

Appendix 2

Equality and Diversity Framework April 2017 – March 2021 - Update 2020/2021

This document is an update on actions delivered to address inequalities by Belfast City Council in the period between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. It is not a standalone document and should be read in conjunction with the Equality and Diversity Framework April 2017 – March 2021.

Priority A: Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment

We know that strategic leadership – both political and managerial – is key to improving equality and good relations outcomes, and promoting diversity. This organisational commitment goes hand in hand with working in partnership to make the best use of our resources in an ever-challenging environment. Fairness in how we comply with legislation, procure goods and services and communicate with our rate payers will highlight Belfast's growth as a diverse city.

Action	Lead Dept/s	Update on delivery 2020-21
A1 Address inequalities through the Belfast Agenda	City & Organisational Strategy	<p>The Belfast Agenda is a shared "city" framework aimed at improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all people living in Belfast. The Local Government Act places a duty on local councils to initiate, facilitate and maintain community planning in their area. The council is only one of a number of statutory partner organisations responsible for delivering the Belfast Agenda.</p> <p>During 2020-21, community planning was effectively put on hold as the city's emergency planning infrastructure kicked into gear to ensure that, working with the third sector and other statutory partners, food parcels were delivered to vulnerable residents and other welfare support was provided on an area basis across Belfast.</p> <p>As lockdown measures were relaxed, community planning structures were reconvened. Department for Communities Employability NI programme was progressed in order to provide support services for unemployed individuals seeking to get back into to work. A Local Inclusive Labour Market Partnership for Belfast was established to deliver a reduction in economic inactivity and long-term unemployment to bring NI closer in line with UK rates; and provide increased support for those with health conditions (especially mental health) and disabilities.</p> <p>The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sectoral Advisory Panel was formally established (post lockdown) in Spring 2020, following an open call selection process managed by the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action on the Community Planning Partnership's behalf. The 15 representatives, drawn from Belfast's large and diverse third sector reflect a spread of themes, areas of the city, gender and size of (large and small) organisation. Meeting every 2 weeks, the Panel's aims are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure that the sector's voices are represented as part of the community planning process.• develop and improve cross sectoral relationships and partnerships; and• promote effective community engagement. <p>Full Terms of Reference were formally approved at the Community Planning Partnership meeting on 27 October 2020. Throughout the year, representatives from the Panel were identified to join the existing community planning structures (delivery boards) ensuring that the third sector were represented (as an equal partner) within the community planning process.</p>

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		Stratagem continued to provide a supporting role to Panel members including secretariat, facilitation and strategic engagement. The Panel held an inaugural conference on 30 November 2020 representing its first strategic intervention into the community planning and associated public policy space. Over 150 people from voluntary, community and social enterprise groups joined the online Zoom conference to share their experience of improving the lives of people and communities across Belfast.
A2 Embed Equality and Diversity in new Corporate Plan	Legal & Civic Services City & Organisational Strategy	<p>A new five-year Equality Scheme 2020-25 has been developed and approved. The Equality Action Plan will run from 2021-24 and is developed from some of the information in the Audit of Inequalities, which is a systematic approach to identify inequalities, across the nine Section 75 categories (religious belief, political opinion, race, age, gender, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, people with dependants or without), which are relevant to a public authority's functions. The Equality Action Plan contains some of the key priorities from our Corporate Plan, which will have the biggest impact on inequalities.</p> <p>Our Corporate Plan is a reflection of what people in Belfast have told us they want and the type of leadership they feel the city needs. It takes the priorities of the Belfast Agenda, the Community Plan, and sets out the ways in which the council will deliver these to grow a sustainable, inclusive economy and equitable society. To fulfil our responsibilities, our Corporate Plan not only ensures we deliver the day to day services which the people of Belfast rely upon; we stretch ourselves through a series of strategic priorities to ensure we positively affect the lives of everyone in Belfast.</p>
A3 Develop and deliver an integrated plan to tackle health inequalities across the city	Community & Neighbourhood Services	<p>Staff within the Belfast Health Development Unit based within council and comprising of staff from Belfast City Council, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust and the Public Health Agency continued to support health inequalities focussed work under the themes of lifelong learning, active Belfast, age-friendly, emotional wellbeing, drugs and alcohol and avoidable winter deaths.</p> <p>Lifelong learning:</p> <p>Discussions have commenced with a view to aligning the lifelong learning work with the Jobs, Skills and Education Board of Community Planning – these will likely continue and hopefully reach a conclusion early 2021/22.</p> <p>Ongoing work to maintain Belfast's United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) Learning Cities status – participation in both the Irish Network and Global Network of Learning Cities.</p> <p>The "Learn Well, Live Well" research report was formally launched in February 2021. UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning wrote the introductory chapter for the research report on learning and health and well-being and the virtual launch event was well attended (two Junior Ministers provided video clips and Belfast Health & Social Care Trust and Belfast City Council participated on the panel) and the report was well received.</p>

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		<p>Under the sponsorships of the Job Skills and Education Board within community planning there will be a new Project Steering Group established who will be tasked with developing a Learning City Action Plan aligned with our UNSECO designation.</p> <p>Active Belfast:</p> <p>Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Programme Grants were extended and organisations supported to re-profile and/or adjust their planned activities in light of Covid-19. Continued support for the Jog Belfast programme (however this can only run when restrictions are not in place).</p> <p>Promotion of online learning opportunities such as Regional Nutrition Webinars, Walking for Health Leader Training via the Making Life Better Together website. Physical activity and healthy eating messages via social media.</p> <p>Active Travel resource packs have been developed to support cycling initiatives associated with Active Travel Hubs. They contain bell, cycle lights, high visibility vests, pumps, repair kit and reflectors; and are branded with Take 5/ Active Belfast logos.</p> <p>Emotional wellbeing: Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing</p> <p>Support provided to the Healthy North Belfast initiative to develop resources (printed and animated) as part of their Take 5 campaign in North Belfast. Delivery of awareness raising sessions to youth workers to enable them to develop and deliver Take 5 focussed activities and programmes within the community.</p> <p>Continued to deliver Take 5 awareness raising sessions to a range of partners such as the Victims and Survivors Service and continued to distribute Take 5 merchandise to schools and community organisations across the city.</p> <p>Avoidable Winter Deaths – now formally branded as ‘Belfast Warm and Well’:</p> <p>The Belfast Warm and Well Steering Group continued to meet and oversee the work. 2020/21 was the second year of the initiative and saw referrals increase to 212 compared with 91 in 2019/20. Engagement continued with city and community partners to raise awareness of the service and make linkages with other related efforts across the city to support people vulnerable to cold homes/weather.</p> <p>Injecting drug misuse: Complex Lives – Supporting Vulnerability</p> <p>Following on from the Injecting Drug Misuse Workshop held in 2019/20 the findings were presented to the Living Here Board under Community Planning. The Chief Executive of Belfast City Council then convened a Strategic Leadership Group inviting Chief Executives of all the relevant statutory partners with a remit for addressing drugs and alcohol, mental health and homelessness to consider how better address the issues identified going forward. This group met twice towards</p>

