



Our commitment to
Inclusive Growth
2020 - 2022



Belfast
City Council

www.belfastcity.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

Belfast City Council (BCC) is committed to inclusive growth. For us inclusive growth means ensuring the success of the city reaches every citizen. Our aim is to connect all residents with economic growth and create vibrant communities where everyone has the opportunity and aspiration to succeed.

This document expresses the commitment of all political parties to drive inclusive growth in Belfast. We know there is a strong desire across the city for change. We want to work in collaboration with others, to collectively make a difference. This commitment has been agreed by Party Group Leaders:

“
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.
”

The commitments outlined in this document will be used to guide the council in adopting business practices that support inclusive growth and to engage partners (including statutory, businesses, social enterprises and community groups) across Belfast in the development and delivery of the city’s ambitions. Furthermore, it is vital that the voices of citizens and communities shape our approach.

It is both a commitment on behalf of the council and also a call to action for other organisations across the city. It sends a message to all of our stakeholders that we want to do business in a way that brings about a more inclusive Belfast.

Throughout the document we set out a policy framework designed to deliver improved outcomes for Belfast citizens and communities and encourage multi-agency collaboration. Our commitments complement a range of local and regional strategies, plans and policies, including the Belfast Local Development Plan, the Belfast Agenda and are heavily embedded throughout our Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023.

We recognise that in order for others across the city to prioritise inclusive growth, the council must take the lead and demonstrate how it is possible to use a range of powers to create an inclusive city. That is why our initial focus is on what we can do as a corporate body and in our role as a civic leader, to improve access to economic opportunity across Belfast city area. We then set out how we believe the city as a whole, and its key anchor institutions, can respond to the imperative to develop a more inclusive economy.

The actions needed to meet these challenges are complex but delivery of the commitments within this document is one of the first key steps to meeting the vision of an inclusive Belfast, leaving no-one behind. We are looking forward to working together as an organisation, with partners and communities to translating it into a powerful programme of delivery and change.

Context

The Belfast Agenda is an ambitious plan for the city, with a strong economic focus and far-reaching targets for population and jobs growth. We believe that in order to address the long term challenges facing people in Belfast, such as health and educational inequalities, the need for good relations, ensuring people feel safe and have good living conditions, we need to focus on growing our economy and ensuring the benefits are felt by everyone.

We know that the best route to an improved quality of life for most people is through having a good job. So we are committed to growing the number of jobs in the city and providing support for residents to take advantage of these. Our goal is that by 2035 our urban economy will support 46,000 additional jobs.

We also know from the experience of other economically successful cities that increasing the number of jobs results in a growing population. It is our desire to grow the city's population by 66,000 more people, returning Belfast's population to similar levels not seen since the 1970s. We want to encourage more people to both live and work in the city, directly contributing to its success, vibrancy and sustainability.

We have therefore rightly set out an ambitious economic growth agenda. This is highlighted by our success and commitment to secure the Belfast Region City Deal and the creation of a range of investment funds and investments to make Belfast a great place to locate and start a business.

We are also committed to creating a strong and vibrant city centre. Its development is vital for attracting private sector investment, creating revenue and enabling the sustainability of council expenditure and service delivery.

Of course, economic and population growth on its own is not enough. These are a means to an end to help us reduce inequalities and create opportunities for all. Not everyone in Belfast has benefited in the past and unless there is a paradigm shift in our policy framework this will continue. While Belfast currently displays great economic optimism, it is imperative the benefits of this growth are inclusive, where everyone has the opportunity and aspiration to succeed.

This strategy aims to improve life chances and therefore it is something that no single organisation or sector can deliver alone. We must do it together. We look forward to working with our city partners to ensure future interventions provide inclusive growth opportunities to ensure no-one is left behind.

While significant, the measures outlined in the remainder of this document are only one part of our commitment to creating an inclusive city. Alongside these commitments to inclusive growth, we continue to work with all partners to address many of the underlying causes of poverty and exclusion such as health inequalities (specifically mental health), educational underachievement, transport and community infrastructure.

By 2035, our economy supports 46,000 additional jobs

By 2035, our city is home to an additional 66,000 people

Attract £1billion private sector investment

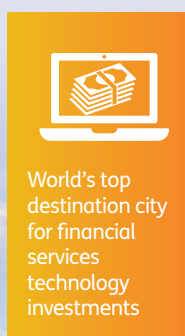
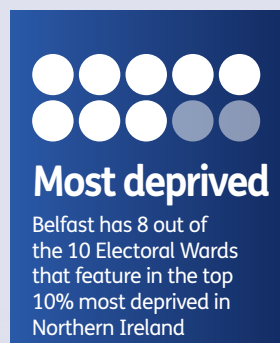
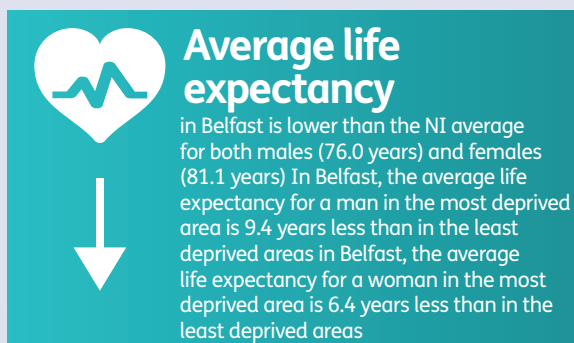
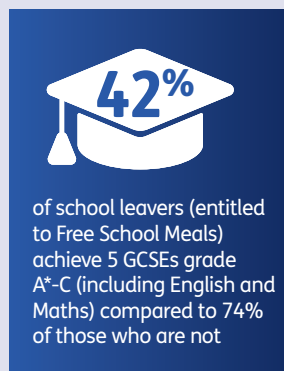
Grow the city's rates base by 5%

Create 4,000 business start ups

Increase value of out of state tourism to £500million

Create 1.5million square feet of Grade A office accommodation

**Inclusive
Growth**



2. Our inclusive growth statement

As a council we believe it is important to have a common and shared understanding of what inclusive growth means for us. In drafting this strategy all political parties worked together to collectively examine the issues facing the city and develop an inclusive growth statement. This statement is set out below.

“

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 households applying to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive 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 benefitting 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.

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.

We are committed to doing all we can to eradicate poverty and inequality in our city.

”

Party Group Leaders

Ciaran Beattie - Sinn Fein
George Dorrian - DUP
Michael Long - Alliance Party
Donal Lyons - SDLP
Mal O'Hara - Green Party
Billy Hutchinson - PUP
Sonia Copeland - UUP

Our inclusive growth cohorts

We have identified four groups of Belfast residents that we will target in the first instance. Each target group is complementary to the Belfast Agenda. Through the delivery of our data development commitments, as set out within Section 5, we will refine our evidence base. In particular we will pay attention to the composition of the four groups in relation to our equality duties.

Residents not in employment

Unemployed and economically inactive households and individuals are usually amongst those most vulnerable or at highest risk of poverty. It can also impact health outcomes, both mental and physical and school performance of children.

Residents with low skill levels

Measuring skills attainment reflects the wide disparity in education performance within Belfast. In Belfast, 32.5% of residents hold below NVQ Level 2 qualifications, which is greater than the NI and UK averages of 29.0% and 25.8%, respectively. Residents with lower levels of qualifications may be restricted to relatively poor paid jobs and are less likely to progress and benefit from new jobs growth in the city.

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Research shows that time spent NEET can have a detrimental effect on physical and mental health and increases the likelihood of long-term unemployment, low wages, or a low quality of work later in life. Lowering the number of young people who spend time NEET will form an important part of Belfast's inclusive growth strategy and future prosperity.

In work, low earning individuals

According to a joint report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) (2018), almost 60% of people living in poverty are non-pensioners in working households. It is vital that inclusive growth interventions target low earning working individuals and encourage employers to pay their employees a fair amount. As the living wage is based on the real cost of living, individuals paid below this threshold can struggle to meet their day to day expenses, particularly as Belfast has higher living costs relative to other parts of Northern Ireland, potentially leading to residents accessing lower quality housing and suffering from poorer health. The disparity between average weekly gross pay (available data is 2015) for Belfast residents (£499.10) and Belfast workers (£550.30) suggests that Belfast's growing economic prosperity is not necessarily flowing to its residents with many highly paid workers commuting into the city from surrounding towns and villages.

