



Subject:	Review of Belfast Agenda (Engagement Findings and Bringing Focus to Delivery)
Date:	19th November, 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the emerging findings from the Continuing the Conversation engagement programme to date and outline the proposed approach for taking them forward during the next stage in the review of the Belfast Agenda which seeks to co-design underpinning delivery plans with a focus of collaborative gain.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: i. consider the emerging findings and recommendations from the initial phase of the Continuing the Conversation Engagement programme outlined in section 3.7;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. note the proposed approach, structure and timeline for the development of the refreshed Belfast Agenda Strategy document and supporting four-year Delivery Action Plans in section 3.8; iii. note the plans for continued Elected Member engagement, including the date and time for the forthcoming meeting of the All-Party Working Group on Community Planning, detailed in section 3.9; and iv. note the delivery and timetabling for the 2021 Belfast Residents' Survey.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The Committee, at its meeting on 18th June, received a report on the Continuing the Conversation engagement programme, the initial phase of which revisited the priorities to deliver the vision, outcomes and ambitions in the Belfast Agenda, seeking stakeholder views on what the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) should focus on over the period 2022-26.</p>
3.2	<p>A range of engagement tools were utilised including an online survey, call for evidence, idea generation and comments and suggestion tool. It was recognised that the lockdown highlighted and intensified the digital divide that exists within the city and as a result shorter paper-based surveys were developed and distributed by Libraries NI across the network of 18 libraries in the Greater Belfast area and the council's 28 community centres. The views of communities were obtained via five independently facilitated workshops sought to understand what the priorities looked like in all areas and for all communities in Belfast.</p>
3.3	<p><u><i>Feedback from Engagement Workshops</i></u></p> <p>A total of 130 participants from 63 organisations attended the events and told us what the priorities meant for them and their community. The workshops also provided an opportunity to check that the long-term vision and outcomes are still relevant and meaningful. Participants were asked to respond to a simple poll and provided clear support that these should remain unchanged.</p> <p>Responding to the question, 'Are the vision and outcomes still very relevant, fairly relevant, or no longer relevant', 57% felt they were still very relevant, 40% felt they were fairly relevant and 3% of respondents felt that the visions and outcomes are no longer relevant.</p>

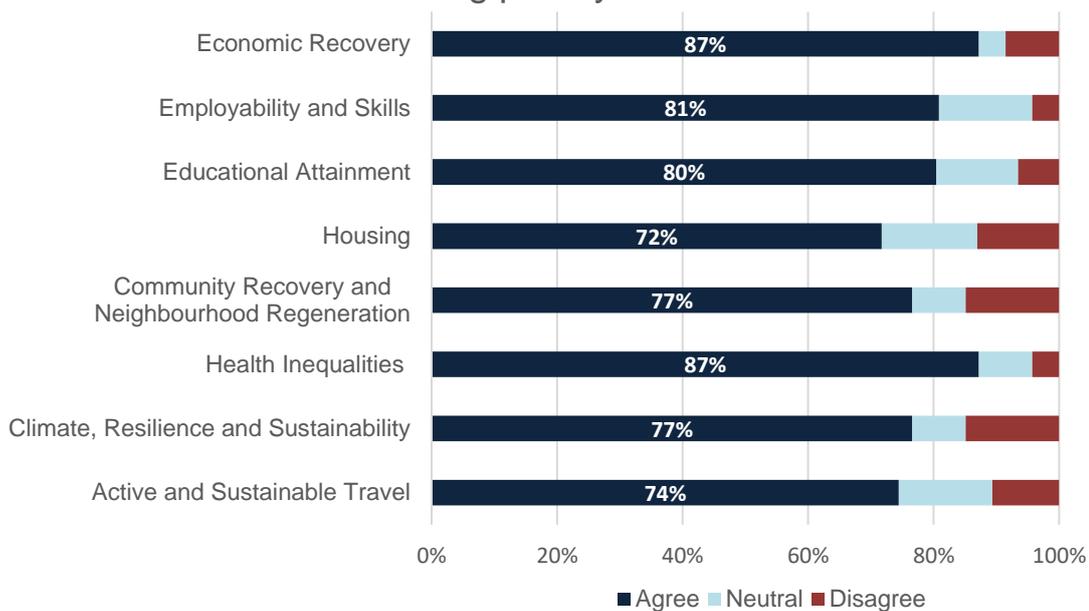
The main substantive discussion of the workshops focussed on the priority themes which had been introduced and explained during the session. The discussion was structured in two parts, asking participants questions on the priorities and what they mean for their communities. Feedback from participants suggests that the emergent priorities are a valid framework to progress to the action planning phase; although some proposed priorities that they felt were missing, or highlighted areas which they felt needed to be made a priority in its own right. Additionally, feedback was received on underpinning considerations, the community planning process, implementation, evaluation, and governance.

