

A CITY IMAGINING

Belfast

Cultural Strategy for
Belfast 2020 - 2030

Equality Assessment at
a Strategic Level

August 2019

Access to Information Statement

This document has been developed in Arial 12 point with 1.5 spacing. As part of our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations, we want to make sure that everyone is able to access the documents we produce. We are happy to provide any of the information in this document in alternative formats on request.

Overview and Executive Summary

As part of the development of the Council's Cultural Strategy *A City Imagining* 2020-2030, Belfast City Council carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) at a strategic level to ensure these obligations were met to the fullest possible extent and that the promotion of equality of opportunity was at the core of the Programme. This was undertaken at the same time as the development of the Cultural Strategy, so that the EQIA could help inform the development of the strategy and influence the investment and implementation programme to maximise the potential for positive impacts.

The Cultural Strategy has four key strategic themes that recognise and nurture the role of culture through four spheres:

A City Belonging – focuses on supporting active citizenship and participation in cultural life.

A City Challenging – focuses on diversity through use of public and cultural spaces.

A City Creating – focuses on supporting innovation and creativity across the cultural sectors.

A City Exploring – focuses on Belfast's relationship to the rest of the world both inward and outward including support for cultural tourism.

Further information on the themes and priorities is contained in section 2. The strategy document presents the overall approach and commitments over a ten

year period. This will be supported by an additional body of work that will include the development of initial three year implementation plans that will specifically address the delivery of:

- The priorities set out in the strategy
- The strategic projects set out in the strategy
- The proposed investment and governance model

The implementation plans and the investment model that support the strategy will specifically address the need for targeted initiatives. These will be subject to relevant screening and/or equality impact assessments at an appropriate time when relevant information to conduct a full analysis is available.

Following the 12 week public consultation process, a consultation report has been produced (www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culturalstrategy) and the equality assessment has been updated. This will help inform the ongoing assessment and monitoring of equality implications as part of the ongoing development and delivery of the Cultural Strategy. Key issues emerging from the responses related to:

- Developing a good evidence base to inform decision making, with annual research to develop our understanding on participation levels
- Effective engagement and consultation
- Ensuring that an inclusive and accessible approach to design and delivery

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1. Introduction

1.1 Belfast City Council has developed a 10 year Cultural Strategy for Belfast - *A City Imagining* - and it was decided that a strategic level equality impact assessment should be undertaken, along with full consultation on the draft strategy. Following this period of public consultation; detailed implementation and investment plans will be put in place and will also be subject to appropriate equality assessments.

1.2 This is a new strategic framework for the city and is set firmly within the context of the Belfast Agenda and Local Development Plan to create a vision and coherent framework for Belfast that will fully embed culture in the wider city agenda and to enable Belfast's vision to be a 'culturally vibrant city'. The ten year Cultural Strategy for Belfast recognises that over the years, the Council has made a commitment to strengthening and promoting the cultural scene in Belfast. Significant steps have informed the development of the strategy; notably:

- (i) Securing agreement on the first **integrated cultural framework for the city** in 2012. This demonstrated the Council's commitment and leadership in establishing a strong vision for the future cultural city. Developed as a result of significant engagement and consultation with the cultural sector in the city, resulting in an agreed vision and action plans for the city. The vision of the Cultural Framework is that:

By 2020, everyone in Belfast experiences and is inspired by our city's diverse and distinctive culture and arts. Arts and heritage are valued for enriching quality of life and creating wealth, and the city's culture and creativity is recognised throughout the world.

- (ii) Securing agreement for a bid for **European Capital of Culture 2023** by Belfast in partnership with Derry City & Strabane District Council in 2017. This process was designed to enhance the city's cultural vibrancy and strengthen the profile of Belfast as a culturally rich destination. The

development of the bid for European Capital of Culture generated significant interest and momentum; highlighting the potential economic and social impact of investing in cultural and creative development.

1.3 Both the Cultural Framework 2012-2020 and the European Capital of Culture 2023 bid programmes have involved substantial developmental work. This includes a significant programme of engagement and consultation; including engagement with stakeholders, community, voluntary groups representing the arts, heritage, business and culture sectors as well as residents and government departments. In addition there has been regular updates and briefings provided to Belfast City Council's councillors, through the City Growth & Regeneration Committee and through party briefings to focus on the development of the strategy.

1.4 The process of developing this new ten year Cultural Strategy has built on, and been informed by, this engagement and participation. The Strategy will also be supported by Belfast City Council's decision in 2018 to participate in the **Agenda 21 for Culture - pilot cities programme**. This international programme supports the role of culture as an additional dimension, alongside the social, economic and environmental dimensions, that are needed in order to deliver sustainable city development. Participation in the pilot cities programme provides Belfast with a 2 year framework that highlights the distinct role of culture in policy and place-making. More information on this international programme can be found at the following website: [Agenda 21 for Culture](#).

1.5 The Council have agreed that the Cultural Strategy will be developed in two phases:

- First phase – Cultural Strategy vision and strategic priorities
- Second phase – Cultural Strategy implementation plans and investment programmes

As a result it was agreed internally that the EQIA process would follow this approach:

- Cultural Strategy Equality Assessment - at a strategic level to guide the development of the implementation plans and investment programme
- Cultural Strategy implementation and investment programme would be subject to appropriate screening and assessment as required. The issues identified at the strategic level will guide the development of the implementation and investment programmes.

1.7 The purpose of this Equality Assessment is to:

- consider the potential equality and good relations impacts of the Cultural Strategy at a strategic level focusing on the key inequalities which the strategic themes and priorities can help to reduce;
- provide an outline analysis of data and research on current major inequalities experienced by people in the Section 75 groups in relation to the key commitments under the Cultural Strategy;
- establish the positive equality impacts which the future Cultural Strategy can make.

Section 75

1.8 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires all public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between :

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

1.9 In addition, without prejudice to the above obligation, public authorities must, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

1.10 The Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 introduced new duties requiring all public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to –

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

1.11 Screening and EQIAs are carried out in accordance with the guidance issued by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI). The relevant guidance currently in place includes:

- Guide to the Statutory Duties (April 2010)
- Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment (February 2005)
- Promoting Good Relations – A Guide for Public Authorities (October 2007).

1.12 The guide to the statutory duties makes it clear that ‘policies’ is a broad, inclusive term which covers all the ways in which an authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland.¹ The Cultural Strategy is regarded as a policy and subject to the statutory duties.

EQIA methodology

1.13 When undertaking an EQIA, the council closely follows the ECNI guidance which recommends that there should be seven steps in the EQIA process :

¹ Guide to the statutory duties, ECNI, April 2010, page 30.

- Step 1 : Definition of the aims of the policy
- Step 2 : Consideration of available data and research
- Step 3 : Assessment of potential and actual impacts
- Step 4 : Consideration of measures to mitigate adverse impact
- Step 5 : Formal consultation
- Step 6 : Decision and publication of the results of the EQIA
- Step 7 : Monitoring for negative impact.

1.14 This draft report has been written firstly to provide information to consultees during the formal consultation phase and was subject to a 12 week consultation period, alongside the draft Cultural Strategy. It has now been updated with the findings from the consultation process to provide the Council with all available information on which to base a decision.