3. Our corporate commitments

This chapter details how as a corporate body we will seek to contribute towards inclusive growth. Outlining how we will leverage our procurement and employment powers to deliver against our vision and how we will place inclusive growth at the heart of our key investment and strategy decisions.

Harnessing procurement to social value

In 2017-18, Belfast City Council procured over £93million from revenue suppliers and over £38million from capital suppliers. We have to achieve value for money, but this doesn't mean we can't seek to ensure that the money we spend through procurement meets our city wide social ambitions. This level of expenditure can provide a boost to our local economy; supporting business and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector; providing employment opportunity; and putting money into neighbourhoods, high streets and local shops. Our procurement approach can also make a major contribution to the reduction of our overall environmental impact.

We will place a real value on those suppliers who can offer more than the core technical requirements of the contract for goods, works or services. This could include, but is not limited to, opportunities such as:

- creating skills and training opportunities e.g., apprenticeships or on the job training;
- creating high quality sustainable employment opportunities for target groups in the local area;
- offering work placements to target groups;
- providing career advice and information on specific careers;
- providing additional opportunities for individuals or groups facing greater barriers;
- activities contributing to wider economic and institutional transformation;
- lowering barriers to social mobility and inequality;
- creating supply chain opportunities for small business and social enterprises;
- encouraging community engagement; and
- delivering environmental benefits for local communities.

We will develop a comprehensive Social Value Procurement Framework. Through this framework, we commit to maximise the potential of the council's procurement spend

to support our social ambitions. Social value in procurement is defined as "the additional benefit to the community over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes".

This work will be guided by the following principles:

Flexible and proportionate guidelines around the implementation of the framework will be appropriate to the value, nature, duration and complexity of the contract that is being procured. This is necessary to ensure accessibility to all suppliers from micro to Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to larger businesses.

Easy to understand and adopt with minimal administrative burden for all businesses, especially SMEs.

User-friendly and supported with guidance, education, tools, and templates. This will include the development of a Social Value Procurement Toolkit. The toolkit will provide guidance for all key stakeholders, including commissioners and procurers and will include a capacity building programme around meet the buyer events, training, collaborative bids and looking at the size of lots.

Evidence based by committing to request potential suppliers provide details and evidence of how they will contribute towards the delivery of our inclusive growth ambitions and include the use of a social value calculator and a category applicability matrix.

Strong governance arrangements will ensure that we work within the agreed legal framework to reduce the regulatory burden on our suppliers.

Reaching out to others to build a pool of best practice across Belfast. As a civic leader for Belfast we want to spread best practice and will ask our partners and anchor institutions across the city to join us in our ambition so that we can use our collective influence to do more business locally, for the benefit of the many.

Environmentally sound and sustainable procurement

Environmental and sustainability considerations will be a key aspect of our social value framework.

We understand that our procurement approach can have a major contribution to the reduction of our overall environmental impact. With this in mind, we are committed to working to reduce the environmental impacts of our supply chain through sustainable procurement practices. We will work in partnership with our suppliers and contractors to minimise and manage these impacts.

Monitoring of the procurement framework

We will ensure that the measurement and monitoring of contractual commitments made by the provider are incorporated into the general performance management of the contract.

Winning providers will be expected to report on the outcomes to evidence how they are achieving the social value and sustainable outcomes they propose to deliver throughout the contract. We will monitor progress, reporting on achievements and sharing best practice with other suppliers, staff and key stakeholders. Monitoring the social and sustainable value delivered and working with providers on these aspects of their bids will be useful in producing new ideas that can be incorporated into future procurements.

Increasing the capacity of our local supply market

We believe that the more we spend on Belfast based suppliers, the more our residents will be able to benefit. Research indicates that strengthening the ability of SMEs and the Community and Voluntary and Social Enterprise sector (CVSE) to compete with multi-nationals and other larger enterprises may result in improved economic growth and resilience, supporting a region's ability to better withstand business and economic shocks.

Our approach is about boosting local competitiveness not about sheltering local businesses from competition.

We will build on the good practices already established in our processes to support and develop our local supply base by ensuring improved awareness of opportunities, advice and guidance and removal of any barriers to tender. This is our offer to local businesses. Our ask of them is that they provide good quality employment and work with us to ensure that our target groups benefit. We will do this by:

Understanding demand, impact and the supply chain

We will undertake a review of historical annual spend and establish a baseline for Belfast, including an analysis of where council money spent goes geographically, the profile of the suppliers, and wider local economic, social and environmental impact.

Adjusting our approach

We will develop focused and targeted approaches to bid for procurement opportunities and grow a local supply base in areas of under-representation.

We are committed to exploring opportunities for supporting the development of co-operatives or new businesses to meet that untapped demand. We will develop a social enterprise action plan to support and grow the sector in Belfast.

Removing barriers

Over the course of this strategy, we are committed to ensuring that we remove barriers to procurement and increase the capacity of under-represented suppliers to compete, including:

- dividing contracts into lots, so that there is more opportunity for SME organisations to bid. And in accordance with relevant legislation ensure the minimum financial turnover required does not exceed twice the estimated contract value;
- ensuring we only ask the minimum, proportionate number of quality (award) questions to establish a bidder's ability and proposals to deliver a contract;
- ensuring that we provide advice and guidance on our procurement processes;
- facilitating learning amongst suppliers and
- encouraging local businesses to engage in tenders for council contracts through publishing a forward plan of tender opportunities. And where appropriate offering pre-tender 'meet the buyer' local market engagement sessions.



Our actions to make this happen

Year one

Social value

Collaborate with other organisations with the same aspirations to develop a costs benefits approach to social value tendering.

Examine options and seek agreement on the council's preferred approach on the status placed on social value and positive environmental outcomes in relation to other more traditional procurement considerations within the tendering process. For example in relation to cost, quality and experience.

Develop a draft framework and social value calculator and a category applicability matrix and test.

Develop accompanying policies and procedures.

Pilot implementation of draft framework through two council procurement contracts (to be agreed) and develop case studies for future.

Local supply market

Develop a social enterprise action plan.

Continue to collate learning from best tender practice in the council and in the market.

Undertake a review of historical annual spend over a three year period and establish a baseline for Belfast, including an analysis of direct and indirect beneficiaries.

Map our future procurement needs against the market.

Refresh the supplier database to make it easier to find local suppliers.

Agree procurement data collection model.

Year two

Launch Social Value Procurement Toolkit and test in market.

Run training and capacity building events with required council officers.

Develop capacity building programme for local businesses through community engagement and pilot.

Hold two 'meet the buyer' events with key partner and anchor organisations.

Identify two Belfast based anchor organisations willing to develop a baseline and to develop their own social value procurement framework.

Promoting inclusive growth through our role as an employer

We are a significant employer within the city, directly employing over 2,300 people across a broad range of occupational areas. We recognise that as a civic leader and large employer in Belfast we can and should set a strong example for others in driving best practice around employment. We firmly believe we can make real progress towards the achievement of the council's inclusive growth ambitions by looking at our own employment practices and the job opportunities we create. We are committed to driving forward some immediate areas which complement the aspirations of our People Strategy.

Promotion of fair work and good-quality jobs

We consider fair work an important mechanism in delivering inclusive growth. Fair work is defined as “work that offers all individuals an effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect”. It is generally accepted that if you have a poor quality job you are more likely to live in poverty, your children are more likely to live in poverty and your chances of accessing training or development are lower.

We will initially focus on the following areas of our employment policies and practices to bring about required outcomes:

Real Living Wage employer

The Real Living Wage is an independently calculated higher rate of base pay, based on the cost of living, not just the government's minimum, national living wage. It is considered a benchmark for responsible employers who choose to pay their employees a rate that meets the basic cost of living. In April 2014 we committed to implement the Real Living Wage hourly rate and we have been applying the Real Living Wage, and its increases ever since. We will encourage other Belfast employers to adopt the real living wage and work towards creating a Living Wage City.