3.4 Feedback from Online and Paper-based Surveys

A subgroup of CPP partners agreed a survey instrument to enable stakeholders including the wider public to provide more detailed views on the vision, outcomes and priorities. The online survey received 50 responses, which ran from 09 June until 30 September 2021. Almost 7 out of 10 people agreed or strongly agreed with the current vision. Respondents also agreed that our outcomes are broadly correct (ranging from 53% to 72%). However, given the written comments, it would appear that some people based their opinion on how well they felt Belfast was meeting these outcomes as opposed to their relevance.

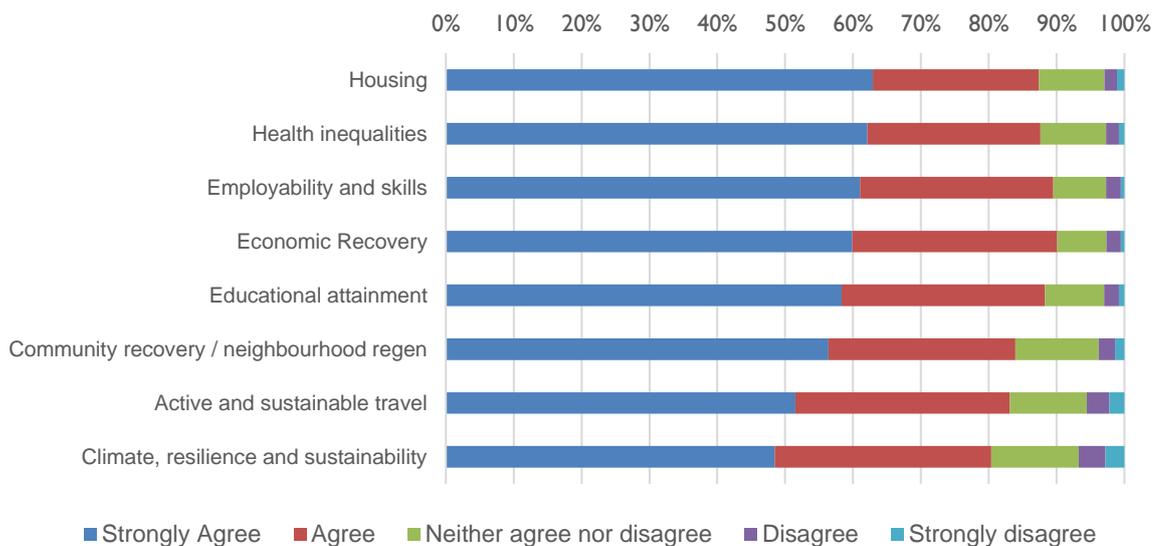
Respondents were further supportive of the proposed priority themes with high levels of agreement (ranging between 72% and 87%) that these themes should be the areas of focus for community planning during the period 2022 -26. The chart below depicts the percentage of respondents who either agreed or disagreed with these priorities. Analysing the strength of opinion, the priorities which attracted the highest levels of agreement included Health Inequalities, Economic Recovery and Employability and Skills.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following priority themes



A total of 385 completed paper-based surveys were received from libraries (214) and community centres (171). This channel provided a more limited opportunity for the public to provide in-depth views, however it provided an opportunity to capture the public's perception of the long-term vision and outcomes and was also an effective means of capturing further views of the individual priorities. Over 75% of respondents (n=364) agreed with the current vision for Belfast; and 81% of respondents (n=368) agreed that the current outcomes are still relevant. Similar to the survey on Your Say Belfast, the majority of respondents agreed with and supported the identified priorities.

Do you agree or disagree that the following priorities should be priorities for the next 4 years?



Again, most respondents to the paper-based surveys agreed that Health Inequalities, Economic Recovery and Employability and Skills were the top-ranking priorities. The strongest level of support (i.e. the percentage of respondents who strongly agreed) were for the Housing priority.

3.5

Call for evidence

A range of information was received as part of a call for evidence, including:

- A 10x Economy, Northern Ireland’s Decade of Innovation (Department for Economy)
- A Fair Start, Final Report and Action Plan (Expert Panel on Educational Underachievement in Northern Ireland)
- Equality Can’t Wait / Build Homes Now! Campaign (PPR)
- Looking to the Future (Healthy North Belfast)
- Belfast: A Learning City, Holyland and Wider University Area Strategic Study (Louise Browne Associates)
- Reset for Growth, A report by the Belfast Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission
- Building Resilience and Embedding Wellbeing in West Belfast Strategic Plan
- Correspondence from Lower Oldpark Community Association
- Correspondence from West Belfast Partnership Board

