

# Area Working Groups

# Terms of Reference

2019

Version 1.4

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## 1. Purpose of the Area Working Groups

1.1. Neighbourhood regeneration is a key priority for the council. We aim to create integrated and sustainable improvements to neighbourhoods where everyone benefits from inclusive growth and their quality of life is improved. Working with members, we will seek to influence the effective use of resources to build community capacity with and across local neighbourhoods to support the delivery of our Corporate Plan, aligned to the implementation of the Belfast Agenda.

1.2. The purpose of the Area Working Group is therefore:

*To enable and ensure that the socio-economic conditions and needs of local people, areas and communities are given due consideration with respect to the delivery of our plans, services and projects.*

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The overarching role of the Area Working Groups is to act as “place shapers” and local area advocates in order to identify and prioritise issues and opportunities to address local needs, with the aim of improving the quality of local people’s lives. They will also consider how the City Centre integrates with neighbourhoods and

communities, and vice versa, to ensure growth is optimised and inclusive across the City.

- 2.2. It will be our aim to engage with, influence and support partnership working, both geographically and thematically. Through the identification and engagement of relevant partners, the Area Working Group will seek to gain support to work together to develop and implement collaborative interventions.
- 2.3. The Area Working Groups will consult, engage and advocate on behalf of their respective quadrant to:
  - Collectively identify and prioritise local needs, as well as support and enhance effective area-based regeneration;
  - Take an evidence-based approach to providing advice to inform and enhance the delivery of services, projects and plans;
  - Consider the local dimension of key strategic plans and projects such as the Belfast Agenda, leisure transformation, cultural strategy, tourism etc;
  - Consider area-based issues as referred by relevant Council committees;
  - Participate in and facilitate community engagement and communications activities associated with their catchment area;
  - Act as community advocates to identify and address local needs and support effective 'place-shaping'
  - Promote local area knowledge and understanding;
  - Build trust and strengthen relationships with external agencies, residents, community representatives, partnerships and the wider communities to deliver improved Council services.

### 3. Members

- 3.1. The Area Working Groups are convened by Belfast City Council to which all Councillors elected to the following district electoral areas are invited.

Area Working Group	District Electoral Areas
North	Castle and Oldpark
South	Balmoral and Botanic
East	Lisnasharragh, Ormiston and Titanic
West	Blackmountain, Collin and Court



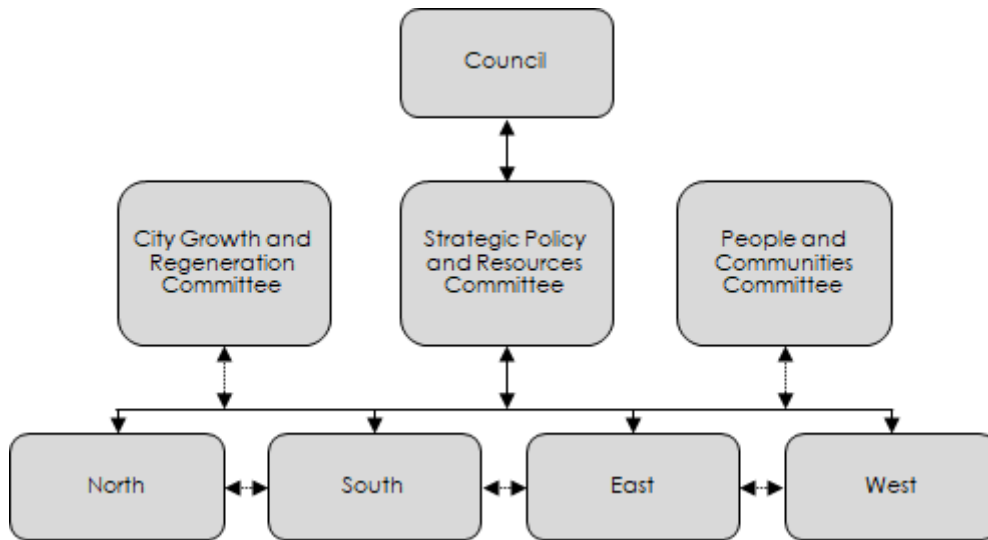
#### 4. Role of the Chairperson

- 4.1. In line with the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee decision on 19th August 2016, the Chairperson will be appointed on an annual basis. This item of business will be placed on the agenda for the first meeting of each Working Group following the Annual Council meeting each year.
- 4.2. The chair of each AWG will undertake a number of roles in addition to those required of Group members. The chair will:
  - Facilitate the meetings, or nominate an appropriate delegate, to ensure the AWG operates efficiently within these Terms of Reference;
  - Collate, share and represent the comments and priorities of their respective AWG;
  - Liaise with a member of the Strategy, Policy and Partnership team to agree the agenda in advance of a meeting.

#### 5. Accountability and reporting relationships

- 5.1. With respect to Council matters, decisions of the Area Working Groups are advisory and as such they are not binding on the Council. The business at Area Working Groups will be guided by existing council Standing Orders and the NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors.
- 5.2. In keeping with its advisory role, the Area Working Groups will provide recommendations to committees on relevant items which have a specific local area remit. Unless specifically sought from a specific committee, recommendations made by Area Working Groups will be subject to ratification by the SP&R Committee.

- 5.3. The relationship between committees and Area Working Groups will be two-way to reflect items which may be referred from committee for the consideration of an Area Working Group; and conversely Area Working Groups in exercising their role may wish to make a recommendation to a standing committee.



## 6. Meeting structures and administration

- 6.1. Meetings of each of the AWGs will be held (at least) quarterly. However, depending on the individual requirements they can be facilitated more frequently.
- 6.2. A quorum shall consist of one-quarter of the AWG elected members, as set out in the table below. If the meeting is not quorate, the meeting can proceed but recommendations cannot be made to any committee.

Area Working Group	Total Number of Members	Quorum
East	19	5
North	12	3
South	10	3
West	19	5

- 6.3. CNS will act as the lead department in terms of agenda setting and facilitation of the meetings. A member of Democratic Services will provide secretariat support with the Strategy, Policy and Partnership unit providing support as required.
- 6.4. The Senior Responsible Officer will be the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services.
- 6.5. Formal minutes will be kept of all meetings and will be brought to next the Strategic Policy and Resources committee for approval. In accordance with the council's decision of 01 February 2018 meetings will also be audio recorded and made publically available on the council website once they have been approved and ratified by council.
- 6.6. To ensure coherence across the city and some form of homogeneity is maintained across the four Area Working Groups, there will be standing items within each agenda that will be common across all areas.