Inclusive recruitment and opportunity

The council currently adopts many inclusive employment practices, for example advertising to as wide and diverse a pool as possible, offering a guaranteed interview scheme for those with a disability and ensuring there are no unnecessary criteria or other barriers applied at shortlisting or when staff are accessing career development opportunities.

We will renew our efforts to work in collaboration across the organisation to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are mainstreamed. We will develop and work with our current Employee Networks (Gender, Disability and LGB&T) to improve employee voice and input into our policies and procedures. We will also develop appropriate human resource measures and metrics and work towards establishing a baseline of information.



Security and sustainability in employment

Building stability into contracts and offering flexible working hours at all levels can help remove barriers to employment, particularly for employees with dependants and those with a disability. Zero hours arrangements, where workers only work as and when they are needed by employers and are only paid for the hours they work, may be open to abuse. We only endorse the use of casual or session work contracts where both parties to the contract enjoy flexibility and where there are no exclusivity clauses. Such an approach can provide advantages, provided these contracts are not open to abuse by employers.

We commit to carrying out a review with staff of the current suite of work-life balance options and making recommendations for the future.

Improving participation in employment

As a council we have a role both as a corporate body, and at a policy and programming level in improving participation in employment. The following section details how we will use our corporate resources to contribute towards our inclusive growth ambitions, with detail on how we will work across the city to improve participation in employment outlined in Chapter Four. Initially we will focus on:

Apprenticeships

We will develop opportunities to address our current and future recruitment needs through apprenticeships from entry-level through to higher-level technical and professional qualifications. Apprenticeships provide a sustainable route into employment across all levels of the workforce and we are committed to embedding apprenticeships within our workforce planning strategy. We will do this by working in collaboration with our community planning partners and the Northern Ireland Civil Service. In the first instance we will explore opportunities in relation to digital services, customer service and operational delivery.

Breaking down barriers for under-represented groups

We will ring fence entry level posts, where possible, and support this through the provision of appropriate pre recruitment training programmes to benefit those furthest removed from the labour market.

Engaging and building capacity within our neighbourhoods

Through our Community Outreach Programme we offer extensive employability support to educational establishments, disability organisations, criminal justice organisations and other community based organisations. Working collectively with partner organisations we will carry out a review of our work in this area and design a targeted work placement and employability support plan. This will include a minimum of 150 work placements and 18 industrial placements each year.

Volunteering

We have long recognised the value of volunteering and encouraged it across the city. In recent years nationally and internationally, cities have recognised the value of taking a more strategic focus to volunteering to make a major impact on the challenges being faced, built on clear goals, measurement of impact and partnership working. We are committed to following this best practice and will develop a city-wide volunteering strategy based on a partnership approach. We will also ensure the consistent implementation and improvement of our current corporate policy, including the development of a staff volunteering policy and explore how we can recognise volunteering as valued work experience.



Our actions to make this happen

Year one

Improving participation in employment

Identify planned recruitment to support our inclusive growth aims and develop an action plan with targets.

Commit to ring-fencing suitable entry level positions, targeting the four cohorts, and running pre-recruitment training programmes.

Develop our approach to apprenticeships, initially considering areas such as customer service, digital services and operational services.

Review our employability and skills community outreach and engagement work in conjunction with key partner organisations and make recommendations to focus resources on agreed inclusive growth cohorts.

Develop a forward action plan of work with schools, colleges, universities and youth organisations to offer work experience and business awareness, prioritizing those who face additional barriers. This will include a minimum of 150 placements and 18 industrial placements.

Fair, inclusive work

Review current human resource practices to ensure we can drive our inclusive growth ambitions and make recommendations, with a focus on employee voice.

Reaffirm our position on the use “casual” workers in BCC and partner organisations alongside a commitment, as part of our procurement of temporary staff services, to ensure that “exclusivity clauses” are not utilised by any providers of contracted agency workers.

Establish agreed human resource metrics and measures for BCC and establish a baseline from which to measure going forward.

Review the effectiveness of our current work-life balance policies and make recommendations.

Develop and deliver workforce diversity action plans (gender, disability , LGBT+ and BME) to support fair work practices.

Explore, with other anchor institutions in the city, the possibility of becoming a Living Wage City.

Develop a staff volunteering policy.

Embedding an inclusive growth decision making framework

We are a significant investor. Not only do we invest through our procurement but also when deciding what capital investments we make, where to focus our revenue expenditure and what funding and grant programmes we deliver.

The main objective of these investment decisions will not always be economic growth. However they will often have a positive influence on the economic condition of people in Belfast without undermining the main objective of the investment.

To help maximise the benefits of our investment decisions, we commit to embedding an inclusive growth decision making framework. Once implemented, the framework will test any future major investment decisions to ensure they have considered how they can help the economically disadvantaged in the city.

In 2018, the council agreed a draft framework. This framework is structured to identify how each investment will benefit our identified inclusive growth cohorts. Within this framework, questions are structured as a flow diagram and help paint a picture of who will benefit from the investment decision, how they will benefit and how many people will benefit.

This includes a series of questions used to determine if any planned investment will help the targeted groups. The questions are focused on the following five key areas: jobs; training and skills; business growth; planning and regeneration; and digital. This information will then form a critical part of the business case to help determine if the investment is approved.

We will implement the Inclusive Growth Decision Making Framework and ensure that the economic benefit of investments or interventions made by the council has considered how it can maximise the economic benefit to those in need. This will be implemented across all our investments – capital, revenue and grant funding – and we will monitor and develop it as we learn more about what works in contributing towards our aim of a truly inclusive economy.



Our actions to make this happen

Year one

Commence staff engagement to develop understanding and begin testing of framework through two capital projects.

Undertake testing of the framework.

Refine framework following testing period and review implementation plan.

Commence public consultation period.

Finalise framework.

Year two

Launch and operationalise framework in a phased approach.

Commence monitoring and reporting of framework.

Encourage our city partners to use the decision making framework as part of their decision making processes.

Continuing to prioritise poverty alleviation

While these inclusive growth commitments are designed primarily to intervene early and provide improved access to economic opportunity for all our residents, we also realise that for many households support is required to address the immediate effects of economic disadvantage. We will continue to invest directly and to work with partners across the city, to alleviate the impact of poverty and are therefore committed to:

Targeting the use of our existing resources

In 2018-19 we focused our resources in the following areas:

- **generalist advice services** – provision of annual core funding of generalist advice services to five area based consortia, incorporating 21 membership organisations. In total in 2018-19 there were 118,489 enquiries made, 74,085 clients assisted and an estimated benefits maximisation of £45.7million;
- **Belfast citywide tribunal services** – provision of a citywide tribunal service via the Belfast Advice Group, with an initial 5,935 enquiries made, 1,879 clients assisted, 1,451 appeals and an estimated £5.2million return on investment;
- **revenue for community buildings** – in 2018-19, 78 community organisations which address the needs of their community by delivering a broad based programme from a specific building were supported through grants;
- **capacity building grants** – capacity building grants were provided to support lead community development organisations in ensuring good practice in governance, committee procedures, appropriate policies and financial management; and
- **service-based funding** – the community sector continued to be supported via current financial arrangements with community based organisations across the city who deliver services on our behalf. This includes the independent management of our community centres, anchor tenants and service level agreements with play resources.



Working in partnership to support those in fuel poverty

- **Affordable Warmth Scheme** – Belfast City Council has been engaged in partnership with the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) in the delivery of the Affordable Warmth Scheme (AWS) since 2014. The scheme aims to address fuel poverty for the most vulnerable households in the city. During 2018-19:
 - the BCC service completed 303 referrals to the NIHE;
 - the total value of approvals granted for the scheme in Belfast was £871,381;
 - 450 measures were installed; and
 - 233 homes were improved within Belfast.
- **Administering the Belfast fuel oil stamps scheme** – our fuel stamp scheme 'Stay Warm', is available throughout Belfast and helps householders save for home heating oil by spreading the cost of their fuel. Individuals can buy oil stamps from participating retailers, collect them on a savings card and use the value of the stamps to pay for all or part of their oil when placing an order.

Over the course of the last three years fuel stamps sold equate to £302,770 and fuel stamps redeemed equate to £293,620.