2. Aims of the policy

2.1 Belfast's culture and arts scene has developed rapidly over the last 10 years and with the city's first community plan in place and the development of the local development plan for Belfast which sets out a vision of the city for 2035.

This Belfast Agenda vision is that by 2035:

*'Belfast will be a city reimagined and resurgent. A great place to live and work for everyone. **Beautiful, well connected and culturally vibrant**, it will be a sustainable city shared and loved by all its citizens, free from the legacy of the conflict'*

This is further reinforced by the Local Development which sets out an ambitious spatial plan for the city and that by 2035:

*Belfast will be a globally successful, smart regional city that is environmentally resilient with a **vibrant economic and social heart'***

2.2 This vision and commitment for Belfast to be a culturally vibrant city; makes this both an exciting and a challenging time in Belfast's transformation. In the challenging economic climate, it is vital that the Council shows leadership by establishing a strong vision for our future cultural city and defines its role in taking this forward. The Cultural Strategy presents a 10 year vision for cultural transformation and establishes strategic priorities to guide future creative and cultural capacity and place-making in the city. This provides the framework for the investment and implementation programmes that will deliver on the strategy.

2.3 The ambition of the Cultural Strategy is set out in the opening cultural statement that has been shaped by the extensive engagement process that has taken place since 2017. This statement recognises that culture has many meanings and that cultural expression can take many forms.

2.4 The Cultural Strategy has four key strategic themes that recognise and nurture the role of culture through four spheres – from the individual, to the community, to the cultural and creative sector and to the city's connections globally. The following strategic themes and priorities have been developed to guide our cultural activity:

2.5 *Theme 1: A City Belonging*

Cultural belonging can be defined as an individual's feelings in relation to their sense of identity, their relationship to other people around them and their sense of place.

Agenda 21 for Culture states that cultural rights guarantee the ability of everyone to identify with one or several cultural communities and to adapt this choice throughout their life.

The exercise of cultural rights is essential for the development of a sustainable city.

We believe that arts and creative practices can foster the confidence to imagine new and diverse senses of belonging in Belfast. Priorities under this theme will support citizens to be active agents of change and co-creators of cultural activity.

The priorities are:

- i. Developing a people focused approach to cultural development by facilitating citizens and sector participation in setting priorities, decision making and in the evaluation of cultural policies
- ii. Building the creative capacity of our citizens and cultural sector to allow people to express their own cultural identities
- iii. Protecting and promoting cultural heritage in all its dimensions, both tangible and intangible including the plurality of the city's cultural narratives
- iv. Enabling a sense of belonging and sense of place through cultural participation

2.6 Theme 2: A City Challenging

Globalisation and migration have increased diversity in cities across the world. Different dimensions of diversity intersect in multiple ways between individuals and communities. One of the city's challenges is to create the conditions whereby Belfast's open spaces offer opportunities for diverse encounters with different cultures, ethnicities, lifestyles, ideologies and attitudes.

Priorities under this theme will aspire to create the conditions for dynamic co-creation and synergy in our public realm.

- i. Embedding cultural impact in city development and local placemaking
- ii. Investing in connected and sustainable infrastructure of quality cultural spaces across the city
- iii. Supporting high quality cultural events and activities that are accessible, diverse and inclusive
- iv. Transforming under-used public spaces into vibrant and diverse cultural destinations

2.7 Theme 3: A City Creating

A culturally vibrant city must take risks. The citizens of Belfast have indicated that they are ready to challenge traditional mind-sets and take a culture-led leap into the future. Cultural, arts and heritage organisations have a key role to play as creative leaders, innovators and challengers.

Priorities under this theme will facilitate and explore new ways of working, taking more risks and helping artists to have more autonomy to engage with citizens in new and creative ways.

- i. Increasing the autonomy of the creative sectors to shape the city's evolving, rich and multiple cultural narratives
- ii. Supporting cultural excellence, cultural planning and cultural entrepreneurialism by providing support for artistic innovation and improved networking
- iii. Investing in a stronger and more sustainable cultural sector by supporting artists and producers to work beyond boundaries.
- iv. Empowering the innovative capacity of the creative economy to connect technology and society

2.8 Theme 4: A City Exploring

The depth and breadth of existing partnerships and networks between a wide range of cultural players is already evident in Belfast. The positive impact of these connections has ripple effects across many sectors at a city and regional level as well as securing Belfast's place within the global creative and cultural economy. Belfast will facilitate, support and maintain city, regional and international networks and collaborative partnerships on a range of levels, from the individual artist to established cultural institutions.

Priorities under this theme will sustain and strengthen the city's cultural ecosystem.

- i. Strengthening our city, regional and international cultural networks

- ii. Growing our sustainable cultural tourism product through local place-making
- iii. Encouraging environmental responsibility by understanding and adapting cultural behaviours
- iv. Increasing the contribution of both public and private cultural sectors to inclusive economic growth

2.9 The Strategy operates at an individual, community, sectoral and city level. It recognises that people are at its the core – everyone who lives, works and visits Belfast will have the opportunity to access, experience, contribute to and be inspired by a diverse, authentic and vibrant culture.

2.10 As a result of the significant programme of engagement and pre-consultation in developing the strategy, culture has been defined in its widest sense – including the formal and professional arts and cultural activities, to people being cultural in their own ways and in their own spaces. The ambition of the strategy is to recognise, value and celebrate the role that culture plays in shaping the city and the lives of those who live, work and visit it by adopting an inclusive and open approach. In this way, we will contribute to the economic ambitions of the city, creating creative spaces and attractive places, building capacity and improving quality of life for the people of Belfast. Through this approach, it contributes to the inclusive economic and social growth of the city.

2.11 To deliver this strategy, we will work in partnership with our city stakeholders, including the culture arts and heritage sectors and strategic stakeholders, to develop supporting implementation plans and investment programmes. We will take an outcomes based approach to deliver on the strategic themes and priorities and in turn, contribute to the Belfast Agenda outcomes.

2.12 The Strategy also includes a commitment to identifying new mechanisms to finance and invest in cultural activity and assets. As the civic leader, Belfast

City Council will take a lead role in developing public-private forms of investment, working with partners, to leverage new investment into the city. The aims of the cultural investment programme are to:

- i. Support the cultural life of the city by enabling citizens to be active, dynamic and creative agents of change
- ii. Invest in our cultural and creative sector to develop the skills and capacity for production and innovation
- iii. Position Belfast as an international testing ground for new approaches to cultural engagement, development and placemaking
- iv. Establish Belfast as a cultural destination

2.13 The approach is shaped by two external bodies of work:

- **Agenda 21 for Culture** – an international methodology that supports cultural development in cities and regions. The focus of Culture 21 is to embed culture as the fourth dimension of sustainable cities alongside existing economic, social and ecological pillars. Belfast’s participation in the Culture 21 pilot cities programme has already been approved and this programme will support the implementation of this strategy.
- **Core Cities Network Cultural Enquiry** – Belfast is a partner member of the core cities network. The enquiry presents a number of practical recommendations on investment and governance of culture in cities. It presents an opportunity to increase the ability of cities to use culture to drive inclusive growth and sets shared priorities for culture along with a more effective approach to investment to maximise the overall return. The development of the investment programme and implementation plans will continue during 2019/20.

