technology based start-ups. There is currently a mismatch between the data protection policies and speed of action within the public sector and the needs of private sector companies (i.e. the innovators and solution providers) which constrains somewhat potential collaborative initiatives. In relation to innovative public sector procurement and opportunities for supporting Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) type programmes and innovation, it will be important that government seeks to removes unnecessary barriers. <p>The Council’s Super-Connected Cities project has proved popular and is an example of how focus intervention and investment can provide necessary digital infrastructure and enabling online access for businesses, communities and citizens across the city. The BCC Super Connected Communities project can be used as a springboard, as its success is largely owed to co-design and co-delivery. Buy-in has been secured from other public and private organisations such as DoF, other BCC departments, the IT industry and the traditional community sector. These partnerships demonstrate a willingness to work together to accomplish more, build collective data and create digital platforms as a channel to achieve a better way of doing business with our citizens. Such alternative programmes which invest in making are citizens digitally literate should be explored.</p>
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?	
Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?	<p>Within the Belfast Agenda (Community Plan for Belfast), the Council notes that digital connectivity is improving; nearly 100% of households in Belfast have access to optical fibre broadband. The city is rolling out free City WiFi. Belfast is part of a project providing the fastest connection from North America to Europe. However the city also needs a number of new ways of measuring the impact of our focus on city development priorities. BCC endeavours that partners will work together to create these new measures including ‘Digital connectivity’.</p>

Outcome(s): 6. We have more people working in **better jobs**

Delivery Plan: Indicator 14 **Population of the work force in employment** (BCC ref 20)

PfG SRO: Derek Baker, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Policy Group, DfE
NI-Economic-Strategy@economy-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback



<p>Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – the Council believe the main issues to be addressed are identified and the Council welcome the focus on the three distinct client groups: those entering the workforce; those already in the workforce and those furthest removed from work. The Council’s Belfast Agenda under the Working & Learning pillar identifies the importance of addressing education underachievement and the need to align the supply and demand of skills within the city, through an inclusive growth approach. • From a community development perspective we welcome the identification of the Department for Communities as a key partner in relation to the Social Inclusion strategy and funding. However, there needs to be more explicit reference to other relevant strategies/frameworks including the Urban Regeneration and Community Development Strategy and the Community Support Programme under DfC’s role on page 16 of the Delivery Plan. • Additionally, there doesn’t appear to be reference made to TEO and the Social Investment Fund in the delivery plan pages (16-18) or the range of other Departmental led strategies which support the sector.
<p>Q2. What additional issues are there?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery plan focuses primarily upon formal skill developments, however it should be recognised that whilst these are fundamentally important employers also place importance on softer employability skills and attitudes to work. • Developing entrepreneurship skills hasn’t been addressed within the delivery plan. To tackle economic inactivity levels and low levels of entrepreneurship consideration should be given to developing enterprise still through the education system. • Consideration should also be given to supporting micro and small businesses to upskill their existing workforce, this has a staff resource and financial implication which has much greater impact for smaller organisations. The same principle would apply to community and voluntary sector organisations. • The Delivery Plan reflects the responsibilities across Government and the need to work in collaboration with industry, education and academia, in ensuring that there is a pipeline of skilled people able to contribute to the economy. However, given the complexity of addressing this issue, within the Northern Ireland economy local Councils and the third sector should be recognised as having a valuable contribution to make in this process. • There is a need to reference the URCD Framework. This Policy Framework aims to ensure that the Executive Depts investment in urban regeneration and community development genuinely adds value, tackles inequality and helps everyone to contribute to, and share in, economic prosperity. Additionally, there is no reference in the DfC section to the Community Support Programme this should be referenced also. • In terms of TEO and Social Investment Fund, there is a need to identify this more explicitly in the delivery plan. SIF was set up to deliver social change. It aims to make life better for people living in targeted areas by reducing poverty, unemployment and physical deterioration but it doesn’t seem to be referenced in either the key partner section or the proposed actions section.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for employability support – the Council would wish to explore the potential for greater devolution of funding to support local employment and skills development including any potential offered by the Apprentice Levy. Making existing funding more effective is essential if the Executive is to meet its ambitious skills and growth targets, and is important for improving the life chances of all citizens. The outcomes based approach offers the opportunity for government to shape community-based services around people, identifying and dealing with their needs intensively in a holistic way with a single point of contact.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age Discrimination - The Council recently passed a notice of motion to call upon the Northern Ireland Executive Office to take immediate steps to extend Age Discrimination Legislation to include the provision of goods, services and facilities. The Council would welcome that consideration is given to this within the PFG document.
<p>Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?</p>	<p>Whilst the majority of actions are appropriate, given the concentration of economic inactivity and unemployment, the Council would welcome the opportunity to co-deliver and co-design the plan in relation to its delivery across Belfast.</p> <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Employability and Skills - The Council would highlight the strong linkages and dependencies with Outcome 1 and the associated commitment to develop with councils a ‘Local Works’ approach to improving employability. The Council would welcome this approach and would wish to work alongside the Executive and other partners to ensure that such an approach is flexible enough to take account of local circumstances, priority target audiences and adequately resourced to have affect and be sustainable.



The Council is already working with central government, education institutions and employers to develop an **Employability and Skills Pathway (i.e. Belfast Works)** which seeks to support people into employment and better match skills to emerging industry needs. The Council believes that this approach is both scalable and transferrable and would welcome an opportunity to work in partnership with the Executive to co-design the policy framework for improving skills and employability and to explore the potential for incorporating Belfast's Skills & Employability Strategy within a regional framework.

A shared understanding of how to target those furthest from the labour market would allow the Executive and the city to work together to engage neighbourhood-level providers to deliver employment programmes within a formal outcomes-led rather than process driven commissioning process. Joint work could be carried out to explore how existing employment and skills programmes could be streamlined at the local level as well as the potential for a city-regional apprenticeships scheme.