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		<p>the end of 2019/20 (January and March) and invited representatives from Doncaster Council along to talk about their work under the 'Complex Lives Alliance' – a whole system, accountable care approach to supporting people experiencing multiple disadvantages.</p> <p>Despite delays and pressures due to Covid-19, the Strategic Leadership Group reconvened again in January 2021 and agreed (as did the members of Belfast Drug and Alcohol Coordination Team, Community Planning Partnership and the Living Here Board) to proceed with forming a steering group, and securing external support and expertise, to develop the Complex Lives approach within a Belfast context – this work will be taken forward primarily during the 2020/21 year.</p> <p>In light of the Covid-19 pandemic and introduction of a lockdown period in Northern Ireland, on 31 March 2020 the Department for Communities requested that each local council considered developing a local Covid-19 response hub. The Department were initiating a food parcel scheme for those individuals who had been advised by their GP to shield as well as other NI residents who identified as vulnerable and reported that they could not access support via other means (e.g. friends or family).</p> <p>By the 8 April 2020, Belfast City Council had a citywide helpline, remote contact centre and a central food distribution hub based within the Ulster Hall fully operational and were already making the first food parcel deliveries to Belfast residents. Staff from across council were redeployed to work in the distribution hub, the contact centre and in the North, South, East and West area teams to link residents in with relevant and timely support services available close to them. And organisations such as SOS Bus and Red Cross, to name but a few, assisted us in delivering the food parcels. Council worked closely with statutory and community and voluntary partners to meet the wide-ranging needs of Belfast residents during this time. Some of the main achievements are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9,770 calls handled by the Belfast City Council Contact Centre • 107,407 food parcels and hot food delivered over 16 weeks • 9,320 deliveries or prescription pick-ups were made on behalf of residents • 1,273 resilience packs were provided to Belfast residents • Over £1.6 million allocated to Community Groups <p>Health/Belfast Health Development Unit: Continue to address health inequalities by talking forward work under mental health, drugs and alcohol, physical activity and nutrition, age friendly and lifelong learning working closely with community planning partners to identify and deliver on priorities.</p> <p>Age Friendly</p> <p>The current Age-friendly Belfast Plan comes to an end in 2021 and so work will be undertaken in-year to both close of existing actions as well as on developing a new plan for 2022-2025 (see A6 below).</p>

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		<p>Physical Activity</p> <p>Re-establishment of the Active Belfast Partnership to enable a more strategic citywide focus is given to how we progress and develop physical activity and nutrition actions and initiatives.</p> <p>Belfast Healthy Cities</p> <p>Complete and consider the findings of the Value for Money review and agree priorities and actions in support of both the recently awarded WHO Phase VII status as well as those health inequalities actions identified as part of the Belfast Agenda refresh process.</p>
A4 Deliver Disability Strategy (encompassing DDA and DDO measures)	Legal & Civic Services	<p>Equality and Diversity is mainstreamed across the council. We have produced an Equality and Diversity Framework which indicates our overall direction to effectively implement actions to address inequalities related to disability.</p> <p>We have also developed a Disability Action Plan 2019/2022, which includes actions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote employment good practice and training of our staff • communicate, consult and engage with disabled people • increase our customer base and satisfaction • deliver on language strategy (e.g. loop system, sign video) • develop partnership and networks with key stakeholders • ensure compliance with legislation and mainstream across all our services.
A5 Deliver an integrated plan to improve good relations	Community & Neighbourhood Services	<p>The council's Good Relations Plan had to be revised to align with activities allowed by the public health restrictions due to the impact of Covid-19. Good Relations was integrated into the council's approach to the pandemic through small grants and strategic thematic funding.</p> <p>While delivery was restricted due to Covid-19, one of the outcomes of the integration of good relations into the council's response to Covid-19 ensured that vulnerable groups such as refugees and asylum seekers and the Roma community were able to access support and were not left behind.</p> <p>In addition, the involvement of the Officers in the Response ensured that we could further the wider vision of the Good Relations Strategy. In October 2020, Belfast City Council commissioned Blu Zebra to undertake research into the council's response to the first lockdown through the lens of good relations and peacebuilding.</p>