2.14 Given the strategic and transformational nature of the ten-year Cultural Strategy for Belfast *A City Imagining*, the equality impacts of the individual programmes, plans and projects, are not specifically considered as part of this EQIA. The programmes, plans and projects to deliver on this strategy, will

continue to be co-designed with stakeholders and partners. These programmes, plans and projects will be subject to equality screening in line with the Council's Equality Scheme and in accordance with the criteria set out in the guidance produced by the Equality Commission.

2.15 This Equality Assessment report provides an assessment of the potential impacts of the overall strategic vision, themes and priorities on the Section 75 groups. This final report has been informed by the feedback received from the public consultation and a summary will be made available on the Council website. (www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culturalstrategy)

3. Analysis of available data and research

3.1 The ECNI guidance requires the council to collect and analyse existing quantitative and qualitative data and research by relevant equality categories in order to make a judgement of the extent of any likely adverse impact. However, these headings simply provide a framework; it is acknowledged that the effects of the Cultural Strategy will be different for each individual person and will not necessarily relate to a specific Section 75 characteristic.

The EQIA includes information on:

- research on the benefits and value of culture and arts;
- data on inequalities in terms of engagement/participation in culture and arts;
- data on the population of the Council area by Section 75 groups (a profile of Belfast is contained in Appendix 1)

3.2 Recognising that this is a new strategic framework for the city and that there will be ongoing development work to produce detailed implementation plans and projects; the analysis within this EQIA focuses on the potential of the Cultural Strategy across the 4 strategic themes.

3.3 The main purpose of this EQIA is to ensure that, in identifying and taking forward implementation programmes that the Council and its partners give due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity by addressing inequalities within and between Section 75 groups. It is therefore important to identify clearly the key inequalities which the Strategy has the potential to address.

Strategic Context and Influences shaping the Cultural Strategy

3.4 The Council has a range of existing grant programmes, development support and direct delivery services that are primarily geared towards promoting and developing cultural activity in the city. Several strategies, frameworks and

delivery plans that direct this activity have been subject to appropriate equality screening in line with the guidance set out by the Equality Commission:

- Belfast Integrated Cultural Framework 2012-2020
- Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy 2015-2030
- Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020
- City Events Annual Delivery Programme

3.5 These strategies have been supplemented in 2017/18 by a mid-term review of the Tourism Strategy and a review of Events and Festivals which have been instrumental in highlighting the need for a more integrated and sustainable model for city-wide programme delivery in order to create a culturally vibrant and attractive city.

Existing funding administered to deliver the Cultural Framework 2012-2020

3.6 The Council currently has a range of small grants and multi-annual funding programmes in place to support cultural life in the city. The primary routes to access this funding have been via the Place & Economy Department's Tourism, Culture, Heritage & Arts Unit.

3.7 The analysis that follows includes an indication of the current funding programmes that have a specific cultural, arts and heritage focus. However, the draft Cultural Strategy recognises that further developmental work to future-proof the delivery and investment model. A summary of the current funding streams is below:

Scheme	Description
Core Multi-annual Fund (core revenue support)	The Council committed over £5.8m to support core costs of 56 arts and cultural organisations over a four year period (2016-20).

	<p>Grants range from £30,000 to £150,000 per annum. Multi-annual funding is awarded for a four-year period. It is open to arts and heritage organisations only.</p> <p>An internal evaluation of this fund has supported the need for a longer term, multi-annual funding programme to support and sustain accessible cultural activity but that a more tailored approach to the investment may yield greater results.</p>
<p>Annual Arts & Heritage Fund (core revenue support)</p>	<p>Through cycles of two tranches of funding per year; this fund supports approximately 35 organisations per funding round.</p> <p>Applicants apply every year for a maximum grant of up to £10,000. It is open to arts and heritage organisations only.</p>
<p>Creative & Cultural Belfast</p>	<p>This programme supported ‘flagship’ projects providing longer term funding for the sector, enabling projects to run over 2-3 years. Belfast City Council and the Arts Council NI jointly funded £900,000 to the Creative and Cultural Belfast programme.</p> <p>Its purpose was "to challenge social exclusion by providing everyone in Belfast with the opportunity to experience high-quality culture, arts and heritage</p> <p>Its target primary beneficiaries were "people and communities [that] are less likely to take part in culture and arts than others due to lack of economic opportunity, educational achievement or other barriers". This included “hard-to-reach” groups already identified in the 2012-2020 Cultural Framework: namely, disabled people, minority ethnic communities and people living in deprived areas.</p>
<p>Community Festivals Fund (project funding)</p>	<p>This fund is match funded by the Department for Communities (formerly Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure). This Fund opens twice a year to recognise the role that festivals can play in increasing social cohesion, celebrating cultural identity and</p>

	strengthening community relations. Festivals can receive up to £10,000 in any tranche. It is open to arts, heritage and community organisations. This fund was subject to an independent evaluation and the evaluation report produced in 2015.
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3.11 All applicants are asked:

- to provide a profile of their target audience and participants by gender and age
- indicate whether they comply with the accessibility requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 or, if this is not possible, what reasonable adjustment they are making;
- provide the location of their organisation and the location where activity will take.

3.12 All funding applications are assessed on a range of criteria including how the organisation or project would support good relations and enrich and extend opportunities to take part in culture and arts activities.

3.13 Many organisations operate across the whole or most of the city, and most organisations aim to be inclusive of everyone. While specific Section 75 monitoring was introduced many groups in the cultural sector choose not to complete and return this information. While every effort has been taken to ensure that the data presented is accurate, classification of applications targeting specific Section 75 dimensions was an arbitrary decision based on the knowledge and experience of council officers.

3.14 The Council has an established track record in using culture and arts as a means for engaging hard to reach groups and evaluating their success. The Creative and Cultural Belfast evaluation report, prepared by Council officers,

reported that 1,076 activities were delivered through the seven funded projects, attracting an audience of 102,626 and engaging 9,478 participants. All projects used a range of measures to remove barriers to access and promote inclusion, such as free events, concessionary ticketing, companion tickets, accessible venues, and so on. The evaluation report included an analysis of the level of engagement and participation by Section 75 groups. As the programmes targeted those who were hard to reach, it is likely that the level of engagement with some Section 75 dimensions would be higher than across the main council funding schemes.

3.15 Evaluations of the Creative Legacies programme (2009-2011) and the Creative and Cultural Belfast programme have concluded that culture and arts programmes have been effective tools in targeting hard-to-reach groups in the following ways:

- Stimulating individual change, including increased self-confidence, self-esteem and skills
- Building healthy relations and making connections between groups, including skills transfer and capacity building
- Creating a shared space and civic identity
- Peace building and conflict resolution – participants gained a greater understanding of, willingness to engage with and tolerance of other cultures and traditions

3.16 The evaluations have also provided recommendations to inform the emerging Cultural Strategy for Belfast; as follows:

- Alternative and staged funding models to allow for more time for planning and co-design
- The role of co-funders in programme delivery
- Striving for a one-council approach to and appreciation of culture and arts

- Marketing and communications to maximise social media and capitalise on word-of-mouth mechanism and attention to be given to marketing to tourists
- Training and development needs to support programme planning, including financial and risk management
- Ongoing oversight of evaluation to ensure evidence is collected systematically, efficiently and effectively

3.17 While there are limitations with the current approaches, the research and engagement process that has informed the draft Cultural Strategy have reinforced the Council's commitment to the development of cultural vibrancy and its commitment to an outcomes based approach. The most recent research, carried out by Thrive (2018) recommends 'a focus on particular demographics in particular areas will be the best way to achieve overall growth in the city's rates of engagement'.