- **Local Councils through the Community Planning process are a key partner** in local economies, they should be recognised as a key partner.
- **Economic/Social Inclusion** - Implement sector specific initiatives to help the economically inactive onto the skills ladder: Council are currently working in this areas through a pilot project The Hospitality Employment Academy specifically targeting the long term unemployed to employment opportunities in the hospitality sector. This initiative was developed on the basis of local Council are knowledge of development projects highlighting the expected growth within this sector resulting from a number of new hotel developments. Other outreach and engagement examples include Active Communities and Sport Changes Lives.
- **Skills Collaboration** - Whilst it is appreciated the need for a regional approach to skills provision consideration must also be given to local area focus considering the geographical hubs of sectoral activity (hubs), consideration of the demographic focus of local skills and associated challenges. At a low level a rich data set will also exist of development/investment opportunities expected to create employment within the city. It would therefore be suggested that the Skills Barometer and Skills Forum should have a regional and council area or city focus.
- **Upskilling** - Consideration should be given to supporting micro and smaller organisations, including the community and voluntary sector to upskill their existing workforce recognising the financial and staff resource implication of investing in staff development is more acutely felt by these organisations.
- **Invest NI** - Recognising the need to address economically inactivity and support individuals back into employment consideration should be given to not only Invest NI priority sectors but also to those providing accessible entry points for entry level employment such as hospitality, retail, wider tourism, health and social care sectors.

Community Development

Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?

As highlighted previously the delivery plan should incorporate skills attainment in the following areas:

- Employability skills
- Enterprise/entrepreneurship skills
- **Employer needs** – it is recognised the delivery plan focuses on the supply of individuals into the labour market, however as referred to within the delivery plan, the supply of individuals needs to be aligned to employer needs and the availability of local employment opportunities. It is therefore important interventions to address 'supply' are informed by and reactive to employer demands.
- Under the proposals section there is reference to The Neighbourhood Renewal Programme **working with the hardest to reach individuals**; however, it is important to reference the **key role of Councils and their Community Planning structures** who will involve other organisations that could play a role in identifying hard to reach individuals.
- Additionally, in order to **break the cycle of deprivation** and deliver real and **sustainable changes** for communities, there is a need for an action which will concentrate on reworking the existing structures of funding i.e. through Neighbourhood Renewal, the Community Support Programme and the Social Investment fund and others to ensure there is alignment with the PfG and its outcomes.
- BCC would welcome **linkages with existing youth forums** to ensure young people are engaged and have a voice: for example as part of their campaigns work, BCC's Youth Forum has been active around the issue of poverty in Belfast. At the start of 2016 while researching the issue, our Forum noted that young people's voices were missing in much of the research, debates and policies relating to poverty and decided that they should work to change this. To this end they decided to create their own youth-led piece of social action research in which they would gather the views of young people in Belfast on this issue. In particular they wanted to find out what young people living in Belfast think about the following:
 - How they view poverty in the city;
 - What they think it means to be living in poverty;
 - How they think poverty impacts children and young people, families and communities; and
 - What actions they think government could take to end poverty.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The youth forum designed a focus group with the help of the National Children’s Bureau and delivered these to young people across Belfast from April-June 2016. Once all of the data has been analysed our young people will create a report with key actions for Belfast City Council to take forward as part of the work to eradicate poverty in Belfast. Our Forum hopes to have their report ready for Feb 2017.
<p>Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?</p>	<p>The Council would welcome the opportunity to work with the Department across the delivery plan, a number of areas in particular for engagement would include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic Social Inclusion actions specifically the sectoral specific initiatives and the pilot projects to reduce economically inactivity levels. In Belfast currently 31% of the working population are classified as economically inactivity, the scale of the challenge in this area highlights the importance of addressing this issue in Belfast. - Invest NI, facilitate the development of small and medium sizes enterprises through online skills programmes and employer engagement activities. The Council currently works with a range of micro and small businesses across the city, as well as working with a range of larger employers, opportunities exist to work through existing mechanisms to engage and support the development SME’s. - Upskilling. The Council currently works with a range of micro and small businesses across the city, opportunities exist to work through existing mechanisms to engage with small businesses to upskill their existing workforce.
<p>Other Comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lessons from Neighbourhood Renewal Programme will be critical in progressing the action to work with some of the hardest to reach individuals as this requires a combined thematic and geographical approach to ensure that there is flexibility to focus activity on individuals, families and groups rather than simply on an area basis. This also reinforces the critical role that the thirds sector and local Councils can play in working with the Department to tackle these issues in a holistic way. The refresh of the Skills Barometer is welcomed as a relevant evidence base on which to develop policy; however, the Council would suggest that there is value in working with the Department to refine this further to produce a more focused Skills Barometer study on the Belfast City-Region area given its role as the gateway and commercial hub for Northern Ireland. This would enable the region to develop economic specialisms and hubs which will drive the region’s distinctive competitive advantage in a sustainable way.

DRAFT

Outcome(s): 6. We have more people working in **better jobs**

Delivery Plan: Indicator 41 **Local Graduates and Skills** (BCC ref 21)

PfG SRO: Derek Baker, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Policy Group, DfE
NI-Economic-Strategy@economy-ni.gov.uk



The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The indicator attached to this delivery plan seeks to measure the proportion of local graduates in professional or management occupations or in further study six months after graduation. This places a measurement on graduate employment at one fixed period of time, this doesn't allow for consideration of fixed term employment and could provide a skewed position of employment. It would be suggested the research trigger points should be extended to include a 6 month, 1 year and 2 year time period for research.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<p>With regards to the main performance indicator, the Council would recommend that consideration be given to making two changes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Only employment in jobs in SOC groups 1 and 2 should be counted (SOC 3 is too vague and low level to be considered management or professional). If we include those remaining in higher education, it should only be for STEM subjects. <p>It is understood that this might be an indicator to allow international benchmarks and so the above changes may not be possible. If so, the indicator in the PfG should be renamed to minimise confusion. For example "Proportion of local graduates from local institutions in professional, management or intermediate occupations or in further study (in any subject) six months after graduation." Again, if it cannot be changed, during monitoring, efforts should be made to report the proportion of those remaining in higher education who are in STEM subjects. Our aim is to ensure that problems such as students using continued education to avoid a subdued job market, are not hidden within the indicator.</p> <p>Consideration should also be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the understanding of 'better' jobs, as graduates may be employed in professional or management occupations but their salary levels may not reflect this; Integrating NI students who have returned to live in the region following study at a non-local institution; The alignment of employment levels against graduate subject areas. <p>Need to address the issue that we export 30% of our best talent each year, many of whom don't come back.</p>
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	Yes - though the plan to introduce post graduate loans is not immediately clear as to how it supports outcome 6.
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater linkages should be contained within the actions to link FE/HE provision to labour market demands and to potentially fast tracking some of the proposed actions such as the post graduate tuition fee to areas of employment where skills gaps/labour shortages exist. Enabling and supporting graduate enterprise skills should be included as an action under this delivery plan, to support the creation of new business start-ups but also to equip new graduates with enterprise and innovation skills that can be equally applied as an employee. The Council is actively working with Ulster University, Queens University and Belfast Metropolitan College in its delivery of the Belfast Enterprise Academy, this initiative supports graduates to start a new business, very successfully and is award winning. Research projects to determine if graduates are employed should incorporate the employment destination in terms of the sector of employment, the size of organisation they are employed in and the nature of the employment (i.e. fixed term/permanent, F/PT). Belfast City Council welcome the integration of international student mobility, however consideration should also be given as to how the city and region can encourage graduates to come back to Northern Ireland as part of a graduate attraction and retention plan.



Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?

- BCC’s main role in this is helping to create the economic conditions that produce a demand for graduate level jobs. This will be covered in BCC’s response to other PfG Action Plans. Additionally, BCC already has several programmes in place to support students in developing wider ‘life skills’. BCC contributes to this through work-placement opportunities, occasional research opportunities and programmes such as the Belfast Enterprise Academy. BCC’s International Framework also supports international experience opportunities for students in North America, China and India. BCC would be keen to understand more about the proposed HEAR scheme, the current IWTS and BtES; the proposed Work Experience Database and how BCC may support these.

Other Comments:

It is suggested the following key partners should be included as part of this delivery plan:

- Belfast City Council (Local Council’s)
- Private sector employers

DRAFT

Outcome(s): 7. We have a **safe community** where we respect the law, and each other

Delivery Plan: Indicator 1 (Prevalence rate [% of the population who were victims of any NI Crime Survey crime]) - (BCC ref 22)

PfG SRO: David Lavery, Director, Access to Justice, DoJ

pfgoutcome7@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk



The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	Yes
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links between offending/risk of offending and underlying drug/alcohol issues. • Important this outcome links with health for improved focus on addressing drug/alcohol abuse and providing appropriate/timely interventions
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	Yes
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?	No - aside from importance of improved link with health re drugs/alcohol
Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place-based approaches • Early intervention • Reviews of legislation

Outcome(s): **7.** We have a **safe community** where we respect the law, and each other

Delivery Plan: Indicator 39 (Reoffending rate) - (BCC ref **25**)

PfG SRO: David Lavery, Director, Access to Justice, DoJ

pfgoutcome7@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk



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Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	Yes
Q2. What additional issues are there?	None
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	Yes
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?	No
Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst the Council believe that the broad issues have been captured in relation to anti-social behaviour and crime; further consideration and focus needs to be given to the links between offending/ risk of offending and underlying drugs and alcohol issues. There is also a close alignment to Outcome 4 on this matter (health). The Council would highlight the need to develop a welfare and ‘whole system approach’ to managing young offending (and the risk of offending) which seeks to address the root causes (e.g. substance abuse, addressing education and employment inequalities etc) rather than taking remedial action (links outcomes 1 and 5).
Other Comments:	N/A

Outcome(s): 7. We have a **safe community** where we respect the law, and each other, 9. We are a **shared society** that respects diversity, 10. We are a confident, welcoming, **outward-looking** society

Delivery Plan: Indicators 26 (A Respect Index), 31 (% who think leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres in their areas are “shared and open” to both Protestant and Catholics), and



35 (% the population who believe their cultural identity is respected by society) - (BCC ref 23)

PfG SRO: Dr Mark Browne, Director for Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations, TEO

pfgrespect@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear recognition of good relations/ promotion of shared space and the complexity of the reconciliation process within the delivery Plan. - Clear alignment with the current Good Relations Indicators and consideration of extensive body of research and practice within Belfast and NI. - Commitment to developing a Respect Index and potentially a Reconciliation Index to augment these indicators. - Specific reference to key issues such as respect for cultural identity; interfaces; minority ethnic considerations; segregation in education and housing, dealing with paramilitarism and addressing the legacy of the past are specifically referenced within the delivery plan and associated actions. - Commitment to supporting the work of the Commission on Flags, identity, Culture and Tradition is also noted.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<p>Addressing issues impacting on the sense of safety and creating community confidence happens at a local level. The Council and the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships have a key role to play in delivering these outcomes including supporting placed-based approaches and early intervention programmes which are preventative rather than remedial in nature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Space – The Council is committed to working with the Shared City Partnership to deliver an integrated plan to improve good relations and developing a sustainable, transferable and scalable approach to the management of shared space. We welcome the PfG commitment to bringing forward flagship transformational programmes to increase shared space and create multi-use places in local neighborhoods. We would be keen to work alongside the Executive to maximise potential opportunities for the city and explore potential synergies with other emerging physical investment schemes. <p>While appreciating the need for clarity and the practical constraints associated with any methodological approach to the measurement of attitudinal change, Council would consider that the concept of shared space needs to be broadened beyond the current limited focus on leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres. There is potential for this to be widened to include other spaces such as city centre, museums and cultural venues etc. Similarly Council considers that the concept of shared space should not be solely viewed from the perspective of the two traditional communities in the city. Further consideration required on allocation of resources for promotion of shared space and creation of new shared spaces would be beneficial.</p> <p>The Council has developed a bid for resources under the PEACE IV programme which includes a specific shared space theme. We would seek to develop a transferable approach to the identification, design, programming and management of shared space with a focus on improving community relations, physical and social regeneration and ensuring the sustainability of local neighbourhoods. We would welcome the opportunity to share this work and to develop an action plan to support a more ambitious agenda for shared space in NI.</p> <p>The Council also intends to invest, under the PEACE Plan, in developing resilient networks for meaningful purposeful and sustainable engagement between individuals and communities as well as facilitating and supporting effective leadership at all levels and within all sectors of the city. This will seek to build the capacity of disengaged and marginalised communities to participate in shared space programming and enable their increased involvement in peace and reconciliation activities within wider society. In addition we will seek to develop increased skills and capacity within different sectors to facilitate increased collaboration and partnership working on developing Good Relations and shared space outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further consideration of the proposals to develop and review existing legal and statutory duties for Section 75 groups for example a discussion on the relationship and balance of current provisions of S.75(1) and S.75(2).