- **Winter Warmth Packs** – we work with the Public Health Agency, Surestart and Age NI to procure and distribute Winter Warmth Packs to vulnerable families each year. Through this partnership a total of 660 packs were distributed to vulnerable adults in 2018-19.

Ensuring that our services are more accessible through concessionary rates

Leisure pricing remains under the control of BCC with the schedule of charges being applied by Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) as our service delivery partner. We currently have concessionary rates available based on a number of factors, for example, age, disability and economic hardship. Based on 2018-19 data, 50% of all BCC leisure centre users paid the concessionary rates which reduces the monthly cost from £34.50 to £17.25.



4. Creating an inclusive city

We recognise that the inclusive growth agenda is not the job of a few but of the many. This section details our ambition and approach to working with others (including our private sector, anchor institutions, community and voluntary sector and our wider public sector partners) and how we will use our wider policy and planning powers to create an inclusive city.

Developing an inclusive growth city charter

Anchor institutions are big and locally rooted organisations like colleges, universities, hospitals and big businesses with local headquarters. They have a significant role to play in realising the economic and social ambitions of a city. This is especially true in Belfast where a 2013 report completed on our behalf by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, highlighted some of the notable economic and social contributions made by anchor institutions within Belfast.

The research clearly indicated that anchors are helping strengthen city leadership and are major employers (with around 60,000 direct and indirect staff in Belfast), procurers of goods and services and innovators. They already may have employability programmes which target priority neighbourhoods for intervention, employ apprentices, and have active corporate social responsibility activities and community trusts.

The potential for collaboration across local anchor institutions around inclusive growth is huge. This is an agenda not just for one institution, but for the whole city. One way to harness the collective power of the anchor institutions across Belfast, that has proven successful in other cities, is the creation of an Inclusive Growth City Charter.

Our aim in creating this charter is to encourage organisations across Belfast to ensure their business practices as employers, procurers, or in the delivery of their services are channelled in the direction of more inclusive growth across Belfast. This charter will enable organisations to apply for a Charter Mark which will recognise their commitment to inclusive growth. The charter will follow a methodology of self-assessment and prioritise continuous progression with goals set by and appropriate to, each individual organisation, within key areas of focus.

In essence, the charter and its supporting framework will enable anchor institutions across Belfast to look at their current practices and identify areas where they could make changes which would have a beneficial impact on inclusive growth for Belfast, whilst also aligning with their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity and the promotion of equality and diversity. The framework will enable anchor institutions to self-assess where they are now, where they want to be and how to get there.

Possible dimensions of an inclusive anchor institution are outlined below:

Proposed dimensions of an inclusive anchor institution

Employer	<p>Recruit in ways that provide equality of opportunity and maximise scope for local people to secure good jobs.</p> <p>Pay the real living wage, and go further to support people in stretching take home pay, e.g. via pensions, non-pay benefits and poverty proofed HR policies.</p> <p>Commit to lower paid staff reaching their potential via inclusive personal and professional development, flexible working, transparent progression pathways and excellent management.</p> <p>Support mental and physical health, e.g. via facilities, policies, culture, advice.</p>
Procurer	<p>Engage with local suppliers and increase the proportion of spend with them.</p> <p>Use procurement processes to deliver social value, e.g. for communities, employees, environment.</p>
Physical investment	<p>Procure developments in ways which create local jobs, skills and apprenticeships, with focus on young people and those facing disadvantage.</p> <p>Design buildings and spaces to create vibrant places with community, health and environmental benefits.</p> <p>Enable access and use by local communities.</p>
Services	<p>Design and deliver services so that they reach and benefit disadvantaged communities.</p> <p>Work with local neighbourhoods to better deliver and gain uptake of services, especially by disadvantaged communities.</p>
Corporate & civic	<p>Embed inclusive anchor dimensions into organisational vision and mission, values, culture, communications, behaviours, leadership, corporate planning and budgeting.</p> <p>Champion anchor collaboration, take civic responsibility, learn, share, promote the services of other anchors, lead by example.</p>

We are committed to working in partnership with other employers and anchor institutions in the development of this charter and underpinning assessment tools. We will engage in a process of co-design with our stakeholders. We will take a phased approach to development, consulting and engaging with business to design the charter and undertaking piloting and testing with key partners in the first instance to ensure that the charter is fit for purpose.

Aligning corporate social responsibility with inclusive growth and the Belfast Agenda

There are many examples throughout Belfast of where employers and organisations utilise their resources to support city-wide challenges. This includes: staff volunteering, fundraising to support local charitable efforts, funding and expertise to support local schools and the provision of work experience and training opportunities to name but a few.

We will work directly with employers, through our existing city leadership governance structures and with existing membership and representative bodies such as Business in the Community, Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Chamber of Commerce (COC), to encourage employers to align their corporate social responsibility activity to address citywide challenges outlined in the Belfast Agenda.

Furthermore we will seek to access sources of philanthropic funding to support the achievement of our citywide inclusive growth ambitions.



Working with our growth sectors

We want to ensure that as our economy develops, everyone across Belfast has the opportunity to connect to growth sectors and the 'jobs of the future'. While we have outlined our commitment and approach to connecting our under-represented residents to workplace opportunities wherever they exist, we believe that the tech, digital and innovation sector has an important role in achieving our inclusive growth ambitions. This is particularly relevant given the significant investment within the sector and its supporting infrastructure as a result of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).

The digital, tech and innovation sector is a major employer within Belfast and one with significant potential for growth. We want to work with the sector to put in place the actionable steps that will support its future expansion in a way that benefits everyone and, although ambitious, look to establish a target for inclusive employment within future job creation projections.

To make this a reality we will work with key stakeholders to establish an Innovation and Technology Inclusion Working Group. The composition of this group will be critical to success and we will seek to ensure that the private sector, the wider public sector and our education and training providers are strongly represented.

The purpose of the working group will be to advise on ways in which to grow the city's digital, innovation and tech-economy in an inclusive manner, increase the number of jobs and high-technology businesses, and ensure opportunities for all of Belfast's residents.

We will ensure that the working group develops an action plan to support the achievement of these ambitions. It is anticipated that this action plan would include, but not be limited to, the development of strategies and tangible actions across:

- **foundational aspects**, providing the groundwork and fundamental tools for residents to participate in the sector;
- **capacity building** for residents to develop technical capacity through opportunities for education and workforce development;
- **capital measures** to expand access to human, social and financial capital; and
- **building awareness** by developing initiatives that highlight and support inclusion.



Our actions to make this happen

Year one

Working with employers and anchor institutions to develop an Inclusive Growth City Charter and practical guide.

Explore the feasibility of introducing an assessment framework against which to enable organisations to analyse their inclusive growth performance.

Host a citywide engagement session with key business leaders to seek buy-in and support and test the framework with two willing pilot organisations.

Work with organisations to seek alignment of corporate social responsibility activity to support city wide objectives.

Work with key stakeholders to establish an Innovation and Technology Inclusion Working Group.

Prioritising employability and skills

Ensuring that the skills and labour supply across Belfast city area meets business needs is critical in creating a resilient and diverse inclusive economy, with the ability to respond to changing market conditions in both a local and global market context.

It is well documented that certain sections of society face more barriers to employment than others and require more targeted interventions to achieve more equity throughout the recruitment and employment pathway. Additional challenges can also be encountered in sustaining and progressing into 'better' employment.

Addressing this challenge will require a focus on both the continued creation of suitable employment opportunities alongside the upskilling and work readiness to improve participation in employment across Belfast city area.

High quality work experience and placements are vital in enhancing an individual's employability, confidence and future prospects and are of particular importance to those who may have become disengaged from the labour market e.g. NEETS, disability and long-term unemployed. Employment barriers must be removed to enable residents to take up these opportunities and facilitate them to remain in employment in the long term.

Research suggests that there is a correlation between learning, skills development and earning potential. Encouraging and supporting skill development opportunities is therefore vital to help residents gain and progress in employment.