Other External Data and Research

3.18 Council Officers have reviewed relevant research and data from other sources as part of the development of Cultural Strategy and this EQIA, including the following:

- Annual Funding Survey 2017/18 Arts Council NI
- Belfast Arts & Culture Baseline – The story so far (Thrive, 2018)
- Belfast City Council Residents Survey 2017 (Social Market Research)
- 10 Year Cultural Framework for Belfast Equality Impact Assessment 2012 (Belfast City Council)
- Engagement in culture, arts and leisure by adults in Northern Ireland: analysis by Section 75 groups: DCAL Research Findings 15/2014-15
- Engagement in culture, arts and leisure by adults in Northern Ireland's local government districts 2017; DfC 2017

- Engagement in culture, arts and leisure by young people in NI (Young Persons Behaviour & Attitudes Survey 2016); DfC 2017
- Opening Doors – an arts led approach to building social capital - Evaluation Report, Arts Council of Northern Ireland Intercultural Arts Programme 2012-2015 (ACNI 2015)
- Older people and engagement in culture, arts and leisure 2015: A literature review DfC 2015
- Five Year Strategic Framework for the Development of the Arts 2019-2024 and Equality Screening (ACNI 2018)

3.19 The Department for Communities (DfC) published statistics in 2017 showing the levels of adult engagement in culture, arts and leisure across the Northern Ireland's local government districts. The continuous household survey figures for the levels of participation and engagement in Belfast are broadly consistent with the figures for NI, as outlined below:

- 87% of residents in Belfast engaged in culture, arts and leisure, compared to a regional figure of 89%
- 81% of people in Belfast surveyed reported that they engaged with the arts and 32% participated in arts activities in the previous year; compared to a regional figure of 82% engaging and 34% participating with the arts
- 78% of people in Belfast attended an arts event, compared to 79% regionally
- 53% of people in Belfast reported that they participated in sports in the previous year, compared to 54% regionally

3.20 In 2018 Thrive carried out a quantitative survey of 2,200 residents selected randomly from across Belfast to establish if and how those residents engaged with arts and culture in the preceding 12 months. This survey broadened the definition of what we mean by culture, so that it includes a range of activities from the less formal and personal activities to the more structured

programme engagement and attendance. The survey baseline reported that 94% of Belfast residents engaged with arts and culture in the previous year. While there are variations amongst certain groups and geographic areas across the city, the engagement level did not fall below 75%.

Consultation

3.21 Council officers undertook extensive consultation and engagement in the development of the Cultural Strategy. This has included:

- Holding 62 civic conversations
- Engaging with 5,361 citizens
- Supporting 625 creators
- Working with 106 artists
- Across 85 places
- Through 137 events

Workshops and briefings were also held with Councillors; a series of workshops with arts and community organisations; workshops, meetings and communications with the heritage sector and other key stakeholders; and presentations to Belfast City Council's Policy Officers Group, Equality Consultative Forum, Youth Forum and Older People's Forum. In addition meetings of the city's Culture Forum provided vital contributions to the development of the strategy.

3.22 A number of 'deep dive' engagement projects were undertaken throughout 2018/19. The (Y)Our Home Pilot projects took place in neighbourhoods citywide (north, south, east, west and city centre). This programme made connections between artists and citizens through a variety of creative ventures to explore what it means to feel @Home in Belfast and how creative engagement can feed into the Belfast Agenda priorities of Living Here, Working and Learning, City Development and Growing the Economy. Taking place over a period of six months, each project ran for 12 weeks delivering creative sessions led by artists from various disciplines from visual arts to theatre production. Over 500

participants engaged as creators; from primary schools, older people's programmes, migrant support groups, LGBTQ++ groups and support agencies for young people in care. The outcomes of which ranged from film, installation art, theatre showcases, product development and environmental installations, reaching audiences of over 5000 people from across the city.

As an extension of the pre-consultation process, over 15 facilitated sessions on accessing culture, both as an audience member and as an artist/performer, were held across the city for disabled people with each session catering for and consulting on the needs of specific disabilities.

3.23 Most of the culture and arts organisations that were consulted attracted audiences and participants representing all or many Section 75 groupings, and recognised that this included those with multiple identities. However, there is a recognition that there may be benefits in targeting some groups to encourage or increase opportunity, recognition or access to ensure equality of opportunity is felt. This may include organisations targeting specific communities or places; minority ethnic groups; disabled people; children and young people; older people and the LGBTQ++ community.

Limitations, constraints and definitions

3.24 There are a number of inherent difficulties of capturing personal data in a cultural/arts setting, the variety and scale of the cultural scene in Belfast can make it difficult to directly assess its impact. This is particularly pertinent when considering the broad definition of culture that is applied to this Cultural Strategy i.e. that includes individual and informal cultural participation as well as more formalised programme engagement and audience involvement.

3.25 Crucially, it is worth noting the following limitations with the current data and analysis of culture and arts activities:

- In some instances, the collection of Section 75 data is not possible, for example, attendees at a large, city-centre, non-ticketed festival.

- Some cultural organisations feel that recording Section 75 data intrudes on their aim to deliver activities irrespective of cultural or community background.
- Monitoring data supplied via funded organisations is self-reported and not independently verified.
- With the exception of age and gender, funded organisations are not as standard asked to monitor the demographic breakdown of their audience or participants. While every effort has been taken to ensure that the data presented is accurate, in most cases, the classification of applications primarily targeting a Section 75 group is an arbitrary decision based on the knowledge and experience of council officers, but with no truly objective assessment possible.
- The nature and type of art form may influence a person's choice to participate in or attend a cultural activity, rather than represent a specific barrier to taking part. For example, older people are more likely to attend the opera than young people. The Cultural Strategy does not differentiate between or prioritise genres or art-form.

3.26 This Cultural Strategy aims to embed culture, in its widest sense, into many aspects of life in order to increase awareness of the role that culture plays in the city and enrich the diversity and vibrancy of life in the city. The strategic themes and priorities target the individual, community, sectoral and city levels.

3.27 Overall, delivering and investing in cultural life and activity in Belfast, through the Cultural Strategy is likely to have a positive impact on all Section 75 groups, both directly and indirectly by contributing to the economic, social and environmental regeneration and wellbeing of the city.

4. Assessment of impacts

4.1 This EQIA has been carried out utilising a wide range of both quantitative and qualitative data, from sources both within and external to the council. Much of the general research relates to Northern Ireland as a whole, but is particularly pertinent to Belfast. Where possible, data from the Council's own Section 75 monitoring systems has been included.

4.2 The analysis is presented under the headings of the nine Section 75 equality categories. However, these headings simply provide a framework; it is acknowledged that the effects of the Cultural Strategy will be different for each individual person and will not necessarily relate to a specific Section 75 characteristic. This point was reinforced by consultees in the pre and formal consultation period.