<p>Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?</p>	<p>The proposed actions appear relevant but further detail on implementation would be beneficial.</p>
<p>Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is scope for specific actions which recognise the importance of using the commemoration of significant events in our shared history impacting upon good relations as a mechanism to bring people together in shared appreciation of the past and respect for differing perspectives. There are many examples of positive outcomes achieved through this type of initiative, particularly through the Decade of Centenaries activities. In November Council held a conference reflecting on the achievements and lessons from the success of good relations events marking the events of 1916 in partnership with the Community Relations Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund. • An action to improve overall communications and alignment of various funding streams related to the TBUC Strategy with a view to maximising the good relations outcomes across all relevant funding programmes.
<p>Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?</p>	<p>Council notes the proposal to develop the Respect Index and potential to develop a Reconciliation Index to augment current Good Relations Indicators and we would be keen to be involved in developing and piloting this approach. We are currently developing an approach to measurement of attitudinal change in programme participants towards good relations and shared space outcomes in line with the new Good Relations Indicators and would welcome the opportunity for continued collaboration with partners in central government.</p> <p>The Council wishes to continue to work with central government and other key stakeholders in delivering on the TBUC Strategy particularly the District Council Good Relations Programme, summer camps and intervention.</p> <p>Shared Space: Council has developed a bid for resources under the PEACE IV Programme. This includes a specific Shared Space theme though which we seek to develop a transferable approach to the identification, design, programming and management of shared space in the City with a focus on improving community relations, physical and social regeneration and ensuring the sustainability of local neighbourhoods and the city as a whole. Through this work Council will work with partners to promote positive attitudes towards shared public space, help address post conflict issues, improve connectivity in the city and build on the city’s wider economic potential. Activity will focus on engagement with local communities on the concepts of shared space and explore, using a variety of methods, how the concept of shared space could be practically applied in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community relations. • Physical and social regeneration activities. • Ensuring a sustainable and liveable city. <p>In this context Council would welcome the opportunity to participate in the development of an action plan to support a more ambitious agenda for shared space.</p>
<p>Other Comments:</p>	

Outcome(s): **8. We care for others** and we help those in need, **13. We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure**



Delivery Plan: Indicators 8 (gap between the number of houses we need and the number of houses we have), 48 (Number of households in housing stress) - (BCC ref 29)

PfG SRO: Andrew Hamilton, Deputy Secretary, Community Regeneration and Housing, DfC

communications@communities-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

PfG

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	The Council endorses plans to help and care for the most vulnerable in our society, ensuring provision is adequate to meet their needs and where appropriate, giving people the opportunity and means to help themselves. We welcome the proposed actions including supporting people with disabilities to live more independent lives, reducing the inequalities faced by people with disabilities, helping people get access to suitable housing, ensuring housing is of a suitable standard, and assisting those living with the most difficult conditions.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Provision – Housing is a key issue in creating sustainable communities. Affordable and safe housing is fundamental to the quality of life of our residents. In 2015, there were over 6,900 people stress in the city. The Council welcomes the commitment given to helping people get access to suitable housing and would highlight the role of local government in supporting this process through its planning functions, the zoning of land for housing and different types of tenure through the Local Development Plan process. The Council is committed to working with central government, the NIHE and other partners to maximise the benefits of housing investment in the city, increasing the tenure mix, growing the population of the city and city centre and helping create sustainable, safe and cohesive communities. <u>Housing Infrastructure</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to reflect the new boundaries following Local Government Reform has updated housing Supply (p2) – The Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs) contained within the Regional Development Strategy and referenced in the delivery plan. The revised figures suggest a supply of housing across the region of 5,630 units per year, rather than the 6,812 units per year referenced to in the paper. The latter figure quoted within the Delivery Plan may be a more accurate reflection of the need based on updated population projections (2014-based rather than 2012-based). If this is the case, DfI should publish revised HGIs to provide a more accurate indication of need to be reflected in Local Development Plans (LDPs). Social / Affordable Housing – Local councils will have a role to play in relation to the provision of additional social housing, through the zoning of sufficient land for housing as part of the LDP. The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) sets out the regional policy context to which LDPs should align. It moves away from considering ‘social’ housing in isolation, instead preferring to consider ‘affordable’ housing as a whole. Whilst including housing provided by housing associations or the Housing Executive, affordable housing would also include other forms of affordable housing, such as co-ownership, etc. It would therefore be prudent for the delivery plan to consider the ‘affordability’ of housing as a key indicator of housing supply, as well as the number of affordable houses being built. This would also support the monitoring of housing supply at a local level. In addition, local councils will have a role through the local planning functions in ensuring new social and affordable houses are supplied. This is referenced in Section 5 on p10-11, but should also be considered in relation to Section 1 (p7) Release of Public Sector Land (p7) – The aim to release more public sector land for housing development is positive and timely, but it may be useful to include a realistic target within the delivery plan, such as the amount of land to be released or the number of new houses provided on surplus public sector land. Local councils will also have a key role to play in relation to this through the zoning of land within LDPs and through the use of their own land estates.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing for Older People (p8) – Local councils can also have an important role to play in facilitating the supply of housing for older people and in providing accessible homes through the planning functions. The planning system, particularly the LDP function, can help to address this aim by ensuring that new housing is built in a way that is adaptable to changing needs through a person’s lifetime. In England, a Lifetime Homes standard is often used to achieve this objective. The LDP will also have a key role in facilitating the provision of housing of the right sizes and types to meet future population needs. • Timescales for Planning Approvals (p8) – The key word within this paragraph is ‘perceived’, highlighting that the delays in securing planning consents are more a perception than a reality in many cases. In Belfast, the Council is already pro-actively working with the development industry to help improve the efficiency of the planning system when considering planning applications. • Empty Homes (p9) – The inclusion of the aim within Section 2 is welcome, particularly the importance of bringing underutilised or vacant commercial space within the City Centre back into use to help meet housing need. The council can have an important role to play in relation to this through our planning functions. • Shared Housing (p10) – It might be worth reviewing the terminology used within Section 4. From a planning perspective this is referring to ‘balanced communities’ or ‘shared communities’, in which segregation is reduced by having a mix of community backgrounds within a given area or location. The term ‘shared housing’ would tend to refer more to housing that is shared by multiple people, such as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) or more specialised forms of shared accommodation. This does not necessarily mean a mix of community backgrounds. Clearly local councils have an important role to play in relation to both aspects of a shared society through LDPs. • Private Rented Sector (p12) – Whilst the references to the Private Rented Sector are welcome, the role and regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) is also of paramount importance, particularly within the Belfast context. Whilst a form of private rented accommodation, HMOs have a number of distinctive characteristics that need to be considered in detail and are subject to a separate use class in planning terms and a separate registration/licensing regime. The Licensing of HMOs is also due to be devolved to local councils within the current Government cycle. • Delivery Partner (p16) – The District Councils are clearly an important Delivery Partner within this Delivery Plan. However, whilst the summary of their role accurately captures the Council’s planning function, the Council would also have a range of other functions of relevance, such as building control and environmental health. These should also be referenced as relevant within the Delivery Plan.
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator 48, which relates to the ‘gap between the number of houses we need and the number of houses we have’, does not appear in the draft Programme for Government. However, ‘Total Housing Stock’ does seem to be a sensible indicator for this aspect of the Programme and should be referenced in relation to Outcome 8. • Looking at the total number of houses built in will not help determine whether the supply of housing is ‘suitable’. The evaluation would also need to look at how well the supply of housing matches projected needs in terms of location, house sizes, types and tenures, etc.
Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?	
Other Comments:	