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<p>A6 Develop an Age-Friendly Action Plan 2018-21 through HASP and deliver programmes of work supporting older people and encouraging Active Ageing</p>	<p>Community & Neighbourhood Services</p>	<p>The Covid-19 pandemic has had a fundamental impact on social and economic life for everyone, but particularly older people. However, older people have insisted that planning for recovery should be emphasize the resilience of older people and not promote stereotypes of frailty and vulnerability.</p> <p>The Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership is an important resource for the city as it plans recovery and re-building as it coordinates the work of many organisations and agencies, at regional, city-wide and local scales which support older people and involves older people through the Greater Belfast Seniors' Forum and local older peoples' forums.</p> <p>We continue to manage the development and implementation of the city's Age-friendly Belfast Plan 2018-21 and has a responsibility to support the wider Community Planning Partnership in planning for recovery and long-term resilience.</p> <p>In July we began distribution of the Keeping Well at Home booklet which provided really used information and linked with Move with Mary, Dame Mary Peters exercise videos, over 12000 copies have been distributed in Belfast already.</p> <p>The Greater Belfast Seniors Forum met from April 2020 via Zoom and have progressed with their work plan and been involved in a large number of consultations, a lot to do with [planning and infrastructure.</p> <p>We put on a full programme of events mostly online for Positive Ageing Month in October beginning with an Age-friendly Belfast Convention on 1 October 2020.</p> <p>There was an annual programme of regular online/at home events – Tea dances, Slipped Disco, Bingo, Tai Chi, Mindfulness, Cookery, Movement to Music.</p> <p>We worked closely with Public Health Agency, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust and other partners in the Citywide isolation and loneliness group to ensure need were met across the city.</p> <p>A number of online Dementia Awareness sessions have been run and a new interactive training session with video scenarios has been developed.</p> <p>We continue to support older people to get online and distributed 30 recycled devises out to older people in September '20 and have 50 devices to go out from 2020/21 budget.</p>
<p>A7 Develop and deliver an integrated children and young people framework and</p>	<p>Community & Neighbourhood Services</p>	<p>The members of Belfast Youth Forum continue to play a pivotal role in the development of the city. The Forum continue to work on and raise awareness of their Poverty, Mental Health and Relationship and Sexuality campaigns. They are also currently conducting research, titled 'Minor Choices, Major Voices' with Black, Asian and minority ethnic youth in the city via a survey on the Belfast City Council 'Yoursay' platform in an effort to learn more about BAME young people'</p>

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work programme		<p>experiences of living in Belfast and aim to be able to made recommendations as to how Belfast can be more diverse and welcoming for everyone who lives here.</p> <p>The Youth Forum has recently launched a Mental Health advocacy toolkit in February '21 in conjunction with Northern Ireland Youth Forum and NI Commissioner for Children & Young People Youth Panel. This toolkit is designed to help young people organise a mental health campaign project in their community and support them to campaign on local mental health issues. The toolkit encourages young people to have their voice heard when it comes to mental health support and services and addressing what needs to change. It also encourages the promotion and highlighting of good mental health in the community. It reminds young people of the importance of looking after their own health, mentally, emotionally and physically and provides some examples of how they can do this.</p> <p>The forum continues to engage with decision makers in Government regarding their campaigns, most recently presenting their Any Use? RSE research informally to the Stormont Education Committee in January '21. The forum also submits feedback from the young people on pertinent legislation/ strategies, etc. as required, the most recent being feedback delivered on the Gender Equality Strategy in April 2021.</p> <p>The Forum continues to meet with the People and Communities Committee 3 times a year to discuss current campaigns and also discuss issues currently affecting young people in Belfast.</p> <p>The Forum also engages with other council departments on consultations and other related work as and when appropriate to bring the voices of young people into our actions.</p>
A8 Deliver LGBT Action Plan	City & Organisational Strategy	<p>This workforce action plan has been developed to ensure that our organisational culture and working environment allows staff to feel comfortable to be their whole selves at work and that policies and practices empower talent development at all levels and the removal of any form of discrimination. It also aims to increase the understanding of the wider workforce of issues facing the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+) communities.</p> <p>Key deliverables and outcomes for 2020/2021 were as follows:</p> <p>Training</p> <p>Stonewall delivered four awareness raising sessions to staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steps to Trans Inclusion • Introduction to Allyship • First Steps to Bi Inclusion • First Steps to LGBT Inclusion <p>A Championing LGBT Inclusion awareness session was delivered to Corporate Management Team</p>

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		<p>Policy</p> <p>Staff policies are currently under review to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are inclusive and use gender neutral language • There are clear processes in place for staff to raise issues around discrimination/ harassment/ Bullying based on gender/ sexual orientation. <p>Transgender guidance has been drafted and this work will continue to be developed.</p> <p>Promotion and visibility</p> <p>Proud LGBT+ staff network introduced an email signature for network members and supporters to use. This was promoted on staff intranet.</p> <p>Ten articles have been included on staff intranet to raise awareness of different LGBT+ events/ initiatives e.g. Pride; Transgender Day of Remembrance; Transgender Day of Visibility including personal stories (one internal and one external); guidance on use of pronouns; LGBT+ awareness week; LGBT+ awareness workshops.</p> <p>Community engagement</p> <p>Information relating to the LGBT+ staff network is included in the jobs section of the website; promoted at induction, diversity and disability awareness training. (Diversity and disability awareness training was put on hold in 2020 because of Covid-19 restrictions). A number of staff and their family members participated in virtual Pride events e.g. sponsored walk with donations going to Belfast Pride. A Pride flag was displayed at City Hall to celebrate Pride.</p> <p>A Transgender flag was displayed at City Hall to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance in November and City Hall lit in colours of Trans flag to coincide with Transgender Day of Visibility on 31 March 2021.</p> <p>Workplace Equality Index</p> <p>Staff attended a number of Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) Support Series question and answer sessions to help with the completion of the 2021 WEI submission WEI 2020 did not take place because of Covid-19.</p> <p>Organisational analysis</p> <p>The fair employment monitoring form has been amended to capture sexual orientation and gender identity data and the IT system now has the functionality to capture and report on this data.</p>