4.3 The purpose of the Cultural Strategy is to recognise and value the role of culture in the city. The draft strategy is based on Agenda 21 for Culture which has its foundation in enabling citizens to exercise their cultural rights to support the development of a sustainable city. This approach states that cultural rights give the ability of everyone to identify with one or several cultural communities and to adapt this choice throughout their life.

4.4 The four strategic themes of the draft Strategy promote active citizenship; inclusion and diversity; new perspectives and connecting Belfast and its place in the world. Therefore, overall the Council considers that, based on previous experience, the Cultural Strategy will deliver significant benefits to Belfast. These include:

- Increasing the levels of engagement and participation in culture and arts events
- Increasing the participation of those from those groups that are harder to reach

- Raising the positive international profile of the city
- Improving the city's reputation as a welcoming and inclusive tourist destination
- Increasing the city's reputation as a cultural destination
- Supporting the growth of the City's creative economy

4.5 However, the council accepts that the need to prioritise investment will result in some users benefiting more than others. The analysis below identifies some of the issues for people in the various Section 75 categories.

4.6 Recognising the strategic nature of this investment across the city, the analysis focuses on the potential of the Cultural Strategy across the aims and objectives. As the detailed implementation plans and investment programmes are developed to deliver on the strategy, the positive impact of the programmes / initiatives to be identified will depend on how each are targeted and located, designed and implemented; and the degree of consultation and involvement of diverse local or relevant communities. Further equality screenings/assessments will be carried out on the implementation plans and investment programmes, as appropriate.

Analysis of data and research and assessment of potential impacts

The assessment is based on an analysis of available data and research and is set out under the categories in Section 75.

However, while these headings may provide a framework for analysis, it is recognised that the effects of the proposals will be different for each individual person and will not necessarily relate to a specific Section 75 characteristic.

Strategic Themes and Priorities	Assessment of impact on section 75 group
<p>A City Belonging</p> <p>Priorities under this theme will support citizens to be active agents of change and co-creators of cultural activity.</p> <p>The priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. Developing a people focused approach to cultural development by facilitating citizens and sector participation in setting priorities, decision making and in the evaluation of cultural policies 	<p>Community and Religious belief</p> <p>In NI and in Belfast, research indicates that the majority of culture and arts activity is all or mainly cross-community. Section 75 analysis of the Continuous Household Survey (2013/14) reports that adults stating that they were of other/no religion were more likely to have attended the arts (88%) and participated in sports activity (65%) in the previous year than either Catholic or Protestant adults. In 2017/18, 91% of people stating that they were of no/other religion were likely to engage with culture; while those from either a Catholic or Protestant background were equally likely to engage with culture (86%).</p> <p>Section 75 equality monitoring forms are provided to successful applicants of BCC funding; however, the vast majority of those in receipt of culture and arts funds choose not to submit these forms. Only 7% (5) forms were submitted in 2016/17 and</p>

<p>vi. Building the creative capacity of our citizens and cultural sector to allow people to express their own cultural identities</p> <p>vii. Protecting and promoting cultural heritage in all its dimensions, both tangible and intangible including the plurality of the city’s cultural narratives</p> <p>viii. Enabling a sense of belonging and sense of place through cultural participation</p>	<p>13% (8 out of 58) in 2017/18, therefore it is not possible to provide further analysis on this data. This is reinforced by the results from the public consultation on the draft Cultural Strategy with most people completing the question indicating that they were neither a member of the Protestant or Catholic community (46%).</p> <p>Political Opinion</p> <p>As above</p> <p>Dependants</p> <p>There is limited evidence of differential impacts on people with and without dependants. In 2017/18, DfC research indicated that 91% of those with dependants engaged with culture compared to 83% of those without. However it is recognised that those with family commitments and/or caring responsibilities may be a barrier to participation/attendance.</p> <p>Racial Group</p> <p>Just over 3% of Belfast’s population are from a black and minority ethnic background according to the 2011 Census. This is likely to be slightly higher in 2019, with</p>
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increasing numbers of new communities recognised in the city. The culture and arts scene is diverse, and minority ethnic communities in general are well represented. The level of activity specifically targeting minority ethnic communities is considered to correlate with the population share of Belfast, while other activities aim to be inclusive regardless of ethnic background. Applications targeting minority ethnic communities are as likely to secure funding as applications targeting any other Section 75 dimension.

It is worth noting that ACNI state that many people responding to their survey choose not to report ethnicity or disability. Research indicates that people from minority ethnic groups can face multiple social, economic and cultural barriers to arts engagement. These barriers to participation may include communications and language; perceived irrelevance of arts to own culture; money; lack of transport; and lack of time and timings of events.

Age

DCAL's analysis of the Continuous Household Survey results by Section 75 category (2013/14) age impacts on engagement rates in all aspects of culture, arts and leisure.

This trend continues with DfC's 2017/18 research reporting that 97% of 16-24 year olds engage in cultural activity while 69% of those aged 65 years and over engage in cultural activity. ACNI and NISRA's General Population Survey 2016 reports that although the engagement, attendance and participation of older people in the arts is lower than other age categories there has been an increasing trend - a 15% rise in engagement, over 10% increase in attendance, and a 5% rise in participation. Despite a drop in engagement during 2014 to 54.7%, engagement of older people in 2016 is recovering (59.3%).

Disability

20.3% of people in NI and 23.5% in Belfast have a long-term health problem or disability that limits their daily activities or the work they can do. According to DCAL (now DfC), adults who have a disability were less likely than those who do not have a disability to play sports, attend the arts, museums and libraries. In Belfast, there is a difference between the level of activity primarily targeting disabled people and their population share. While the majority of activity aims to be inclusive of people with and people without disabilities, attendance and participation rates in Belfast are not known.

Sexual Orientation

ACNI's Annual funding Survey 2017/18 reports that 4.8% of programmed ACNI funded activity targets LGBTQ++ communities. Most arts organisations aim to be inclusive of LGBTQ++ people, and there is little information on rates of cultural attendance and participation among this community. However, barriers to participation may include services designed on the assumption that the users are heterosexual and events and activities are not reflective of their culture.

Multiple Identities

The cumulative impact of multiple sources of disadvantage – low incomes, benefit dependency, low skills levels and qualifications – are likely to combine together to impact on an individual's ability to access opportunities to participate and their capacity to participate in cultural activities, heritage and cultural policies. Deprivation levels vary considerably across the city with the majority of the most deprived wards being in north and west Belfast. According to Thrive's audience baseline (2016/17), there is a likely relationship between age, marital status and the level of cultural engagement; as well as a correlation between gender and age and the level of cultural engagement. In addition, engagement and participation levels will vary according to the nature of the cultural activity and individual choice.