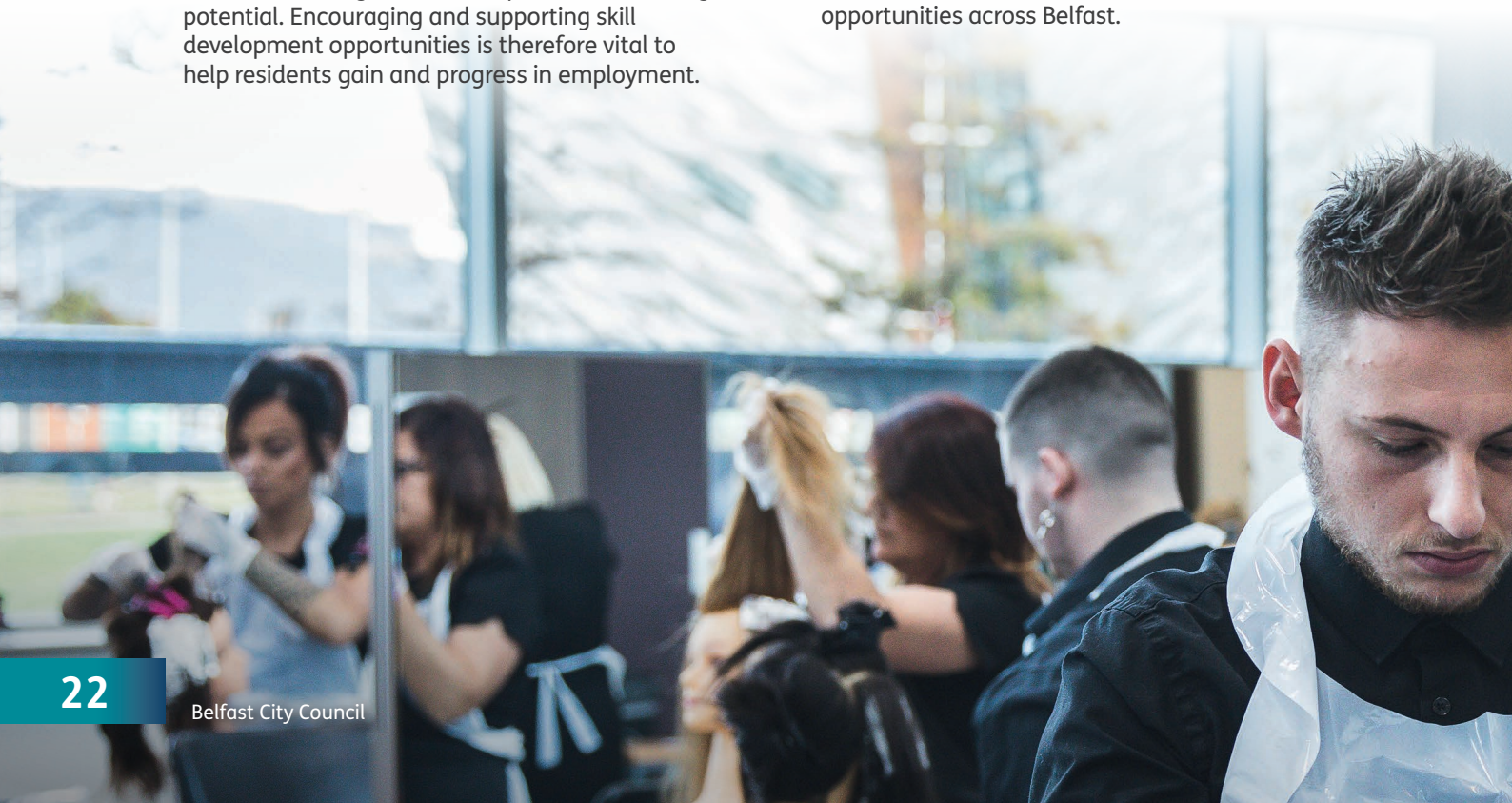
Early intervention within the education environment can help to support young people to recognise the value of education, support them to identify their own career path and the skills journey they need to embark upon to reach their ultimate employment destination.

Our work with city partners under the Working and Learning pillar of the Belfast Agenda supports the inclusive growth ambitions of the council by addressing barriers to progression, focusing on educational underachievement and supporting residents to access employment and/or upskilling opportunities.

Across the spectrum of the business community potential exists to support our ambitions towards economic inclusion. Over the next ten years employment opportunities are expected across high growth sectors such as ICT, financial services, creative digital industries as well as more traditional sectors including retail, care, tourism and hospitality.

Across this work programme, we will contribute towards the goals of the Belfast Agenda to:

- reduce levels of economic inactivity;
- address educational inequalities;
- enhance and increase the skill levels of Belfast residents;
- address barriers to employment; and
- match people and skills to opportunities across Belfast.



Across the coming year up to 3,000 Belfast residents are expected to take part in a range of initiatives, including:

Access to employment

Increasing access to employment by addressing barriers and supporting industry relevant entry and mid-tier skills will be a key area of focus. Through employability interventions flexible support systems will be delivered geared towards addressing the personal and structural barriers impacting upon a person's ability to positively progress.

Through an employer led approach we will further refine and develop our successful employment academies approach, designed to be demand led and aligned to real job opportunities. Through this activity we will continue to work with employers in order to develop a talent pool aligned to their business needs. In the coming year, these will focus on both entry-level positions and upskilling employment opportunities. A key area of focus for our future academies will be harnessing the wealth of talent amongst young people to access our employment academies.

Additionally we will trial new approaches aimed at supporting employers in growth sectors to create accessible work experience and employment opportunities for individuals who are unemployed or underemployed.