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A9 Deliver Gender Action Plan	City & Organisational Strategy	<p>During 2020/2021, Covid-19 impacted on the council's ability to deliver some of the actions contained within the GAP. Staff were involved in managing and planning for recovery from the pandemic and due to the restrictions in place some activity was not possible. Where feasible, virtual activity events and activity were progressed. Outstanding actions from 2020-21 have been included in the new three-year GAP (2021/22-2023/24).</p> <p>Activity in Belfast City Council's Gender Action Plan is grouped under the following themes.</p> <p>Women in the Council</p> <p>Held a number of virtual development and awareness raising events and workshops to mark, and celebrate IWD.</p> <p>Participated in the NI Gender Diversity Charter assessment - bronze level retained.</p> <p>Women's Network Group ongoing.</p> <p>Transgender guidance drafted.</p> <p>Held a workshop gender inequalities workshop for both male/ female staff to jointly explore/discuss gender issues and identify any issues to be addressed. Issue identified will be captured in the new Gender Action Plan for 2021-2024. Engagement with staff will continue on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Held a facilitated workshop with Women's Steering Group to consider content for the revised Women's Leaders Programme going forward. Also considered the social and emotional impact of Covid-19 on society and in particular on gender related issues and how these might be incorporated into future gender action planning.</p> <p>Women in the Community</p> <p>Funded annual external IWD event.</p> <p>Held event to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance</p> <p>Supported Raise Your Voice Project to help address misogyny, sexual harassment and violence- delivered a number of awareness raising sessions around sexual harassment and consent.</p> <p>Women in the Economy</p> <p>Work ongoing to review frontline job opportunities to make these more attractive to women e.g. working hours/ shift patterns.</p> <p>We continue to partner with INI, WIB and the 10 other councils to support the delivery of the yes you can programme which aims to support females to start a business.</p>

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		<p>Since March 2020 42 females in the Belfast City Council area have engaged in bootcamps and peer mentoring delivered as part of the programme. These were focused on developing business ideas and taking positive steps to start a business.</p> <p>Through the online webinars which focused on Finance and Sales 12 females from the Belfast City Council area attended.</p> <p>The pitching event delivered as part of the initiative is currently live, to date 16 females from the Belfast City Council area have submitted an application.</p> <p>The programme concludes in November/December 2021. The Enterprise and Business Growth team are currently scoping options to delivered support for females when the current programme concludes.</p> <p>Women in the City</p> <p>The baselining process for assets has commenced and well underway via the Asset Management System project - it is planned to be fully rolled out by March 2022. The rollout has been severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic (external contractor; resource availability).</p> <p>It is intended that an Asset Management Board will be created, to oversee the management on council assets going forward including needs of all stakeholders with the opportunity identify issued/needs</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>The Council is supporting a number of projects which look at opportunities of how the needs of women can be better met across the city including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new Grace Family Centre (recently completed and launched) which has received funding under our Belfast Investment Fund; - The development of the new Shankill Women's Centre: progress is well underway – procurement of a contractor is beginning this month. <p>In addition, we are also involved in the delivery of Urban Villages capital investment programme, where one of the completed projects is the Footprints Women's Centre.</p> <p>Retained Platinum Status- Onus Charter</p> <p>Achieved Safe City Status- January 2021</p> <p>Ongoing support for the Raise Your Voice Project to help address misogyny, sexual harassment and violence- delivered a number of awareness raising sessions around sexual harassment and consent.</p>

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A10 Deliver Race Action Plan	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>To support the integration and inclusion of new communities, council has delivered various projects which have been specifically commissioned and developed through our Good Relations Grant-Aid and Peace IV Local Action Plan.</p> <p>Grant Aid Programme Support</p> <p>The Good Relations Unit has a Good Relations Grant Aid Programme that provides an opportunity twice a year for organisations across Belfast to submit project proposals focused on promoting good relations between communities.</p> <p>The fund provides grant-aid up to £10,000 for short-term projects that aim to promote good relations within the City. Significant work has been undertaken through the Migrant Forum to ensure that organisations supporting new communities are competent in accessing the fund as well as encouraging host communities to utilise this fund to develop projects aimed at promoting relations between new and host communities.</p> <p>This fund has been a popular initiative that has enabled many interventions and innovative projects aimed at connecting communities and supporting the integration and inclusion of all.</p> <p>Supporting integration and inclusion through the celebration of festivals and cultural events</p> <p>We have worked with many of the minority ethnic communities across the City, supporting them to celebrate their festivals and to open them to other communities as an opportunity to build relations. The City Hall and Botanic Gardens, for example, have been used to host Eid, Chinese New Year and other cultural celebrations. We also work to ensure that festivals and cultural events organised by the council are also inclusive of all communities living in Belfast, such as St. Patrick's Day.</p> <p>Supporting the integration and inclusion of Asylum Seekers and Refugees</p> <p>The Good Relations Unit has supported several initiatives to promote the integration and inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers including advice and information services as well as cultural events. We support the annual Refugee Awareness Week, through hosting the launch and organising awareness raising events and providing funding to enable others to mark the week. We have organised 3 Refugee and Asylum awareness training events across Belfast, this year, enabling communities and staff to understand asylum issues and the impact of our services on these communities.</p> <p>We are currently updating the Refugee Transition Guide that was recognised by the Department for Work and Pensions as a model of good practice. The guide was developed on the back of an information gap relating to the provision of advice for people who claim asylum and are granted permission to stay. The guide contains information on finding a home, looking for work, applying for benefits, education, healthcare, family reunion, long term immigration status and more. It is available in several languages. We are currently looking at updating and re-printing this guide.</p>

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		<p>Supporting improved relations in East Belfast For the past four years the Good Relations Unit has funded East Belfast Community Development Association to provide a Race Relations Co-ordinator in East Belfast. This post has been critical in developing improved relations between new and host communities in East Belfast and developing networks among community, voluntary and statutory partners and linking new communities in local services.</p> <p>Roma Information Hub Through our Peace IV plan we are funding a two-year Roma information Hub.</p> <p>The purpose of this project is to provide a support hub as a point of contact for the Roma Community to encourage and enhance access to statutory and voluntary support services and promote the integration and inclusion of this community.</p> <p>Building capacity within schools We have also been partnering with the Education Authority to create 4 Shared School Partnerships. As well as promoting shared education between the partnering schools the schools will also partner in projects to develop the capacity, skills and strategies of young people and school staff to understand diversity, the impact of sectarianism and racism and to challenge racist and sectarian behaviour.</p> <p>DiverseCity Programme For the past four years, we have been running a very popular DiverseCity programme that provides monthly diversity initiatives for the public. The purpose of these initiatives is to encourage an increased awareness of issues around diversity and to provide participants with an opportunity to meet and engage with representatives from other faith, ethnic and political backgrounds. It also gives participants the opportunity to visit places and spaces that they would not traditionally go to. Initiatives within this programme include facilitated workshops at the Belfast Islamic Centre, the Jewish Synagogue, the Hindu Temple, the Chinese Resource Centre as well as training on Refugee Issues, Arabic Awareness, Roma and Traveller issues, opportunities to listen to the stories of Refugee and Asylum Seekers. The programme has been very well received and is always oversubscribed.</p> <p>Supporting integration through economic inclusion The Good Relations Unit with the council's Economic Development have been engaging with new communities to ensure that access to economic development programmes and academies are also accessible to new communities. To support this, Economic Development staff have become permanent members and a constant agenda item at the council's Migrant Forum meetings. This has been critical in enhancing communication between this department and new communities and has resulted in a greater uptake of opportunities from people from new communities. It has also helped inform those developing economic initiatives of the barriers facing inhibit new communities from accessing economic initiatives.</p>