<p>A City Challenging</p> <p>Priorities under this theme will aspire to create the conditions for dynamic co-creation and synergy in our public realm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. Embedding cultural impact in city development and local placemaking vi. Investing in connected and sustainable infrastructure of quality cultural spaces across the city vii. Supporting high quality cultural events and activities that are accessible, diverse and inclusive viii. Transforming under-used public spaces into vibrant and diverse cultural destinations 	<p>The aim of the strategy is to retain or increase access to and inclusion in a vibrant inclusive cultural scene, and to create opportunities for cultural participation and expression, including more marginalised and/or deprived communities. Increasing the accessibility of cultural infrastructure, either in terms of getting into these buildings or spaces, or the distances people are required to travel to get there, removes barriers to participation in cultural activities.</p> <p>94% of people in Belfast have engaged in arts and culture in some way, shape or form in 2016/17 with general agreement around the importance and value of the type of festivals and large scale events which Belfast City Council fund (Thrive 2018); however, there is room for improvement and an opportunity to deepen and solidify the participation. Key to this is recognising that individuals may face multiple barriers to participation and engagement. Applying the Council’s Linguistic Diversity Policy and Inclusive Events Guide will be important elements in planning and delivering the strategy to ensure accessible, diverse and inclusive events, places and spaces.</p> <p>Community and Religious belief</p> <p>In NI and in Belfast, research indicates that the majority of culture and arts activity is all or mainly cross-community. The majority of Belfast organisations operate across</p>
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the whole or most of the city and are all or mainly cross-community. Funded organisations are not required to record the religious beliefs or political opinions of their audiences and participants. However, while the location of an organisation is not always indicative of their catchment area or typical target audience, for the purposes of analysis, applications for funding were classified according to the postcode of the organisation where this could be associated with a predominantly Catholic or Protestant area.² In the 2016/2020 period³ the vast majority of core multi-annual funding awarded to organisations were based in areas that are not dominated by one single religious belief/community background - only two of the 56 organisation's receiving core multi-annual funding located in a predominantly Catholic community (3.6%)³

Political Opinion

As above

² Where more than 90 per cent of the population of the Super Output Area was Catholic or Protestant. It should be noted that the above statistics do not include Duncairn 1 and Bloomfield 1 super output areas, in which, respectively, 89.7 and 89.5 per cent of the population are from a Protestant background. A total of 176 applications were received from these areas, mostly from arts organisations based in the Cathedral Quarter, of which 125 were successful.

³ As a result of Local Government Reform and boundary changes there were some changes to Belfast wards. NISRA census figures have been used as the basis for the community background per ward.

Dependants

There is very limited evidence of differential impacts on people with and without dependants. However it is recognised that those with family commitments and/or caring responsibilities may be a barrier to participation/attendance.

Age

DCAL's analysis of the Continuous Household Survey results by Section 75 category (2013/14) age impacts on engagement rates in all aspects of culture, arts and leisure.

In keeping with the social trend and analysis to date, younger people are more likely to participate and engage in cultural activity than other age groups it is likely that they will benefit more from this Strategy than other age groups. Research has indicated that tailoring activities and events that are more likely to attract older people such as music and reading/literature offer the greatest opportunities to create greater participation, engagement as well as contributing to increased vibrancy and inclusion in city life. The most frequently cited barriers to participation by the young and old are access to transport.

Racial Group

Just over 3% of Belfast's population are from a black and minority ethnic background according to the 2011 Census. This is likely to be slightly higher in 2019, with increasing numbers of new communities recognised in the city. The culture and arts scene is diverse, and minority ethnic communities in general are well represented.

The level of activity specifically targeting minority ethnic communities is considered to correlate with the population share of Belfast, while other activities aim to be inclusive regardless of ethnic background. Funding applications to the Council's Tourism, Culture, Heritage & Arts Team targeting minority ethnic communities are as likely to secure funding as applications targeting any other Section 75 dimension.

Disability

Analysis indicates that disabled people are less likely to attend and participate in culture and arts activities than people without disabilities. The opportunity to attend cultural events at venues and participate in activities taking place within them is constrained if the building's infrastructure has poor physical accessibility.

While we have not identified any adverse differential impacts on disabled people, there may be an opportunity to improve access and participation. Funded organisations are not required to record the number of disabled people who attend or participate in their activities.

All funded organisations are required to comply with the accessibility requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 or, if this is not possible, to make reasonable adjustments. Organisations and projects also employed other measures to include disabled people, such as the use of captioning and audio description. The Council's Inclusive Events Guide is being included in contracts to promote inclusive and accessible events for all.

Sexual Orientation

Most arts organisations aim to be inclusive of LGBTQ++ people, and there is little information on rates of cultural attendance and participation among this community. ACNI's Annual funding Survey 2017/18 reports that 4.8% of programmed ACNI funded activity targets LGBTQ++ communities.

Most arts organisations aim to be inclusive of LGBTQ++ people, and there is little information on rates of cultural attendance and participation among this community. From 2016-2018, four applications for funding were received for Community Festivals and Arts & heritage Funds to support programmes and projects highlighting specific aspects of sexual orientation. Of these, three applications were successful. Funding applications to the Council's Tourism, Culture, Heritage & Arts Team targeting LGBTQ++ communities are as likely to secure funding as applications targeting any other Section 75 dimension. However, research has indicated that barriers to participation may include services designed on the assumption that the users are heterosexual and events and activities are not reflective of their culture. Through the co-design approach to cultural programmes and the integration of culture in placemaking there is scope to build in more inclusive practice.

Multiple Identities

The cumulative impact of multiple sources of disadvantage – low incomes, benefit dependency, low skills levels and qualifications – are likely to combine together to impact on an individual's ability to access opportunities to participate and their capacity to participate in cultural activities and events. Deprivation levels vary considerably across the city with the majority of the most deprived wards being in

	<p>north and west Belfast. A city development and local placemaking approach provides a neighbourhood and city-wide perspective; transforming under-used public space will ensure that the impact of ease of access, connectivity and affordability are factored into the cultural strategy.</p>
<p>A City Creating</p> <p>Priorities under this theme will facilitate and explore new ways of working, taking more risks and helping artists to have more autonomy to engage with citizens in new and creative ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Increasing the autonomy of the creative sectors to shape the city’s evolving, rich and multiple cultural narratives ii. Supporting cultural excellence, cultural planning and cultural entrepreneurialism by providing support for artistic innovation and improved networking iii. Investing in a stronger and more sustainable cultural sector by supporting artists and producers to work beyond boundaries. 	<p>In 2016, employment in the creative industries accounted for an estimated 24,000 jobs, representing 2.9% of total employment in NI and just over 2,900 businesses (DfC 2018). Almost two-fifths (38%) of all creative industries were in IT, software and computer services; followed by 12% in film, TV and 7.6% in music, visual and performing arts. As an urban centre, Belfast is a hub for the region’s creative sector. This is evidenced in recent research on the employment of Belfast residents (Ulster University Economic Policy Centre, 2018) reports that BCC residents have a high proportion of NI’s jobs in creative sectors; for example, over half the jobs in film, Tv and music are held by BCC residents (55%), while just over two fifths of the jobs in creative arts and entertainment are help by BCC residents (41%). However, it is not possible to break this down to an analysis by Section 75 group.</p> <p>A range of enterprise and business start-up and growth programmes are available and have identified creative sector business as a growth sector. These programmes have been equality screened and targeted engagement and support available for</p>