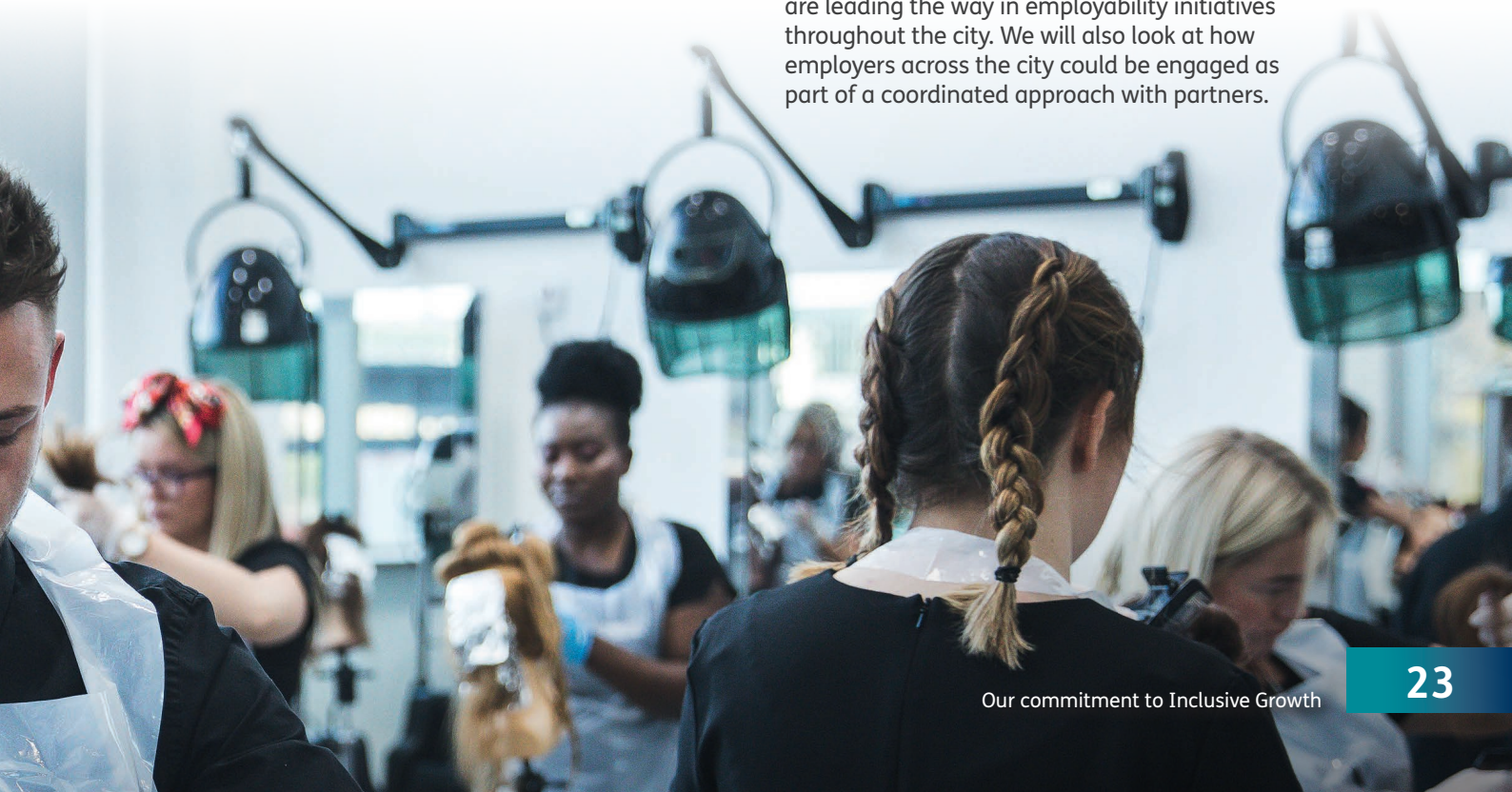
Focus on young people

Developing the talent of our young people is a core strand of our employability and skills work. Ensuring young people have the right skills, access to work experience and are informed to make the right career decisions are all important factors.

Our youth interventions are geared towards supporting young people during their formative years in education as well as post 16. Support is provided on a needs led basis, with those identified at being at risk of or who have disengaged from education or unemployed being a primary focus. Activities are personalised to client needs, with clear outcomes seeking positive progression for young people into further education, employment and/or training. Progression pathways will be built around young people's realistic career aspirations and where possible opportunities to experience the world of work will be provided.

Develop Belfast Workplace

Through the ongoing implementation of the Belfast Agenda we will work with city partners to examine how we can support those furthest from the labour market to access employment opportunities. Focusing upon relevant community planning partners initially, we will collectively develop an initiative known as 'Belfast Workplace' that opens up entry level recruitment to benefit those furthest removed from the labour market. In developing this pathway, we will work closely with employability partners and stakeholders who are leading the way in employability initiatives throughout the city. We will also look at how employers across the city could be engaged as part of a coordinated approach with partners.



Educational attainment

Low educational attainment is one of the key labour market challenges facing the city. Labour market intelligence suggests those with lower level skills will find it increasingly difficult to find employment with employers driving demand for mid and higher level skills.

One of the critical milestones in young people's educational journey is their GCSE attainment levels. Often regarded as a passport qualification for employment and further education. Low levels of educational attainment (measured by GCSE performance) particularly in parts of the city is an ongoing skills challenge. To address this, our GCSE support programme is aimed at supporting young people in the later stages of the school system to improve their prospects of obtaining minimum GCSE attainment levels in key subject areas.

This programme builds upon successful GCSE revision programmes which have operated in parts of the city, extending the level of provision to all parts of the city combining holiday and community revision programmes. Specifically geared towards providing additional support for young people to help them achieve Grades A*-C in key subjects, particularly English and Maths.

Our ambitions in this area also extend to working with our community planning partners to plan for the development of an integrated city programme to address educational inequalities. Taking an evidenced based approach, learning from best practice and identifying how and where interventions are most needed.

Strategic engagement

Working in partnership with government departments we will continue to develop joint areas of working to facilitate better alignment between regional employment and skills programmes and the needs of the Belfast labour market. This will include the development of new "test and learn" pilots with the Department for Communities (DfC) and Department for the Economy (DfE)

Belfast Region City Deal

The Belfast Region City Deal (BCRD) has the potential to deliver up to 20,000 new and better jobs, with an ambitious programme of activity underpinned by employability and skills. Its impact on the growth of the region will be significant. The BCRD has inclusive growth at the centre of its vision. It will provide the mechanism to develop a transformative employability and skills programme for the region that delivers skills for growth and skills for inclusion. Inclusion is therefore being built into each investment pillar to ensure that we are connecting people into the opportunities created – through regional innovation networks, affordable transport, tourism led-regeneration and social value.

The BCRD partners recognise that a fully integrated approach may take some years to develop, but there is potential to seize the opportunity created by the BCRD investment. The BCRD creates an opportunity for councils, colleges, departments, agencies, businesses and the community and voluntary sector to co-design a new integrated

model of working that will align existing and new resources over the 10 year period to support a collective vision of inclusive growth.

As well as directly creating the opportunities for improved productivity and growth, the BCRD will also invest in transport infrastructure, ensuring that people are connected to the economic opportunities that are created. The proposed expansion of the Glider network (Belfast Rapid Transport Phase II) will be vital in connecting communities and individuals to the job opportunities of the future and crucial in realising our inclusive growth ambitions.





Our actions to make this happen

Year one

Develop and deliver, working closely with community planning partners, a Belfast Employability Pathway to support Belfast residents access into and through employment.

Work with community planning partners and anchor institutions to understand workforce planning needs and identify employment opportunities for entry level recruitment to benefit those furthest removed from labour market.

Deliver a suite of sectoral employment academies, including a 'Leisure Academy', to help train people and enable them to gain access into employment.

Work with DfE to develop an action plan and trial new approaches, through 'test and learn' pilots, to support young people at risk of becoming NEETs.

Development of a citywide youth engagement programme to provide flexible support for NEETs or those at risk of becoming NEET.

Delivery of large scale events to provide access to residents to employment opportunities and or career advice.

Delivery of career development support providing young people with access to information and experiences to help them identify career pathways.

Development, commissioning and launch of a citywide GCSE revision programme targeting year 12 students at risk of not achieving a grade C in English and Maths.

Deliver schools based employment academies supporting young people in year 12 at greatest risk of not achieving or dropping out of education.



Promoting inclusive growth through planning powers

On 1 April 2015, the council became the planning authority for Belfast as part of the wider reform of local government. For the first time in a generation the council is responsible for exercising the majority of planning functions within its own boundaries creating a planning regime that is more responsive and understanding of the needs of the city. Since 2015 we have been actively working to update planning policy ensuring that we use planning to build strong communities.

Affordable housing

Maintaining and improving access to affordable housing¹ within the city is a key aspect of meeting our inclusive growth ambitions. The Belfast Draft Local Development Plan has proposed a new draft policy on affordable housing, which requires all housing developers on sites greater than 0.1 hectares and or containing five or more dwelling units to provide a minimum 20% of units as affordable housing (social and intermediate). Other key aspects of this draft policy are that:

- appropriate size, type and tenure of affordable units will be determined having regard to up to date analysis of housing stress and prevailing housing need;
- the affordable housing¹ should be an integral part of mixed tenure development and tenure blind; and
- where the applicant can demonstrate that it is not sustainable or viable to meet the affordable housing requirements in full, suitable alternatives will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The council's draft policy on affordable housing will be accompanied by Supplementary Planning Guidance, which will provide further detail, in particular around the mechanisms for delivery. In addition, we are committed to future monitoring of affordable housing provision with Belfast in line within proposed targets.

1 Affordable housing relates to social rented housing and intermediate housing.

Planning tools – developer contributions

Developer contributions are a planning tool used to mitigate or manage the impacts of new development. For example they can be used to ensure that a new development is supported by the right infrastructure or to make sure that the environmental impacts of a proposal are appropriately managed.

Since the transfer of planning powers in April 2015, our council has routinely secured developer contributions to mitigate and manage development impacts in appropriate circumstances. That means for those developments which would otherwise have a negative impact, those impacts are mitigated through the provision of on-site infrastructure or financial contributions to off-site infrastructure or programmes. We are committed to continuing to develop the use of developer contributions to support the creation of an inclusive and sustainable city.

We have recently published a draft Developer Contributions Framework for consultation and are committed to agreeing the final policy position. This Framework sets out the types of infrastructure or environmental mitigation that may need to be addressed through developer contributions. The list below is by no means exhaustive and each planning application will be judged on its merits, having regard to the Local Development Plan and other relevant material considerations.