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Belfast Agenda Board Workshop Reports <p>This information will be considered and addressed by convening leads, who will be responsible for leading the development of the supporting action plans (see section 3.8).</p>
3.6	<p><u><i>Specific Engagement with Older People and Children and Young People</i></u></p> <p>The co-design subgroup identified older people, children and young people as specific cohorts to be directly engaged. Officers attended meetings of the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (22/09/21) and the G6 / Greater Belfast Seniors Forum (12/08/21) and posed similar questions to those asked during the engagement workshops. The main findings are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addressing health inequalities and access to health services were cited as the most pressing issues for many older people, particularly the increasing waiting lists for non-Covid related operations and procedures.• Loneliness and Isolation were highlighted as significant issues for older people in relation to access to the city centre and opportunities to re-engage socially. It was felt that this had a direct impact on mental health. <p>In addition, community planning officers designed a programme of engagement to obtain the views of children and young people, using several interactive activities to help understand what matters most to them. These activities took place during late September and October to enable access to the school environment. Engagement events took place with training providers (Workforce Training, BCTNI), sports clubs (Tullycarnet FC, Grove Jujitsu, Belfast Phoenix Basketball Club) and schools (Hazelwood Integrated College, Belfast Model School for Girls, Strathearn School). The analysis of captured data is still ongoing, however figure 1 below, shows a summary of comments which received significant support (through likes/upvotes):</p>

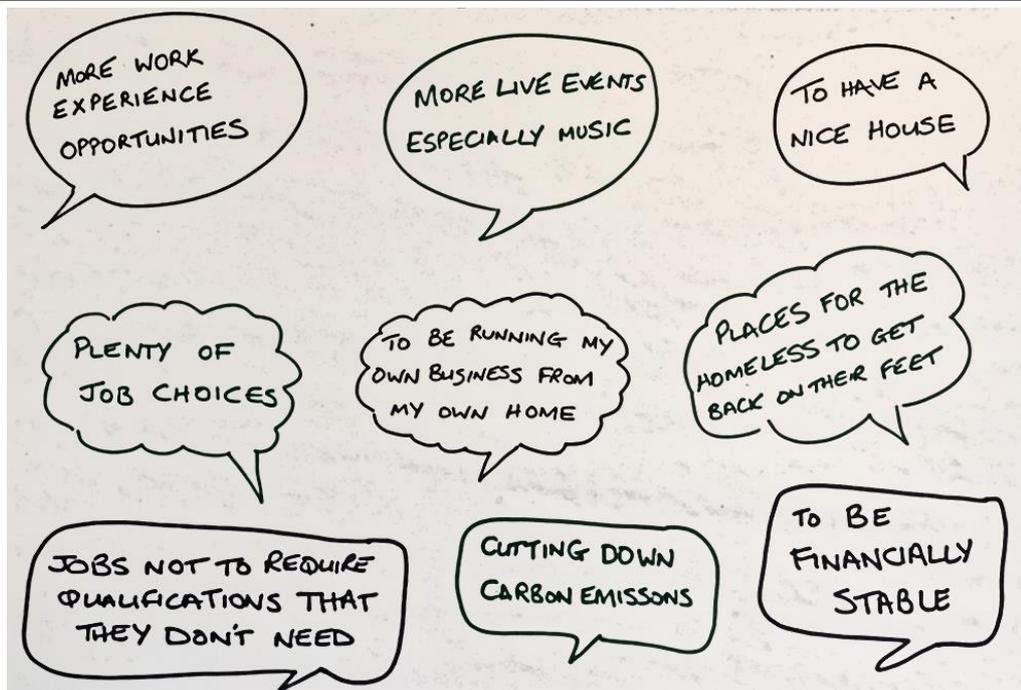


Figure 1: Sample statements from engagement with children and young people which received strong support

3.7

Emerging Findings and Recommendations

Following analysis of all evidence captured during the engagement programme to date, a number of emerging findings include:

- Terminology – Many respondents stated that many of the terms used in the consultation narrative and stated priorities needed further clarification. For example, many agreed that the definition of ‘economic recovery’ needs refined and questioned whether this was a desired outcome rather than a priority.
- Active and Sustainable Travel – Many stakeholders suggested that this issue was wider than just travel. Rather, it should be considered wider to incorporate the transport system and connectivity issues within the city.
- Community recovery and neighbourhood regeneration – Respondents also queried the definition of this priority theme, seeking clarification of what was trying to be achieved and how success would be measured. In addition, it was also suggested that regeneration could be a single citywide priority considered to address physical development, infrastructure, dereliction/vacant sites.
- Addressing Poverty – Several participants expressed concern about families and older people who were struggling with poverty (e.g. food poverty, fuel poverty).