<p>iv. Empowering the innovative capacity of the creative economy to connect technology and society</p>	<p>those groups who are traditionally under-represented (disabled, black and ethnic minority groups, women and those with caring responsibilities).</p> <p>ACNI (2017/18) reported that 8% of their core funded client workforce were from a minority ethnic background; many employed in an artistic capacity. This is an indication that those from minority ethnic groups are well represented in the arts and cultural sector, when considering the proportion in the population.</p> <p>Further research will also be undertaken to ensure an appropriate outcomes focused impact evaluation of Council funded activities. We will also continue to work with the cultural and creative sector to consider effective measures of hard-to-capture audiences, for example, audiences at non-ticketed events. We want to ensure that the impact of our investment is felt across all communities and creates a positive impact, particularly in terms of inclusive economic and social growth for people, communities and the city.</p> <p>Multiple identities</p>
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	<p>The cumulative impact of multiple sources of disadvantage – low incomes, benefit dependency, low skills levels and qualifications – are likely to combine together to impact on an individual’s opportunity and capacity to access and participate in cultural and creative life . Deprivation levels vary considerably across the city with the majority of the most deprived wards being in the inner city areas and north and west Belfast.</p>
<p>A City Exploring</p> <p>Priorities under this theme will sustain and strengthen the city’s cultural ecosystem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Strengthening our city, regional and international cultural networks ii. Growing our sustainable cultural tourism product through local place-making iii. Encouraging environmental responsibility by understanding and adapting cultural behaviours 	<p>This theme builds on the three previous themes to position the city as a connected, outward facing city.</p> <p>Strengthening the city’s cultural networks will not only recognise the city’s distinct characteristics and events but also build on the city’s calendar of diverse cultural festivals and events, including Belfast Mela, Diwali and Samhain, Holi, Chinese New Year and Polish Cultural Week.</p> <p>As the brand and other actions and initiatives develop to deliver on the priorities, such as maritime tourism, the story of Belfast and “Beyond peace”, the Council will ensure</p>

<p>iv. Increasing the contribution of both public and private cultural sectors to inclusive economic growth</p>	<p>that these remain inclusive of all people and be subject to appropriate equality considerations, to ensure that there is no differential impact.</p> <p>A number of initiatives to support the tourism infrastructure and visitor management, such as coach parking and tours, neighbourhood tourism trails and routes across the city, have the potential to promote equality of opportunity for both visitors and residents, including those with disabilities.</p> <p>The Inclusive Events Guide and Council’s Linguistic Diversity Policy adopted in 2017 will also be applied in the delivery plans for the Cultural Strategy’s themes and priorities.</p> <p>Marketing and communication platforms should be inclusive of and respond to the needs of people with different disabilities, race, age and language needs.</p> <p>New signature ‘Imagine’ festivals and visitor attractions will include design principles to ensure they are inclusive and accessible.</p>
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<p>A City Investing</p> <p>The aims of the cultural investment programme are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Support the cultural life of the city by enabling citizens to be active, dynamic and creative agents of changeii. Invest in our cultural and creative sector to develop the skills and capacity for production and innovationiii. Position Belfast as an international testing ground for new approaches to cultural engagement, development and placemakingiv. Establish Belfast as a cultural destination	<p>A City Investing outlines the four pillars that will guide the development of the Cultural Investment Programme.</p> <p>91% of those surveyed by Thrive (2018) agreed to some extent that having culture and arts available in Belfast is important; this applied across genders and age ranges.</p> <p>An important aspect of the Cultural Strategy is to incentivise and invest in the city’s cultural offer and to increase future events and activities available for all residents and visitors to participate in. The cultural offer and future events and activities will be designed and programmed to ensure inclusivity, diversity and accessibility in order to create a city that is welcoming and attractive for everyone.</p> <p>Testing new approaches to cultural engagement is likely to enhance and diversify links at a community level which should support increased participation levels. This will be built on best practice and learning from cities elsewhere.</p>
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5. Overall assessment of impacts

5.1 The development and implementation of the Cultural Strategy will make an important contribution in terms of the development economic, social and environmental growth and regeneration of the city. In addition it supports the aspirations set out in the Belfast Agenda and the Local Development Plan. The Council believes that the Cultural Strategy strategic themes and priorities will not have specific adverse impacts for any Section 75 group but the analysis of available data and research shows that there are a number of key inequalities that the Cultural Strategy may help to address.

5.2 The main purpose of this EQIA is to ensure that the Council and delivery agents will have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity by addressing inequalities within and between Section 75 groups.

5.3 Feedback from the consultation process has highlighted the importance of building equality implications into the future development of the Cultural Strategy implementation plans and investment programme.

5.4 The importance of engagement and co-design principles is fundamental to the delivery of the Strategy. The gaps in the data have emphasised the importance of the engagement and consultation process in order to understand the nature of cultural impact. Priority 1 of the strategy commits to 'a people focussed approach to cultural development' therefore over the next 10 years this engagement methodology will continue to evolve.

6. Consideration of Measures

6.1 The Cultural Strategy is likely to have a positive impact on all Section 75 groups, both directly and indirectly, by contributing to economic growth and social progress. It is anticipated, however, that some areas of development may have a differential impact on a number of Section 75 groups in a positive manner by addressing recognised need and these are highlighted below.

- Investment in the Cultural Strategy will help the city to encourage economic growth and position Belfast as a primary tourist destination and international city. This economic growth will provide opportunities to target under-represented groups such as disabled people and those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. The opportunities for economic growth will provide opportunities for those from deprived communities in the city.
- Seek to maximise the opportunity to participate in cultural activity by ensuring that events, venues and facilities are inclusive and accessible. This will have particular benefits for those groups who currently experience barriers to access, including people from black and minority ethnic communities, LGBTQ++, disabled people, older people and people with dependants.
- The four strategic themes and priorities will also help to reduce segregation and social isolation.

6.2 The potential impacts of the Cultural Strategy will only be realised when the Cultural Strategy investment programme and implementation plans are developed. An equality assessment will be undertaken on the investment programme and equality will be factored in to the design and delivery of the implementation and action plans resulting from the Strategy. It is recognised that the positive impact of programmes / initiatives will depend on how each are targeted and located, designed and implemented; and the degree of consultation and involvement of diverse local or relevant communities.

7. Consultation

7.1 Following a significant programme of pre-consultation and engagement in the development of the draft strategy; the formal consultation period for the draft Cultural Strategy, including this strategic level equality assessment report was carried out over a 12-week period from 17th April 2019 to 10th July 2019.

7.2 During the 12 week consultation period the draft equality assessment report was available on the Council's website consultation platform Citizenspace, together with the draft rural needs assessment and the draft Cultural Strategy *A City Imagining*. A press release was issued on 18th April on the launch of the public consultation. Media coverage took place along with pulse screen public advertising for the initial two weeks of the consultation period; advertising in Queen's Film Theatre, Crescent Arts Centre, The Mac and Lyric Theatre as well as articles in City Matters and through the Council's social media channels (with a Facebook discussion group specifically set up for *A City Imagining* consultation) .

7.2 A composite report on the public consultation is available on the Council's website (www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culturalstrategy). In total, 3,264 people engaged in the process in a variety of ways with over 80 events taking place across the city. The formal consultation period included:

- Exhibitions & workshops in community venues in North, West, South and East of the city
- Opening of pop-up consultation space *A City imagining Hub* in the city centre for a five week period
- Bespoke stakeholder and sector engagement workshops
- Workshops with those from Section 75 groups representing those who may face barriers to participation including those with dependants, young people, LGBTQ++, refugees and asylum seekers.