Outcome(s): **10.** Confident, & outward looking, **12** Place where people want to live, work, etc



The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	Belfast City Council would highlight the following issues and actions which should be considered in the delivery plan.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the plan is concerned with attracting foreign investment and increasing international trade however there do not appear to be any direct indicators for this in the plan. This means that monitoring information will be vague as a consequence. • The second pillar of promoting NI internationally is well documented as tourism but the Council would recommend that business tourism needs emphasised here given that now Belfast has the infrastructural improvements well underway with 11 new hotel developments and the new Belfast Waterfront conference and exhibition centre. A third and important pillar of promoting NI internationally is to attract foreign students and the associated income this brings to our economy as well as attracting partners and customers for international research through the 2 universities. • The Council would recommend that consideration be given to including the Belfast Harbour, a key anchor institution and gateway, as a key partner. • The Council would like to see more information as to how the target/predictions have been calculated, and whether the knock on implications such as the resulting need for additional hotel capacity has been considered. • The Council is committed to expanding international relations and developing our international tourism through our International Relations Framework and Tourism Strategies. Currently our key geographic focus is on Europe, North America, Dublin, China and India. The delivery plan references the Middle East, which is not currently pursued by Council. Partners such as INI have pulled out of India, however the British Council and the NI Consul General for India are encouraging NI stakeholders to reconsider this huge market although experience tells that it is slow burn market. • Consideration will need to be given to the approach to the Dublin relationship in light of Brexit. It is critical that the economic potential of the Belfast - Dublin is explored in terms of boosting tourism promotion, transport connections and trade. • The implications of United Airlines pulling out of Belfast will have a direct impact on action point 6 and greater emphasis on an alternative (whether that be via Dublin or a new airline out of Belfast) should be included as a key issue. • The role of Belfast as a capital city and regional driver needs to be emphasised. Businesses recognise the city as do students and tourists more than anywhere else and it provides port of entry and a gateway to the region. As the region's capital city, major population centre and the hub for business and employment, Belfast is critical to Northern Ireland's economic future. • Local Government / Belfast City Council has a number of sister city partners (North America / China) and other international connections (New York, San Francisco, Austin). These agreements are a key factor given the importance of city government to city government relationships and civic leadership role that councils can play to open doors to other stakeholders which has been proven time and again. These linkages can provide a unique platform to promote tourism, investment and collaboration in Belfast and we are already delivering on a number of the actions in this plan e.g. Collaboration with universities (Emerson College, Boston and Ulster University, Belfast). • A need to integrate the tourism offer with retail and expansion of the night time economy which will also include consideration of the legislation on licencing laws, in light of city centre regeneration plans. • In relation to events and festivals, there are a number of areas that could be addressed or Council work which could support Department activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilise the Council's investment in festivals and events to enhance the city as a place to live, study, visit and invest in. This will require a joined-up approach across agencies e.g. TNI, ACNI and Sport NI.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In attracting international events, that provide a global platform for NI, we need to be cognisant of our current liquor licensing and hospitality opening hours which are externally viewed as outdated and out-of-step with a modern international city. There is a need for an agreed position on the changes to liquor licensing and hospitality opening hours. - A more streamlined and co-ordinated approach across Departments is required to assist cities and the region in regarding to staging major international events and festivals. This will avoid potential delays in the process which may impact whether such projects are staged in NI.
<p>Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No – Given that the impact of Brexit remains uncertain and the new US President’s statements about lowering Corporation Tax, the impact of a reduction in Corporation Tax is unclear. These are significant issues which will influence the future economic performance and climate in NI. • The Council would like to see consideration of the impact of the increase in tourism spend predicted. For example, what increase in Hotel capacity will be required to support this growth? • There is a fleeting reference to the role and value of education and attracting foreign students and research partners. Both Universities and BMC in Belfast have set targets around all of this which will impact the Ni economy as a whole and the Council feel that these measures should be highlighted. <p>Proposal 6 - Maximise the benefit of existing direct air access and grow direct air access with key overseas markets in collaboration with NI Airports and Airlines through initiatives such as the ‘Enhanced Cooperative Marketing Fund’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the news that the only direct flight to the USA is withdrawing from Belfast, priority should be given, to how best to provide an alternative e.g. working with Dublin Airport to provide incentives / attracting a new airline to Belfast. This is critical to supporting international connectivity and access. <p>Proposal 8 - Invest in experiences and products that will give external visitors new reasons to holiday and stay longer in Northern Ireland through a new Tourism Growth Fund.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy has been adopted by DfC as the policy framework for the city centre and local government has a role to play in integrating retail offer, night time economy of city centre into the overall tourism offer. <p>Proposal 14 - Harness the power of the NI diaspora to develop and grow the support of people with a connection to Northern Ireland by birth, family, education or business, in order to deliver economic impact to NI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the diaspora have played a key role in export missions such as the Belfast Tech Mission, a more formal relationship needs to be developed with NI Connections to ensure linkages are being utilised to their full capacity all international markets e.g. SXSW Austin, Texas. The diaspora can play a key role in promoting and supporting business and tourism messaging, however this is done so on an ad hoc basis with no real formal plan or strategy.
<p>Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?</p>	<p>Additional proposed actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There would be value in Government agencies and Councils working together to determine event and festival priorities. - There is a need for an agreed position on the changes to liquor licensing and hospitality opening hours to promote the region globally in term of tourism and events. - A more streamlined and co-ordinated approach across Departments is required to assist cities and the region in regarding to staging major international events and festivals. This will avoid potential delays in the process which may impact whether such projects are staged in NI. For example, agreement in terms of managing roads and public event spaces such as a single point of contact within via TNI - A commitment to support a second major tourist attraction in Belfast would be welcome. - Reference to the targets and strategies of the 3 education players. - Recognisant of the untapped potential of the Chinese tourism market with 100 million Chinese travelling each year. - Prioritising of funding and resources, by Government agencies and Council, to enable events and festivals to deliver tangible outputs. - It would be of benefit to look at how the action plan can integrate more fully with the conference and exhibition schedule within the City. How best can we showcase our key business sectors to conference and exhibition delegates?
<p>Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council note that a lot of the plan involves work which will help deliver existing strategies. • The Council is already engaged with Tourism NI on the NI Tourism Strategy work and InvestNI’s international work. The Council is also engaged with both universities and Belfast Met (exchanging strategies and agree KPIS etc). There could perhaps be an increased acknowledgement of working with Belfast as the key gateway to NI for both Tourism and business investment. BCC’s Tourism Strategy, Cultural Framework, International Framework and City Centre Regeneration Plan are all relevant to the work in this action plan.