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		<p>Targeted engagement with new communities resulted in a 13% uptake of academy opportunities from residents that were born outside the UK and Ireland.</p> <p>The Economic Development Unit linked with the Migrant Forum to ensure that individual barriers to accessing employment academies were removed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having interpreters at engagement roadshows - Producing key information in the top five languages - Providing childcare while attending academies - Developing flexible hours around delivery - Working through the Migrant Forum and other partnerships to ensure that opportunities were communicated to new communities. <p>Programmes aimed at preventing hate</p> <p>We are currently working with partners across the City on initiatives to prevent hate crime, through the City-Wide Hate Crime Steering Group which is convened by the Safer City Coordinator. A report was commissioned on the experiences of people from the Muslim faith within Belfast. Following on from this report, we commissioned Faith Matters and Tell Mama to deliver a four-day training looking specifically at anti-Muslim hate and how to address and prevent. We have also partnered with other relevant agencies to develop a specific structure to monitor tensions experienced by people within the Muslim community.</p> <p>Targeted Support for communities through the Covid19 Pandemic</p> <p>At the early stages of the pandemic, council developed several targeted interventions to support vulnerable communities during the pandemic and to ensure that messaging and support services were accessible to these communities. Although minority communities were encouraged to access the wider council Covid-19 Help-line, two specific interventions were also developed for minority communities in recognition of language barriers and communities that might be more isolated and digitally and socially excluded. These included the Roma Helpline and the support provided to run a bilingual help-line for refugees and asylum seekers, details of which are outlined below:</p> <p>Recognising this vulnerability the council funded Forward South Partnership to provide a culturally appropriate telephone helpline to support the Romanian speaking Roma community across Belfast.</p> <p>This bilingual service has provided a trusted and accessible service and enabled many within the Roma community to obtain support for food, housing and benefit advice at a critical time. It has managed to provide significant engagement with the Roma Community and has established a referral system to enable this community to access wider support and advice services.</p>

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		<p>Council also provided emergency funding support for people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities impacted by Covid-19, this was administered through Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) NIACRO.</p> <p>Supporting the integration and inclusion of new communities by linking and learning from other cities. The council was accepted as a member to the Oxford University Inclusive Cities project. This project is a knowledge exchange initiative supporting UK cities and their local partners to achieve a change in their approach towards the inclusion of newcomers in the city.</p> <p>The project will allow for peer learning and support between the participating cities and from the Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, several learning opportunities are being planned for the coming months which will help inform improved work in supporting new communities.</p>
A11 Deliver a city and neighbourhood community safety programme	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership consulted on their Strategic Direction which identified there were no significant equality or disability considerations.</p> <p>Contracts that were advertised during this time included pass/fail criteria to ensure they would be delivered in line with S75 and Disability Discrimination Act.</p> <p>A number of projects have strong equality and disability benefits:</p> <p>Lone Parent Project – enhanced understanding of why lone parents are more worried about crime.</p> <p>Adults at Risk of Harm – delivering key community safety messages to adults at risk of harm.</p> <p>Home Security Service – improving home security measures for older adults who have been the victim of burglary.</p> <p>Dual Diagnosis and Street Injector Support Services – respond to vulnerable adults in crisis and support them to develop a more stable lifestyle.</p>
A12 Develop the Equality & Diversity Network	Legal & Civic Services / City & Organisational Strategy	<p>The Equality and Diversity Network (EDN) group has been established and is chaired by the City Solicitor. Meetings of both the strategic and operational levels continue, and governance was developed including the reporting to the Corporate Management Team, led by the Chief Executive.</p> <p>During the reporting period meetings of the strategic tier took place on 17 November 2020 and 3 February 2021. The operational tier met on 7 October 2020 and 21 January 2021.</p> <p>The work plan for the EDN is informed by best practice and includes the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland (ECNI's) <i>S75 Demonstrating Effective Leadership</i> guidance, the aim of which is to support the effective implementation of the</p>

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		duties and will help to improve decision making and engagement with those potentially affected by the development of public policy and service delivery in Northern Ireland.
A13 Implementation of Equality Scheme	Legal & Civic Services	<p>Our current Equality Scheme was approved in 2021 and will run until 2025.</p> <p>Capacity building support was provided through experiential learning on the impacts of Covid 19 on service delivery.</p> <p>Our Equality and Diversity Network Operational group which comprises key departmental representatives continued to meet on a quarterly basis in 20/21. Findings were progressed through the Strategic tier of the Network which comprised the City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services and Strategic Directors.</p>
A14 Review and develop new Equality Scheme 2020-25	Legal & Civic Services	<p>Our Equality Scheme describes certain arrangements that a public authority has set up and which it is obliged to apply and follow as a means of fulfilling the duties imposed on it by the duties set out in Section 75:</p> <p>(1) due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity, and</p> <p>(2) regard to the desirability of promoting good relations.</p> <p>Our Equality Scheme outlines our arrangements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessing our compliance with Section 75 duties • assessing and consulting people on the likely impact our policies have on promoting equality of opportunity • monitoring any adverse impact of policies on the promoting equality of opportunity • publishing the results of our assessments • training staff • assessing public access to information and services we provide <p>Having in place necessary resources such as people, time and money, to make sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we can comply with our statutory duties • we implement the equality scheme effectively, and on time <p>Our previous Equality Scheme ran from 2015 until 2020 and before the end of the five year period for which it covers we must review how the Equality Scheme arrangements have been applied and assess how effective they have been in assisting the Council to comply with Section 75 duties. This is known as a Five-Year review; a summary of this report is sent to ECNI which sets out:</p>