- In addition to the Council's online Citizenspace Survey platform, there was an opportunity to submit electronic and written responses as well as have one-to-one/drop-in sessions.

7.3 The main issues raised in terms of the equality and rural needs include:

- The strategy document did not reference specific Section 75 groups such as members of the LGBTQ++ community, minority ethnic groups or disabled people.
- The importance of equality of access and equality of opportunity.
- Making information readily available on the accessibility of venues.
- Consider accessibility issues when planning and delivering cultural events/activities, including the cost/pricing and infrastructure issues such as transport and parking.
- Increasing staff capacity and training around the use of language and assistance around disability
- The need for monitoring to be manageable.

7.4 The development of the strategy was strongly influenced by the extensive pre-consultation engagement. Through this process there was a strong message that a truly inclusive civic society embraces all people and that we should challenge the current use of language to enable the city to move forward. Therefore the decision was taken that the Cultural Strategy *A City Imagining* would adopt a language of inclusivity and that specific Section 75 groups would not be referenced.

7.5 The engagement and consultation activity that has informed the strategy will continue to develop and inform the implementation plans and delivery of the strategy.

8. Monitoring for adverse impact

8.1 As part of the investment programme and implementation plans, a monitoring and evaluation framework is being developed. This will consider the need to monitor the equality impacts. As a result of the feedback on the equality assessment, this will also take account of the need to ensure that monitoring requirements are manageable and commensurate.

8.2 In addition, research will be undertaken on an annual basis to inform our understanding of participation and measuring harder to capture audiences.

8.3 The results of ongoing monitoring of the equality impacts will be reviewed on an annual basis and included in the annual review on progress to the Equality Commission. This review will be published on the Council's website.

9. Further Action

9.1 The implementation of the strategy aims to ensure a more inclusive approach to cultural engagement and investment. The potential to promote equality and good relations will only be realised where the delivery is informed by due consideration of the inequalities that need to be addressed. The implementation plans and the investment programme that support the strategy will specifically address the need for targeted initiatives and ensure that the principle of equality is fully realised in the outcomes of the strategy. These will be subject to relevant screening and/or equality impact assessments at an appropriate time when relevant information to conduct a full analysis is available.

Belfast City Profile (by Section 75 category)

Religious belief

Based on the 2011 Census⁴, there is a higher proportion of residents from a Catholic community background (48.8%). 42.3% state that they are from a Protestant and other Christian community background. Compared to the NI level, there is a slightly higher proportion of residents stating that they are of no religious persuasion (7.1%, compared to 5.6% regionally); this has also increased since the 2001 census when 4.2% indicated they were non-religious.

However, there are many neighbourhoods comprising people almost exclusively from one community background; in the 2007 council public survey, 78% of residents described their area as mainly one religion⁵. In the council's 2010 public survey, 51% of those surveyed stated 'that their local area is a place where people from different religious and political backgrounds get on well together'.

Political opinion

In the last local government election in May 2019, eight political parties are represented at Belfast City Council; as follows: 30% for Sinn Feinn (SF); 25% for the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), 16% for the Alliance Party, 10% for the Social Democratic & Labour Party (SDLP), 6.7% for the Green Party, 5% for People before Profit, 3.3% for the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and 3.3% for the Progressive Unionist party (PUP). A total of 60 councillors were elected to Belfast City Council.

⁴ NISRA (2011) Census of Population

⁵ Ipsos MORI (2007) Survey of Belfast Resident Population

Ethnic background

According to Census 2011, 96.7% of Belfast's population is white. Just over 3% of the Belfast population are from an ethnic background. As is the case in NI, the largest minority ethnic groups in Belfast are the Chinese (0.7%), Indian (0.7%) and Asian (0.6%) communities. The proportion of ethnic groups from a non-white background has increased in Belfast since the 2001 census (1.4%).

While 95% of Belfast's population (aged 3+years) have English as their main language, recent years have seen an increase in the number of migrants to the region and city, with 1.4% of those aged 3+years stating other as their main language and 1.2% of those aged 3+years having Polish as their main language.

Age

Belfast has a lower percentage of young people (aged under 16 years) and a lower percentage of older people (aged 60 years and over) than the NI average. In 2011⁶, 19.8% of Belfast residents were under 16 years (compared with 20.9% in NI as a whole) and 19.6% were aged 60 and over (compared with 21.5% in NI as a whole). The Belfast Agenda and Local Development Plan ambitions are putting programmes in place to support the growth of the city's population, by an extra 66,000 people by 2035.

Marital status

A relatively high percentage of residents are single at 45% compared with the NI average of 36.1%. There is also a higher percentage of those who are separated and divorced (11.5%), compared with the NI level of 9.4%. Belfast also has a higher proportion of residents who are in a same sex civil partnership at 0.13%, compared to 0.09% regionally. There are fewer married people at 35.6% compared with the NI average of 47.6%⁷.

⁶ NISRA (2018) 2017 Mid-Year Population Estimates

⁷ NISRA (2011) Census of Population

Sexual orientation

According to ONS statistics, 2.0% of the UK population identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) in 2017. ONS report that 1.2% of the NI population identify themselves as LGB⁸. The council currently has no data specific to Belfast.

However, estimates for the LGB population range from 0.3-10% using different sources. A commonly used estimate of LGB people in the UK, accepted by Stonewall UK, is approximately 5-7% of the population.

Gender

Belfast has a slightly higher proportion of females (51.5% of residents). This is slightly higher than the NI figure of 50.8% (NISRA 2017 mid year estimates).

Disability

The Census 2011 showed that 23.5% of Belfast residents has a long term health problem or disability that limits their daily activities or the work they can do, compared with the NI average of 20.3%⁹.

Dependants

30.4% of households in Belfast include dependant children, compared with the NI average of 36.5%. 12.1% of households in Belfast consist of a lone parent and a dependant child or children, compared with the NI average of 9.1%.

At the time of the Census, 12.3% of people stated that they provided unpaid care for a to family, friends, neighbours or others; this is slightly higher than the NI average of 11.8%¹⁰.

⁸ ONS (2019) Sexual identity, UK: 2017

⁹ NISRA (2011) Census of Population

¹⁰ NISRA (2011) Census of Population

Multiple deprivation

On many measures of socio-economic performance there has been a narrowing of the gap between the Belfast region and UK averages; however, on most measures a gap remains. As the Northern Ireland Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey noted, exclusion remains a fact of life for a large section of the regional population with Belfast containing more than its proportionate share¹¹.

Half of the 100 most deprived Super Output Areas in NI are located in Belfast, accounting for 29% of its 174 SOAs; the highest proportion of all LGDs.

Waterworks 2 is ranked as the second most deprived area in NI. 12.4% of the Belfast population are living in households with an income below 60% of the NI median (compared with 25% in NI as a whole) and 13.1% of the working age population are identified as employment deprived (compared with 20.6% in NI as a whole). In terms of access to services, none of Belfast's Super Output Areas fall within the most deprived 100 super output areas in NI¹².

Links:

<https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk>

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culture

culture@belfastcity.gov.uk

¹¹ OFMDFM (2008) Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey

¹² NISRA (2017) NI Multiple Deprivation Measures