co-design / co-deliver?

- There is an action to utilise NI's Brand. BCC's Place Positioning work will be relevant to the NI Brand work. Students tend to choose cities before they choose universities, The PP work of BCC will be very important in promoting NI overseas for business and tourism and investment – port of entry/ gateway etc. The role of cities will play a prominent role in attracting businesses, tourism and students, this should be referenced and BCC would be keen to engage on this issues.
- BCC is best placed to lead on some sectoral developments where critical mass of companies/research is e.g. cyber security, business tourism, creative industries, green technologies.
- Development of an events/festivals strategy that aligns to Government priorities and vice versa.

Proposal 2 - Utilise the Northern Ireland brand to deliver a consistent message to all international audiences (government to government, business to business and business to consumer) through a co-ordinated plan, consistently delivered by all stakeholders.

- BCC participate in many international events, networks and partnerships alongside Belfast based SMEs. As part of these initiatives, the Council actively promote Belfast / Northern Ireland as place to visit, live, work and invest. Innovative collateral to showcase the City would strengthen this message.

Proposal 4 - Support our priority sectors to raise awareness of their capability, establish key partnerships and secure new business in key international markets;

- As above, Belfast City Council are active in numerous international events and networks. The Creative Digital Sector is key for Belfast and this sector has been and still is key in terms of raising the profile of the City and Region globally whether this be through participation at events such as SXSW or hosting creative industry focussed inward visits with our sister cities in Boston and Nashville.

Proposal 7 & 8 - Deliver events of scale (e.g. the 2017 Irish Open, 2019 Open Championship and the 2023 Rugby World Cup) and continue to bid for global events & Invest in experiences and products that will give external visitors new reasons to holiday and stay longer in Northern Ireland through a new Tourism Growth Fund.

- Local Government has a role to play in integrating retail offer, night time economy of city centre into the overall tourism offer.

Proposal 14 - Harness the power of the NI diaspora to develop and grow the support of people with a connection to Northern Ireland by birth, family, education or business, in order to deliver economic impact to NI.

- Belfast City Council to develop a more formal relationship / connection with the Diaspora in terms of supporting and promoting our international business activity. BCC to work closely with NI Connections as part of our international business calendar / programme.

Other Comments:

- The plan appears to be compromised by having to fit into the Executive's approach to OBA. This plan is really two plans with only two small areas of overlap (business tourism and international perception). Only one of the two areas is adequately reflected in the main indicators (visitor spend). The other indicator (national brand index) is relevant to both but is an enabler of them, not an important outcome on its own. It would seem far more sensible to split this action plan into two parts: one for tourism and one for attracting business and investment. The latter should have its own indicator. NB FDI is apparently covered elsewhere in Delivery Plan 4. If so, it could arguably be dropped from this plan, which could then focus on tourism.
- Belfast City Council is not listed as a key delivery partner within the PfG delivery plan – although local government is listed in some of proposals. The Council should be included as a delivery partner as tourism currently attracts almost 9.5 million visitors to Belfast each year and contributes over £430 million to the local economy. This would help further main improvements identified in our Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020 and will help us double the value of tourism to £870 million per year by 2020.
- There appears to be a discord between the two indicators detailed (external visitors and national brand) and the delivery plan activity (attracting investment and FDI).
- While the comparative benchmark data will be useful (pt 7.9), it may be beneficial to examine countries or regions considered to be competitors or of a similar size.

Outcome(s): **13.** We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure

Delivery Plan: Indicators 23, 25 and 47 (NI water) - (BCC ref 6)



PfG SRO: John McGrath, Department for Infrastructure (indicators 23, 25)

Fiona McCandless, Department of Infrastructure (indicator 47)

[INSERT](#)

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.

Feedback	
Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to meet today with the Committee for Infrastructure. It is our desire to work in partnership with central and local government as well as the private and third sectors to create a resilient, sustainable and inclusive city-region. The Council strongly believes that if Belfast and Northern Ireland is to make a further step change and compete on a global scale there is a need for targeted investment in the physical, economic and social infrastructure of the city-region. Having modern infrastructure in place will enable and support economic growth and ensure that the city-region remains competitive in terms of being an attractive place to live, work and invest. It is also important in terms of supporting future development and plans for growth. Understanding Northern Ireland’s priority infrastructure needs, and planning to address these on an affordable and property sequenced basis, should be at the heart of the PfG and new Investment Strategy We wish to work in partnership with central and local government as well as the private sector to ensure that critical infrastructure schemes are identified, prioritised and importantly finance to ensure delivery.
Q2. What additional issues are there?	
Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated case around these?	<p>The Council would highlight the following infrastructure projects and asked that they be considered in the context of the delivery plan and the investment strategy still to emerge.</p> <p>(i) Infrastructure Plan for the City-Region - the Council would wish to work in partnership with the NI Executive, the Department for Infrastructure and other government to develop an Infrastructure Plan for the city-region and connections with other economic corridors. This will seek to identify the key infrastructure priorities and will complement any regional infrastructure plan which may be brought forward.</p> <p>(ii) Financing Infrastructure Investment – the Council would wish to wish to work in partnership with the NI Executive, Department for Infrastructure and Department to explore and identify potential new financial mechanisms and vehicles which could be utilised to deliver critical city infrastructure projects and support economic growth and job creation across the region (e.g. joint ventures with private sector, European Investment Bank investment, asset backed vehicles, land value capture, financial transactions capital, social impact bonds, earn-back incentive schemes).</p> <p>The DoF and Executive are proactively looking at the practicalities and merits of other funding vehicles - in the context of the emerging new Programme for Government, NI Investment Strategy and the deliverability of Executive priorities. Initial discussions have already taken place with DoF officials who are keen to work with council, the Strategic Investment Board and other partners to co-commission a specific piece of work around innovative financing models. This will seek to identify options and examine their merits and practicalities of implementation.</p> <p>It is important to recognise the financial tools available to the council, including, for example, ability to borrow to invest in capital schemes, ability to access other funds, and the ability to enter into Joint Ventures with the private sector to unlock major investment and development opportunities.</p> <p>The Council would also wish to explore with DFI, DoF, the NI Executive, other Departments and the Strategic Investment Board the potential to utilise government assets to incentivise investment and unlock major development and infrastructure schemes. We would also wish to explore more commercial alternatives to bringing forward and financing important such schemes. This is linked to the earlier discussions on the agenda regarding the possible creation of an ‘Infrastructure Plan for the City’.</p>



