

Inclusive growth in Belfast

For Belfast City Council inclusive growth means writing a new chapter for Belfast, ensuring the success of the city reaches every citizen.

We have seen our city transform in recent years. We are creating new opportunities for many of our residents. We are creating a new chapter for our city, one which is optimistic and ambitious, aiming to be outward-looking and confident on the world stage with significant economic growth. But this is a tale of two cities; not everyone is part of this new story

Whilst our city has flourished for decades, some of our communities have been left behind, with unacceptable levels of persistent deprivation and inequality. Conflict compounded this deprivation, creating a city divided on religious and economic grounds. More than 56,000 residents in Belfast live in poverty, 28% children in Belfast grow up in poverty and over 7,000 NIHE applicants are in housing stress. These issues are concentrated in inner south, inner east, west and north Belfast with pockets across other parts of the city. Many residents in these areas are out of work. They are disengaged from new developments, even when these are on their doorstep. In short, many residents are not benefiting from new opportunities and prosperity.

We also have uneven education attainment levels. Some parts of Belfast are succeeding - in one area almost every pupil attained 5 GCSEs at A*-C (including Maths and English), whilst in another ward less than 3 in every 10 pupils achieve this. This variation is not good enough.

A new model of delivery: inclusive growth

For years we have helped tackle the symptoms of deprivation, now we need to go one-step further. We need to stop the symptoms occurring and connect all residents with economic growth to create vibrant communities where everyone has the opportunity and aspiration to succeed. To ensure our growth sectors and new jobs are accessible for all residents, we need to better target the opportunities to all residents and ensure everyone has the right support to take these opportunities.

The Belfast Agenda will ensure the right conditions are in place so that everyone can benefit from economic growth - improved housing conditions, improved skills levels, more jobs and a more developed city. As a Council we will take the lead, changing how we make investments, interventions and procurement decisions around geographic and demographic need.

We want all our residents to feel pride in their community, as such we will not only ensure our residents are supported but will ensure they can contribute and play a positive role in the city's future and help move people out of generational deprivation.

We will continue to work hard to secure business investment and growth, but we want businesses to create jobs with decent pay, fair contracts, training and career ladders which are accessible to all our residents. There will be no single way in which this can happen, and we will bring together areas such as skills, business, education, housing and transport to address this.

As a Council, we are committed to ensuring that all citizens of Belfast are part of, and feel pride in, this exciting chapter of Belfast's story.