Action	Lead Dept/s	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how the scheme's implementation has benefitted individuals within the Section 75 groups • how leaders within the authority are engaged in the scheme's implementation • challenges and how they have been overcome • lessons learned, and • good practice <p>The Five-Year Review of the Equality Scheme was prepared with key findings incorporated into the new Equality Scheme which will run from 2020 until 2025. Both documents were approved by Strategic Policy and Resource Committee in December 2020, with ratification at full Council in January 2021.</p>
A15 Hold bi-annual meetings of Equality Consultative Forum	Legal & Civic Services	<p>Meetings were held virtually during the period 2020-21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The group met in November 2020 and March 2021 the topics presented at the meeting held on 18 November 2020 are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Response to Covid-19 Pandemic • Belfast Regional City Deal • Forth Meadow Community Greenway • Place & Economy Upcoming Projects • Review of the Equality Consultative Forum <p>The topics presented at the meeting held on 31 March 2021 were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on our approach to recovery • Equality Scheme Consultation on Audit of Inequalities • Equality Action Plan 2021-25
A16 Review the role of the council's external Equality Consultative Forum	Legal & Civic Services	<p>A review of the operation, role and remit of our Equality Consultative Forum was completed prior to the pandemic and has not been implemented. It is increasingly clear the consultation and engagement landscape has changed considerably and a refresh of the consultation findings will address this. It is envisaged that this review will enable better alignment with the new governance arrangements in respect of the Belfast Agenda. Recommendations arising from the review will be presented to the council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and Consultative Forum members for consideration and approval.</p>
A17 Scope option to develop an internal and external Equality	City & Organisational Strategy	<p>The Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Panel continues to provide sectoral advice to the Community Planning Partnership. The Panel continue to ensure that equality issues and needs form part of their ongoing and future engagement with the wider Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise citywide network.</p>

Action	Lead Dept/s	Update on delivery 2020-21
Forum within the emerging Community Planning Partnership		
A18 Develop and deliver a communications plan to promote equality and diversity in the organisation internally and externally	City & Organisational Strategy	The team continues to ensure materials are provided in accessible formats and across different platforms. We have introduced an accessible website (see customer update).

The actions listed above were included in the Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-21 approved by the Strategic and Policy Resources Committee on 22 September 2017. In addition a number of strategic actions have also been developed and are under delivery, these are summarised below:

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2020-21
A19 - Develop a Cultural Strategy	Place & Economy	<p>In August 2019, the council launched the city's ten year cultural strategy, A City Imagining 2020-2030.</p> <p>This is a new strategic framework for the city and is set firmly within the context of the Belfast Agenda and the Local Development Plan to create a vision and coherent framework for Belfast that will fully embed culture in the wider city agenda and to enable Belfast's vision to be a 'culturally vibrant city'.</p> <p>Work on realising the aims of the strategy is now mentioned as a core element of our city's Recovery Plan (Oct 20). Just some examples of projects that commenced in 2020 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gig Buddies, in partnership with the Black Box, is creating a new best practice model for supported audience engagement. Gig Buddies is a project that pairs up people with and without learning disabilities and/or autism to be friends and to go to events together. It will challenge thinking, encourage innovation, and create a cohort of trained individuals. This model can be expanded across wider sectors.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A City Imagining Cultural Leadership Programme is working with broader unionist communities and other groups perceived to engage less in cultural activity in the city. Through 'civic conversations' we also engaged with Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+) groups to explore barriers and needs, and met with disability groups, as part of our ongoing engagement to inform our work and understand what change is needed. - Tourism Cultural Heritage & Arts Unit's investment programme encourages breadth and depth of engagement across all groups in the city, focusing on developing cultural participation and celebrating cultural identity. A total of 67 organisations were in receipt of core investment of over £2.526m during 2020/21. All the organisations that we support must commit to promoting equality and diversity through their presentational work and civic engagement. Examples of organisations we fund for whom equality is a key tenet of their work, include Open Arts, Streetwise, University of Atypical, Outburst Festival, Arts Ekta. <p>In addition, Tourism Cultural Heritage & Arts Unit's funding for projects supports those organisations at earlier stage of their development and in some cases is coupled with mentoring. 18 Festive Neighbourhood grants were released totalling over £100,000 helping neighbourhoods express themselves through culture at Christmas 2020. A further 14 grants were given out to specifically support the needs of the broader unionist communities, with a value of investment of over £70,000. Other specific interventions are facilitated as required within forums or in partnership. We are also working on large transformative projects such as cultural mapping, a new co-design framework, a new evaluation framework for our investment, scoping plans for 2023, active partnerships with Eden Project and with other UK and international networks and bodies such as IETM, One Young World, Eurocities and Horizon Europe.</p>
A20 - Local Development Plan	Place & Economy	<p>The Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out how the council area should develop up until 2035. It is vital to the delivery of the outcomes in the Belfast Agenda and it will provide a 15-year planning framework to support economic and social outcomes in the city, while providing the delivery of sustainable development.</p> <p>Stage 1 of the process, the LDP draft Plan Strategy (dPS) is at an advanced stage in the statutory Independent Examination process, having been subject to public hearing sessions in late 2020 and early 2021. The dPS has been subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment to ensure all legislative obligations (including Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Disability Discrimination Order 2006) have been met and that the promotion of equality of opportunity is at the core of the LDP. As with the Preferred Options Paper, the dPS underwent full public consultation, with a series of stakeholder engagement events, including consultation with Section 75 groups and the council's own Equality Consultative Forum.</p> <p>In addition, Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is being prepared to assist the implementation of a number of the policies in the dPS, including affordable housing, residential design and urban design. These further address a range of relevant issues, including accessibility, access for all and quality/inclusive design.</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>Social and Affordable Housing</p> <p>This is being brought forward as part of the LDP dPS within a new proposed policy. In the interim, pending adoption of the Plan Strategy, developers are being encouraged to provide a level of social/affordable housing.</p> <p>Public Realm</p> <p>Developers are being encouraged to offset the impacts of a development by making developer contributions and one of the main catalysts is that of public realm.</p> <p>Open Space</p> <p>Planning Policy Statement 8 and Creating Places require new residential developments to provide communal open space and where applicable, play facilities. Similarly to the public realm, this ensures accessible environments for all. PPS8 policies have been incorporated into the LDP draft Plan Strategy, which also includes policies on access for all and quality design.</p>
A21 - City Deal	Finance & Resources	<p>Over the past year the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) partners have continued to develop Outline Business Cases for the 22 projects and Programmes making up the City Deal investment. Completed Business Cases have now been submitted to various Government Departments for individual approval. Once approved within an overall Deal Document for the region money will begin to flow to allow the Delivery Phase to commence.</p> <p>Partners across councils and universities retain responsibility for ensuring that their respective projects continue to align with the objectives of the City Deal in terms both of inclusive growth and of contributing to a regional balance of benefits. (This includes Belfast City Council, for example, which has responsibility for the Digital Programme and for the Destination Hub tourism project).</p> <p>The Programme Management Office (PMO) has engaged with Partners to remind them of their Equality responsibilities under Section 75 at all stages of the design, development and delivery of projects. As Outline Business Cases were being developed (July 2020) they were reminded at individual project level that their duties in respect of equality would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) taking appropriate lawful positive and affirmative actions to remedy any potential adverse impacts on those with particular needs and circumstances, including those with a disability, those with dependents, women and those from minority ethnic communities; (ii) considering how opportunities to maximise equality might be incorporated into projects and; (iii) engaging and consulting with section 75 groups and rural stakeholders at the earliest stage of project development and at relevant intervals throughout