(iii) **City Infrastructure Priorities** – to meet the infrastructure needs of the city, the Council would wish to work with the Executive and Department for Infrastructure and other partners, including the private sector, to bring forward the following schemes:

- **York Street Interchange** – the Council welcomes the recent announcement by the Infrastructure Minister that this important scheme will be taken forward but are concerned about the current uncertainty around financing. Given the significance of this scheme to supporting the regional economy and improving connectivity between Belfast (and Port) to the rest of the region, the Council believes that this £160million scheme should be explicitly referenced within the Programme for Government and prioritised within the emerging NI Investment Strategy.

It is recognised that the York Street Interchange proposal will alleviate a significant bottleneck at the M2/Westlink junction which adversely impacts on city centre traffic volumes and congestion on a daily basis. The Council believes that this scheme is critical in supporting regional economic growth and competitiveness, accommodating 1000,000 vehicles each day, mostly commuters to and from Belfast as well as connecting freight /haulage transport through the port of Belfast to the strategic road network throughout the wider region.

- **Transport Infrastructure** – ensuring that the city and city-region has appropriate transportation infrastructure which supports and enables access, mobility and connectivity is a key priority. Effective infrastructure and transportation planning will be critical components of the Local Development Plan and the creation of a sustainable land-use strategy for the city and city-region.

Within the Belfast Agenda, we are committed to developing an integrated city transport plan which will seek to maximise the opportunities presented by the £150million investment in the Belfast Transport Hub and Rapid Transit System. It will also seek to address under-use of public transport, particularly in relation to commuter patters and work to promote active travel.

The Council would wish to work closely with the Executive and Department for Infrastructure to bring this forward and ensure alignment with regional priorities which may emerge in the Investment Strategy and revised Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan. It will be important that we establish shared transport objectives and priorities.

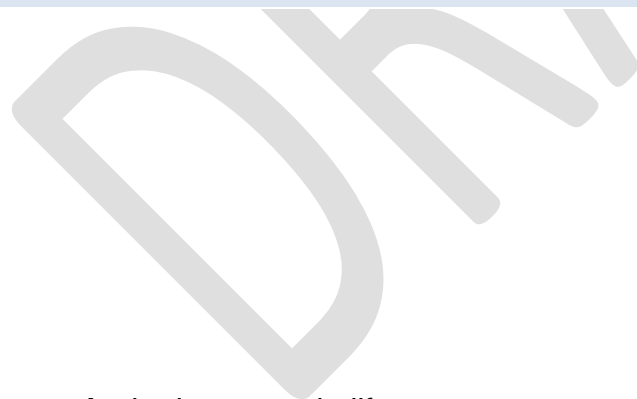
- **City Centre Transport and Parking** – Again, we would wish to work with the Executive and DfI in bringing forward a Car Parking Strategy for the city which will include a comprehensive solution to addressing city centre transportation and parking related pressures.
- The delivery of the **Belfast Rapid Transit Phase I** in the West and East of the city and developing proposals for **Phase II for the North and South of the city**.
- **Enhancing the cycle network** – develop strategy for cycling, securing necessary funding and ensuring that cycling is a consideration within planning processes.
- **Living with Water Programme** – ensuring that the drainage infrastructure within Belfast is fit-for-purpose and alleviates potential risks around flooding and pollution. The ‘Living with Water Programme’ has identified that Belfast has the worst drainage infrastructure in Northern Ireland and a failing to act could result in significant consequences including e.g. financial impact, reputational damage, impeding housing and business growth and adversely impacting on construction. Estimates to deliver the necessary infrastructure are around £750m for Belfast alone.
- **An energy security programme** – The Council would wish to work alongside the NI Executive, other city partners and utility providers to develop a city-region energy programme. We will work with partners to better manage energy usage across the city’s public estate and support better acquisition, management and finance of energy. We will build opportunities with partners, including the private sector and local communities, to encourage investment and deployment of renewable sources in order to make the city more attractive to investors and to tackle fuel poverty.
- **Housing Provision** – Again the Council would highlight the fact that housing is a key issue in creating sustainable communities. Affordable and safe housing is fundamental to the quality of life of our residents. In 2015, there were over 6,900 people stress in the city. The Council welcomes the commitment given to helping people get access to suitable housing and would highlight the role of local government in supporting this process through its planning functions, the zoning of land for housing and different types of tenure through the **Local Development Plan process**.

The Council is committed to working with central government, the NIHE and other partners to maximise the benefits of housing investment in the city, increasing the tenure mix, growing the population of the city and city centre and helping create sustainable, safe and cohesive communities.