- open space, sport and outdoor recreation;
- local neighbourhood facilities – including meeting places, crèches, youth facilities;
- schools, surgeries and local shops;
- public realm;
- employability and skills;
- sustainable transport;
- air quality;
- natural heritage;
- flood risk and sustainable drainage; and
- waste management.

One of the regional strategic planning objectives is to tackle disadvantage and facilitate job creation. Therefore in line with our inclusive growth ambitions the draft Developer Contributions Framework sets out that the council will consider the use of developer contributions to support employability and skills initiatives as outlined below.

A key additional feature of the framework is to encourage early dialogue between developers and communities to help identify what the impacts are likely to be of a development and how they can be properly dealt with through the planning process.

The draft framework is currently being reviewed following public consultation with the intention of seeking adoption by the Planning and Strategic Policy and Resources Committees in 2019.

Description of proposal	Developer contributions
Major development proposals	Supporting employability and skills initiatives in the city where there is a skills shortage (either during construction or on occupation of the development).
Development proposals resulting in the loss of economic development uses	Supporting employability and skills initiatives in the city to enable displaced employees and people who may have sought employment at the site, to gain employment elsewhere in the city.



Our actions to make this happen

Year one

The Developer Contributions Framework will be adopted by Belfast City Council.

Governance arrangements for utilising developer contributions will be established.

The number of apprenticeships and jobs aligned to planning agreements will be recorded, monitored and reported on.

Continue to pursue the council's ambitions in relation to affordable housing.



Strengthening civic voice

We are committed to ensuring that citizens and communities shape our services and policies. We will design and test new and innovative models of engagement.

We will build on our learnings from previous council citizen engagement mechanisms such as The Belfast Conversation, the Cultural Hub and Citizen Space.

We will look at best practice case studies around citizen participation, to garner further ideas and agree upon the best mechanisms to put in place to enable us to understand and respond to broad stakeholder interests. In particular, we will foster participation with those who may face additional difficulties and barriers and consider the design of models of engagement which benefit local SMEs and co-operatives.

As well as ensuring direct engagement with citizens we will strengthen and modernise our approach to engagement with the Community,

Voluntary and Social Enterprise (CVSE) sectors. This will include the establishment of a CVSE sectoral advisory panel, bespoke information sharing and innovative engagement fora. This engagement will go beyond consultation and ensure that the CVSE is an equal partner in shaping action planning and delivery.

We will begin by ensuring that Belfast citizens have a role in shaping our inclusive growth agenda and in the assessment of progress. We want to draw on the ideas and experience of local people from across the city, both directly and through engagement with community and voluntary sector organisations, starting with consultation on this draft strategy.

Our long-term aim is to co-design a system of inclusive policy and agenda setting that enables the voices and experiences of local residents to be heard.



Our actions to make this happen

Year one

Test a range of innovative approaches to harness civic voice and citizen engagement in our policy and delivery design.

Develop a council wide approach and model to civic engagement.

Develop and test new models of engagement with the CVSE sector (in association with community planning partners).

5. Holding ourselves to account

Underpinning our desire to create an inclusive city is a commitment to hold ourselves to account. We will do this in a number of ways, including publishing yearly action plans reporting against our commitments and monitoring how many people we have been able to support across our target groups. We will also continue to refine and build our evidence base, creating new measures of inclusive growth where required including both qualitative and quantitative measures.

We will commit to publishing a statement of progress annually, setting out the extent to which we are delivering against the commitments outlined in the strategy and the impact we are having.

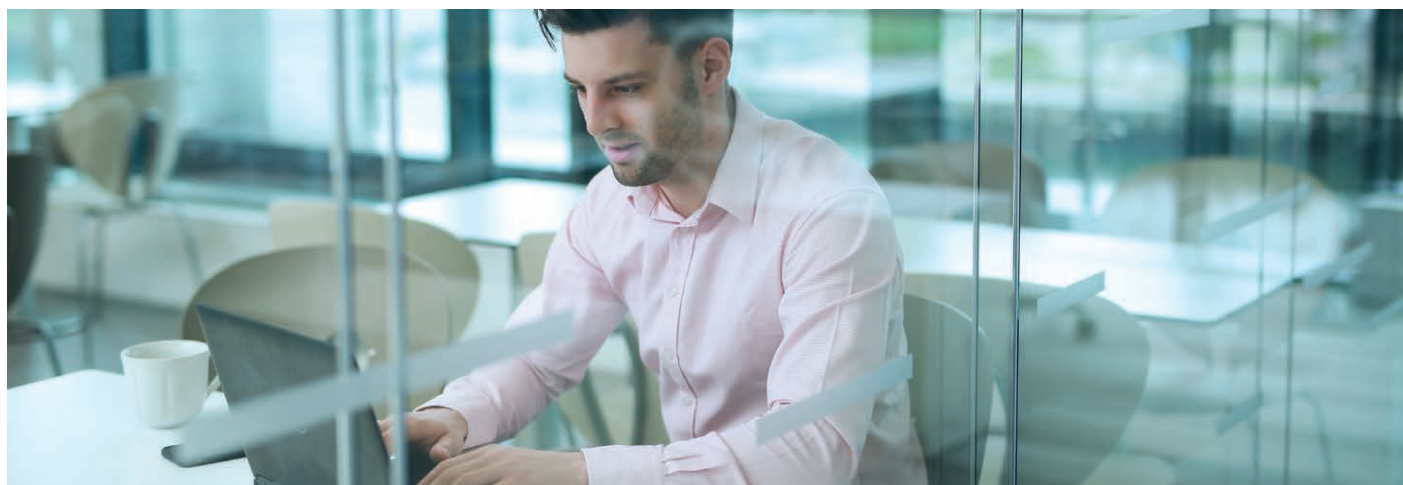
Developing an inclusive growth dashboard

This strategy includes a number of policy interventions, which highlight the council's initial contribution towards delivering inclusive growth. They are designed to provide a contributory relationship towards the citywide outcomes of addressing residents not in employment, residents with low skills levels, in-work low earning residents and young people not in education, employment or training.

In pursuit of our vision for inclusive growth for Belfast, we will adopt an open and transparent approach to reporting by publishing a statement of progress annually. This report will provide a summary of the information from the inclusive growth dashboard which will be used on an ongoing basis to measure success and the extent to which our policy interventions are having an impact.

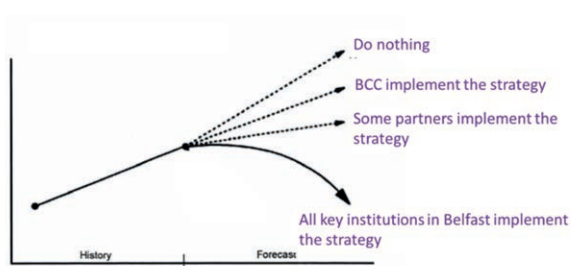
These target groups, identified during the development of the council's inclusive growth decision making framework, align to the Belfast Agenda and can be measured by a number of its population indicators, as follows:

Inclusive growth target group	Belfast Agenda population indicators
Residents not in employment	1.8 The proportion of working-age population in Belfast who are employed 1.9 Working age employment rate by deprivation 1.10 Economic inactivity rate (excluding students)
Residents with low skills levels	3.1 Proportion of working age population who have attained Level 2 or above
In work, low earning residents	1.11 Average earnings
Young people not in education, employment or training	3.6 Proportion of school-leavers entering employment, education or training



These indicators provide a sense of whether as a city the entire population is heading in the right direction.

Affecting change of the above target groups requires coordinated effort amongst citywide partners and anchor institutions. This is best demonstrated by the “Turning the Curve” concept used as part of the Outcomes Based Accountability™ thinking. For example, if the chart below maps the city’s economic inactivity rate, the “Do Nothing” forecast predicts that this is likely to increase. Nevertheless, a concerted partnership approach to inclusive growth policy interventions would enable us to ‘turn the curve’ and reduce for example, economic inactivity at the population level.



In addition to the population indicators included within the Belfast Agenda’s monitoring framework, we also capture information through our biennial residents’ survey.

The residents’ survey enables reporting every two years on the extent to which a representative sample of Belfast residents:

- agree that everyone in Belfast benefits from a thriving and prosperous city;
- agree that Belfast is a city where everyone fulfils their potential;
- agree that they can access job and training opportunities; and
- earn at least or above the living wage.