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>Project teams were advised to engage appropriately and regularly with Section 75 groups and rural stakeholders to avoid the risk of 'designing-in' inequality and to work with their own in-house Equality and/or Good Relations Officers in this regard. As work evolves discussion and feedback should be facilitated at key decision points in project delivery (design stage, implementation stage etc).</p> <p>In November 2020 the PMO provided the Equality Forum with an overview of the City Deal Programme including details of its intrinsically inclusive nature and the approach to ensuring equality.</p> <p>Next Steps</p> <p>As the projects within the BRCD programme reach delivery stage, the particular needs of Section 75 groups and categories will continue to be borne in mind.</p> <p>We will continue to remind Partners of the need to take appropriate lawful positive and affirmative actions to remedy any potential adverse impacts on section 75 categories.</p> <p>The PMO has consulted with the Belfast City Council Equality Unit at regular intervals and will remain in contact with the Unit throughout the lifespan of the Programme.</p>
A22 – Belfast Open Spaces Strategy	City & Neighbourhood Services	The strategy document has been finalised and, although delayed by the pandemic, a process has commenced to begin developing the detailed action plans to deliver the strategy.
A23 – Capital Projects	Property & Projects	<p>The council's physical investment programme is a £400 million citywide commitment to making Belfast a better place to live, work, visit and invest. The programme, which includes around 400 projects, includes major schemes to boost the economy, create jobs and also improve the quality of life in our neighbourhoods.</p> <p>The programme is not simply about building new facilities or assets. Investment decisions are taken in line with the strategic aims and objectives of the Belfast Agenda. The physical programme's capital projects are delivered under various funding streams which include Capital Programme, Leisure Transformation Programme, Belfast Investment Fund (investment of £250k or more), Local Investment Fund (investment of under £250k), Urban Villages Programme in Belfast and Social Investment Fund.</p> <p>During the year 2020 to 2021, the council and Physical Programmes Department successfully delivered significant achievements in relation to the physical investment programme despite the impacts and restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>During the 2020 to 2021 period, we invested £33.9m to complete 28 major physical developments in local communities across the city.</p> <p>Key projects included:</p> <p>Leisure Transformation Programme</p> <p>This programme won the leisure category for the inaugural Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Social Impact Awards 2020 and with a total £105m investment is the largest of its kind in the UK. During 2020/2021 work commenced on Avoniel (£8m) and Templemore Baths (£17m.) Furthermore plans continue for a new leisure facility at Girdwood.</p> <p>Other Major Investments</p> <p>Other major investments included completion of 8 community facilities, 3 parks and open spaces, 4 play parks, 3 community sports facilities all of which have provided improved accessibility and provision for local communities.</p>
A24 - City & Neighbourhood Transition and Improvement Programme	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>The ambitions of the City & Neighbourhood Services Transition and Improvement (T&I) programme have remained throughout 2020/21, and there has been significant learning in how we have collaborated and engaged with communities since the on set of the pandemic.</p> <p>However, given the current operating context and periods of significant government restrictions, the priority has been to sustain our critical and vital services to the public.</p> <p>Despite these challenges some project activity was able to progress, for example in relation to embedding the Open Spaces and Streetscene delivery model, piloting technology aspects within Resources and Fleet, and a revised Area Team approach has been introduced to support Community Provision.</p>
A25 - Social Clauses	Place & Economy	<p>Social Value is the additional benefit to the community from the commissioning or procurement process which is over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and works, including <i>economic, environmental and social well-being</i> or community benefits that can be delivered to a local area.</p> <p>A Social Value Act was introduced in England and Wales in 2013, and in Scotland in 2014. An equivalent act – shaped to reflect the priorities of Northern Ireland has not yet been introduced here. The council is committed to work with stakeholders to ensure that a social value act is established in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>In the absence of a Social Value Act, a cross-departmental working group led by the Community Planning team with input from Enterprise and Business Growth, Employability and Skills, Corporate Procurement Services and Physical</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>Programmes teams, developed the council's Social Value policy. This policy sets out the expectation of Social Value provision in the city and aligns to the themes in the Belfast Agenda:</p> <p>Working & Learning - Promote local skills and employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More opportunities for disadvantaged people • Reducing the number of long term unemployed getting back into employment • Improved skills for local people • Number. of apprentices <p>Growing the Economy - Supporting Growth of Business Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More opportunities for SMEs and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprises <p>Living Here - Healthier, Safer and more Resilient Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a healthier community • Volunteering hours <p>City Development - Environment: Protecting and improving our environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate impacts are reduced • Savings in CO2 emissions <p>This work has been supplemented by the Corporate Procurement Services team with advice and support from Enterprise & Business Growth and Employability & Skills teams in developing a Social Value Framework for council procurement. It replaces the current Social Clause policy and builds on supporting a number of target audiences including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of work (unemployed and long-term unemployed); • Economically Inactive including those with caring responsibilities, disabilities and health conditions; • Young people; and • Low paid individuals. <p>Social Value considerations under the Framework include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment weeks for the long term unemployed /economically inactive; • Apprenticeships;