- **Digital infrastructure** – important for driving economic growth and competitiveness and enhancing international connectivity and proposition as an investment location. Also supports the development of the knowledge based and technology start-ups. The region also has a strong record of staying at the forefront of communications technology. It became the first region in Europe to achieve 100 per cent broadband coverage and one of the first to operate and experience high speed, next generation services with a new 40-gigabyte per second



	<p>transatlantic and terrestrial telecommunications link between Northern Ireland, North America and Europe. This is providing secure, reliable service and delivering prices up to 20 per cent below market rates in London, Dublin, Manchester and Glasgow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streetscape – Investment in high-quality streetscape which creates a sense of place, improves the attractiveness and animation of localities and helps attract tourism and inward investment, including the potential future use of developer contributions to fund this.
<p>Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council would wish to work with the Executive, government departments and other partners on the specific proposals set out above.
<p>Other Comments:</p>	<p>Sustainable Water - A long Term Water Strategy for NI (2015-2040) : Draft Strategy Implementation Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council would note that at time of responding to this delivery plan, we are also consideration and responding Note that at the time of consultation, BCC are also providing feedback in relation to the 'Sustainable Water – A Long-Term Water Strategy for NI (2015-2040) – Draft Strategy Implementation Plan' - Drinking water supply and demand - Flood risk management and drainage - Environmental protection and improvement - Water and sewerage services. <p>In particular BCC are commenting on roles suggested for local government within the implementation plan and would welcome consideration to be given within the applicable PfG Delivery Plans. For example it is Council's understanding that, under the Living with Water Programme, discussions have taken place regarding the use of Council's parks and open spaces to support the delivery of sustainable flood resilient development. It is essential that the appropriate officers, both operational and planning are involved in future discussions with DfI, if Council are to support this aim, given that any actions implemented will have a significant impact on the use of Councils parks and open spaces and again any potential impacts of a capital or revenue nature that may require further discussion</p>



Outcome(s): **14.** We give our **children and young people** the best start in life

Delivery Plan: Indicators 15 (% children at appropriate stage of development in their immediate pre-school year) - (BCC ref **32**)

PfG SRO: Cathy Galway, Acting Director of Youth, Early Years & Childcare, DoE
PfGconsultation@education-ni.gov.uk

The following comments relate specifically to the delivery plan, and will be emailed directly to the named senior owner. The Council have aimed to provide views on the suitability and likely effectiveness of the proposed actions as well as the planned partnering arrangements. BCC would welcome the opportunity to be involved in co-design and delivery of place-based interventions and programmes linked to this delivery plan.



Feedback

Q1. Are the key issues which need to be addressed identified?

BCC welcomes the focus on early intervention and the proposal to strengthen relationships and partnership working to integrate health, education and community assets to meet the needs of children.

- BCC delivers a range of age-targeted programmes to support this outcome through our provision for example in Leisure, Health, Parks and Open Spaces, Educational Outreach and Community Services.
- These services deliver a **variety of interventions** designed to promote active and healthy lifestyles for the **breadth of age-groups**.
- In addition, Council administers a significant **grant aid programme** to support local community and voluntary organisations to deliver initiatives which will advance this outcome in their local communities.
- Council also has a dedicated Children and Young People’s Unit which has a remit not only to deliver direct services to children and young people via the Play Service, but also to champion their needs and enable them to have a voice in the city via the Belfast City Council Youth Forum.
- Through the delivery of our **Play Service programmes**, BCC contributes to improving outcomes for children supporting their physical, social and emotional development from **age 5 to 11 years**. Through the delivery of outreach play services to voluntary and community parent and toddler groups the Play service aims to promote positive and consistent messages and support for parents regarding the importance of play. Our ethos is that freely chosen play is of fundamental importance to a child’s development and Council welcomes this recognition in the PfG.

Council would welcome the **opportunity** to work more closely in **partnership** with other key stakeholders to ensure that our services are **targeting those children who are in greatest need**.

BCC has adopted an outcomes framework for our work with children and young people which is aligned to the outcomes for the Programme for Government. Council is making a commitment as part of the Belfast Agenda to enable children and young people to play their part in shaping their city and communities, and aims to contribute to children being healthy, happy and achieving at each stage of life. We also aim to support children to feel safe in their community and encourage them to reach their full potential.

- The focus of the PfG is very much on **early year’s provision** and BCC would **welcome a greater recognition of the importance of early intervention for all children up to the age of 18 years**. It is recognised that there are **a number of points in a child’s life** particularly when transitioning to post-primary education or experiencing adversity where they are at greater risk of becoming involved in risk-taking behaviours or where they are more susceptible to poor mental health or experiencing poor educational attainment. BCC recognises the importance of engaging young people in meaningful and constructive activities and creating opportunities for them to make a contribution to civic life and gain valuable employability skills. Our Belfast City Council Youth Forum provides opportunities for young people to do this. Council has adopted the Ask First principles of participation as advocated by the Participation Network (CINI) to ensure that we consult effectively with children and young people.

BCC is **committed to working with a range of city and regional partners** to safeguard everyone, address child poverty and ensure effective family services are available at each stage of a child or young person’s life. We will encourage our children and young people to have the best start in life by providing 1000’s of free, accessible play opportunities across the city through our outreach and After-schools provision, organising activities and events in our parks, delivering summer schemes, community centre programmes, city events and festivals. We will support our Belfast Youth Forum members to be the city’s young advocates and provide high quality safe open spaces in parks and play areas for our children and young people.

Q2. What additional issues are there?

Article 31 of the UNCRC formally enshrines the **child’s right to play** and the right to engage in other recreational activities including participation in cultural activities and the arts. It states:

1. State Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
2. State Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational leisure activity.

BCC would welcome greater recognition of this right within the PfG and the inclusion of outcome measures to assess how departments and agencies are meeting this.



Q3 Are the proposed actions suitable?	Yes - the proposed actions are suitable and BCC particularly welcomes the introduction of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional (ASQ: SE) as a baseline for measuring developmental outcomes for young children.
Q4 Are there any additional actions we wish to raise? And associated costs around these?	<p>Within the intervention to ensure that every child, whose parents want it can access a funded place in the Pre-school Education Programme in their immediate pre-school year, it would be helpful if a commitment could be given to ensuring that each child attending this provision has access to freely chosen play opportunities.</p> <p>The Programme for Government should consider adopting the Ask First model for consultation with children and young people to ensure that their voices are heard and feedback is given as to how their responses have been acted upon.</p>
Q5. What areas /actions does Council wish to co-design / co-deliver?	<p>BCC would be keen to work in partnership with the Health and Social Care Trust, Belfast Childcare Partnership and Community and Voluntary organisations to design and deliver play programmes for parents and pre-school children. Council would also welcome opportunities to engage with hard to reach / at risk families / parents perhaps via the Family Nurse Partnership to introduce play opportunities and contribute to supporting parents as the first educators of children.</p> <p>Council would welcome opportunities to work more collaboratively and co-design interventions with local grant-aided groups which are aimed at giving children the best start in life.</p>
Other Comments:	None

DRAFT