Obtaining access to meaningful, detailed and timely data presents a challenge for policy makers particularly at a local government district level. Proxy measures may therefore be required to report performance at a population level due to difficulties accessing data.

However we will not be constrained by this. Work is being progressed with our community planning data analytics partner, Queen’s University Belfast to develop an inclusive growth monitor

that is specific to Belfast. We are committed to developing an evidence base that will allow us to take an intelligence led approach to inclusive growth. Therefore we will also seek to benchmark our efforts by examining the work of the Centre for Progressive Policy in relation to the measurement of inclusive growth at the country, community and company level.

Reporting on who we have supported

We will also monitor and report at a performance level. Using this to create targets and strengthen and shape our actions over time. This could include:

- the total number of participants completing employability programmes (specifically targeting those that are long term unemployed or economically inactive) and the proportion progressing into employment;
- the total number of participants completing work experience or paid placement opportunities;
- percentage and value of spend within the local supply chain;
- percentage and value of spend with SMEs and social enterprises;
- number, duration, type and scope of direct delivery of business/enterprise initiatives that supports business start-up;
- the total number of participants increasing skills, qualification levels or ‘upskilled’ to be able to access ‘better’ employment;
- the total number of employees progressing in employment as a result of ‘upskilling’.
- the total social value (£) for local communities as a result of council procurement;
- percentage of suppliers’ employees who are employed on a permanent basis;
- percentage of suppliers paying the Living Wage;
- the total number of volunteering opportunities created as a result of social value in procurement;
- the total number of pupils engaged by working with schools and colleges; and
- the total number of new apprenticeships created.

The above measures are not intended to be an exhaustive list and it is envisaged that new performance measures will be developed as monitoring mechanisms within the council are developed. We will also work collaboratively with our city partners to widen the evidence base that exists for our target groups.

Establishing an inclusive growth oversight group

We recognise that implementing this strategy will require a significant shift in behaviour across the council. This is why we are committed to establishing an inclusive growth oversight group, reporting directly to our senior officers through well established oversight structures. The purpose of this group will be to ensure that we are working in collaboration across the organisation and on track for achievement against our stated outcomes.

This will allow support for best practice to be shared across the organisation, and for streamlined engagement with our key stakeholders in ensuring that a city wide agenda is adopted. This group will also work to commission joint research required to implement the strategy, support the development of improved targeting and monitoring and advise on improved target setting and future action planning.

International benchmarking and networks

In our efforts to develop a fully inclusive economy we are committed to learning from other cities throughout the United Kingdom (UK), Ireland and internationally to build our expertise, benchmark our performance and develop and share best practice. Opportunities will be sought at both an officer and elected representative level to ensure that within Belfast we are leading the way and to open us up to constructive peer review. This could include continuing to build linkages with:

- **EUROCITIES** - Belfast City Council has been an active member of the EUROCITIES network (comprising 140 European cities) for more than 20 years. In February 2019 EUROCITIES launched a new political initiative “Inclusive cities for all: social rights in my city” to demonstrate cities’ contributions to a more cohesive society. Mayors and elected officials from 21 cities have announced their pledges to act on the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights through dedicated investments for city measures. There is an opportunity for Belfast to support and endorse the campaign but equally to learn from signatories on measures used by municipalities to support inclusive growth.
- **The Social Affairs Forum (SAF)** has an active working group entitled Smart Social Inclusion which enables peer reviews, the identification of solutions to address issues common to cities across Europe.
- **Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)** - In April 2016 the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) in association with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation launched an Inclusive Growth Commission for the UK. Belfast was one of a number of cities visited and examined by the Commission. Since then, we have been actively developing our links with the RSA, JRF and other organisations that provide leadership in this area. This ongoing relationship has led to the development of a new opportunity for Belfast that will greatly enhance our impact. With JRF and others we are exploring the potential for a city wide network of officers. We hope that these connections to other places and inclusive growth experts will enable constructive peer review, providing critical support and insight as we develop and innovate inclusive growth policy.

Our actions to make this happen

Year one

Finalise the measures that make up the inclusive growth dashboard.

Progress work with our partners to develop an inclusive growth monitor.

Develop a monitoring framework across the council to ensure that we are able to capture, record and report on our activity and outputs.

Continue to benchmark ourselves against best practice internationally, through membership of appropriate networks.

Establish an inclusive growth oversight group.

Continue to raise awareness of the strategy and its progress with citizens and key stakeholders.

Best practice case studies

Learning from others

Building community wealth, The Cleveland Evergreen Cooperatives

The City of Cleveland is an urban centre of around 400,000 residents located in Cuyahoga County in the state of Ohio. During the 2000s Cleveland experienced growth in a number of highly-skilled sectors, with increasing job opportunities in some STEM and health occupations, as well as growth in the number of highly-skilled workers living in the city. However, poverty rates remained comparatively high, unemployment rates were around the national average while wages were slightly below.

One important approach to economic development and harnessing inclusive growth in the city is the use of cooperative structures.

Evergreen Cooperative, is an umbrella body for a number of co-operatives in Cleveland. The co-operatives, which consist of a laundry

company, an energy efficiency contractor, and America's largest urban farm, were grown with the help of procurement contracts with Cleveland's biggest schools and universities.

The Cleveland Foundation, a private charitable trust, took the lead by encouraging the city's key anchor institutions – the Cleveland Clinic, Case Western Reserve University and University Hospitals – to buy into the vision, and the City of Cleveland quickly joined the scheme, pooling its resources in a multi-stakeholder effort.

In 2016 the three Evergreen Cooperatives employed around 120 people from the low-income University Circle area and generated a combined revenue of \$6.3million.

Manchester - Social value in procurement

In 2016-17 Manchester City Council spent 71% of its procurement spending with local companies, equating to around £320million on goods and services from Manchester businesses. This figure was just over 50% a decade ago and is the result of work to improve its procurement policy and practices, aiming to address local needs and maximise benefits to the city's residents.

The council state they are firmly committed to embedding social value into all aspects of its procurement cycle and has established a minimum 20% social value weighting for all procurements.

As well as the direct economic benefits, research estimates that they have:

- created 705 apprenticeships in the city and over 1,000 jobs, including 423 employment opportunities for “hard to reach” individuals;
- created almost 70,000 hours volunteering and community sector support activities; and
- achieved 75% of responding suppliers paying their staff an hourly rate in excess of that advocated by the National Living Wage foundation.

Building on our work

Ringfenced recruitment - Belfast City Council

In 2013 Belfast City Council, with employability partners across the city, identified that a key factor in helping the long-term unemployed was to ring fence opportunities. With our employability partners we co-designed and delivered a pre-recruitment programme for five ringfenced basic entry administration posts. 40 participants were selected by partner organisations to take part in a two week pre-recruitment and training programme. This consisted of a mix of on the job experience and classroom based learning,

and all who completed the course were invited to interview. Skills checks questionnaires were used instead of qualifications requirements. Five people were appointed to five permanent posts. Following the success of the pilot, which had never been tested in the public sector in Northern Ireland before, this approach was employed for the further recruitment of Cleansing Operatives and Business Support Clerks with a total of 27 people recruited via this method to date.

Volunteering - Belfast City Council

In 2015 Belfast developed a Charter for Volunteering, with an estimated 73,693 volunteer hours benefitting the council during 2013-14. We developed this commitment further by implementing an accompanying policy and procedures in 2017.

Currently we are actively promoting opportunities in our community centres, Super Connected Communities Hubs, summer schemes, Age Friendly Belfast and the Tropical Ravine, involving approximately 1,000 volunteers across the city.

Employability - Belfast City Council

Across the 2018-19 financial year, key achievements include over 2,750 participants engaged in employability programmes, with more than 800 expected to progress into employment this year; over 3,500 young people supported

through youth initiatives and almost 7,500 participants engaged through career events and job fairs.

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Access to information

As part of our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations, we want to ensure that everyone is able to access the documents we produce. This document is available in alternative formats such as Braille, easy-read, audio, large print and also in other languages on request by contacting: 028 9027 0234.



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City Council