- Measuring Success – Many participants expressed a clear desire to develop targets and indicators in order to measure progress against the priorities.

It is recommended that each of the above findings are considered and taken forward by identified internal convening leads and in liaison with relevant partners. The emerging considerations, refinements and proposals will be brought back and considered by Members as part of phase 2 of the BA Review process. It is suggested that the wider issue of measuring success is supplemented by creating a new project on Your Say Belfast to enable stakeholders to have their say on the current Belfast Agenda population indicators.

3.8

Bringing Focus to Delivery - Phase 2 Action Planning

Phase 2 will focus on co-designing specific action plans aligned to the agreed strategic priorities. The activities detailed within these supporting delivery plans will take account and be tested against the principles for action planning (see attached).

Any emerging action plans will also take account of the experiences and lessons emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic and what can be achieved through real collaboration and co-delivery. The ambition is to adopt a pragmatic approach to developing consolidated action plan(s) which draw out those specific interventions which are identified as an urgent priority and whereby community planning can make a significant difference/ impact.

It is important to recognise that as we reassess the key challenges and opportunities facing the city, we are not starting from a blank sheet. Consideration will also be given to a range of inputs which will inform our planning (e.g. the emerging findings and outputs from phase 1; continuing work and commitments from current programmes of work; and recent Belfast Agenda Board action planning workshops). The community planning team are currently undertaking initial work to provide a baseline position. It is also important that we engage with communities and city stakeholders at the right stage and with the input and involvement of statutory and other delivery partners to ensure we secure balance between ambition and what is possible to develop realistic and deliverable plans.

Building on this initial scoping work, it is proposed that convening leads are identified for each priority area to take forward planning involving a core set of community planning and relevant partners. Consideration will be given to:

- i. **Strategic intent / outcomes** – what we are trying to achieve?
- ii. **Measuring success** – what would success look like / potential targets
- iii. **Actions** – core set of actions/ interventions (what, who, when)

Figure 2 below outlines an indicative timeline for phase 2, highlighting individual milestones and ensuring the action plans are developed by the original deadline of end of March 2022.



Figure 2: Action Plan development timeline.

3.9 Engagement with Elected Members

Following the all-Member workshop on 3rd September, it is proposed that we adopt a rolling programme of engagement going forward, including the All-Party Working Group on Community Planning, Party Group Briefings and Area Working Groups. On that basis, a meeting of the All-Party Working Group on Community Planning will be scheduled for early December.

The meeting will provide an initial opportunity to contribute to the action planning phase and also input to the review of the Belfast Agenda Outcomes framework that will provide a sense as to whether the outcomes are being achieved. A featured project has also been added to the Belfast Agenda Review Hub on Your Say Belfast where elected members can also continue the conversation.

3.10 Belfast Residents' Survey 2021

Since 1999, the Council has undertaken a regular residents' survey to help inform strategic planning and performance management. Following the introduction of community planning, the survey is now also used to track progress against the Belfast Agenda and to inform city priorities. The survey provides statistically reliable perception data based on a representative sample of Belfast residents. It provides a robust evidence base to inform strategic planning and service improvement as well as helping support the council's statutory duty to consult under the Local Government (NI) Act 2014. The last survey was undertaken in early 2019. While we normally undertake the survey every two years, it was delayed this year due to the Covid pandemic. The methodology for the 2021 Survey has also been changed to a telephone survey to reflect the current environment with the pandemic. Telephone numbers including mobile numbers are obtained using recognised European and UK research standards and meet data protection.

	<p>Following a quotation exercise, we appointed Social Market Research (SMR) to carry out the survey. A minimum of 1,500 people (aged 16+) will be interviewed from across all DEAs and electoral wards. Quotas are applied to ensure those completing the survey are representative of the population of Belfast. We have included a notice on our website about the survey and have informed the PSNI; those undertaking the interviewing will also provide BCC contacts details should residents require reassurance as to the legitimacy of the caller.</p> <p>The fieldwork will be carried out between 11th November and 11th December 2021, and we anticipate bringing key findings to Committee in January 2022. The survey, which has been adapted as necessary to reflect the Covid-19 pandemic, will provide feedback from residents on the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in Belfast • Your local area • Your wellbeing • Belfast City Council
3.11	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Any financial implications arising from this report will be covered from existing budgets. The review process will involve the participation of all community planning partners, who will need to commit their resources to the review process and the agreed action plans.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>It is recommended that the consultation and engagement activities to review the Belfast Agenda will take account of the draft Audit of Inequalities and include specific sessions with targeted harder to reach groups to ensure that equality implications are considered as part of the review process.</p>
4.0	<p>Document Attached</p>
	<p>Agreed principles of community planning (action planning)</p>