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid student placement weeks (3rd level students); • Unpaid trainee placement weeks; and • Paid placements. <p>Other Social Value priorities and actions recognised in the framework and policy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Social Enterprises in supply chains; • Belfast based small to medium enterprises within a supply chain; • Addressing crime and anti-social behaviour; • Tackling health inequalities; • Promoting environmental, green, sustainable business practices; • Tackling under attainment; • Supporting volunteering opportunities; and • Building capacity in Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector. <p>All council contracts above £30,000 are screened for social clauses and contractors are supported to deliver social value related initiatives to creating employment opportunities. The clauses also provide community supports, capacity building for Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise and bespoke support for young people and disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>This work has been supported by the creation of and publishing of Belfast Inclusive Growth Strategy in 2020 which was supported by Employability and Skills team. This policy outlines how council will leverage our procurement and employment powers to place inclusive growth at the heart of our key investment and strategy decisions. One of the commitments was to harness procurement to achieve social value. We have defined social value as:</p> <p>“The additional benefit to the community from the commissioning or procurement process which is over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and works, including economic, environmental and social well-being or community benefits that can be delivered to a local area.”</p> <p>Integration of social value commitments in relevant council contracts can deliver benefits such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic – creation of employment, apprenticeship or volunteering opportunities, provision of support to businesses and the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector; • Social – delivery of initiatives that have direct community benefits such as increasing opportunities for disadvantaged people, promoting social mobility and good relations, addressing health inequalities and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour; and

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>Environmental – contributing towards a cleaner and greener city and improving environmental sustainability, by implementing environmental improvements, supporting reductions in waste and carbon emissions, supporting energy efficiency, procuring materials from renewable and sustainable sources (leading to, for example, reductions in disposable and single-use plastic items).</p> <p>PUBLIC REALM:</p> <p>Tourism Cultural Heritage and Arts (TCHA) is seeking to develop new ways to re-imagine our city centre and we held a series of five ‘Making Spaces’ online events with over 200 attendees in 2020 featuring local and international interventions on how our cities can be repositioned and transformed to create more accessible, welcoming and attractive city environments. Our cultural strategy references creating a Playful City and names other new initiatives such as Fun Palaces and Playstacks as partnership based, co-designed ways of bringing this to life.</p> <p>TCHA’s active Belfast Canvas project, updates to city centre signage, flagfields and bannerings with Belfast City Centre Management and Visit Belfast, and partnership with Department for Communities to manage the eight sails on Royal Avenue brings colour and coherence to the public realm.</p> <p>TCHA’s Cultural Mapping project (stage one of three) analyses provision of physical cultural infrastructure across the city council area creating data which we will use to benchmark, identify gaps, hotspots, and promote our resources.</p> <p>Work continues in partnership with City Regeneration Unit to bring changes to the look and feel of the city via research on pilots (reuse of vacant units, festive window dressing), brokering models, and innovative interventions such as the Star Factory at City Hall.</p>
A26 - Social Value Procurement Framework	Finance & Resources	<p>A draft social value procurement policy has been drafted and is planned to go to Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) for committee approval in June.</p> <p>This will be followed by public consultation, equality and rural screening and a refreshed proposal will go back to committee for final approval, before developing guidance documents and training for staff and contractors, clearly identifying the council’s ambitions, processes to be applied and sources of support/assistance.</p>
A27 - Urban Villages Programme	Property & Projects	<p>Belfast City Council continues to work in close partnership with The Executive Office, as the appointed Delivery Partner, to support the successful delivery of the Urban Villages Initiative.</p> <p>The Urban Villages Initiative is a headline action within the NI Executive’s Together Building a United Community (T:BUC) strategy. The Initiative is designed to improve good relations outcomes and develop thriving places where there has been a history of deprivation and community tension.</p> <p>During the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, through this partnership approach, a further 4 capital projects at a</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>value of £4,695,523 (includes funding from Belfast City Council, The Executive Office, Department for Communities, and Department for Infrastructure) were delivered under the ongoing Urban Villages Initiative. Projects included:</p> <p>Short Strand Peace Tourism</p> <p>This project provided a refurbishment of existing property to facilitate the development and delivery of informative tours which showcase bespoke memorabilia and resources to help share the story and experience of the peace process within the local area.</p> <p>Sacred Heart Marrowbone</p> <p>The project facilitated the purchase, restoration and redevelopment of the vacant former parochial hall into a thriving mixed-use community facility for the area.</p> <p>The facility includes a boxing club, dance studio, youth club, multi-functional spaces, health & wellbeing shed, community garden and children's play area.</p> <p>The project enabled the provision of a range of community and youth related programmes that will help to address the many layers and facets of multiple deprivation that residents in the locality face on a daily basis. Additionally the project regenerated the existing building, facilitating a local focal point and base for many community and voluntary organisations in the area to deliver their programmes, events and activities.</p> <p>Grace Family Centre</p> <p>The project developed a new community resource located at Alliance Avenue in the Crumlin and Ardoyne Neighbourhood Renewal Area, a community experiencing some of the most severe disadvantage and deprived within Northern Ireland. The new resource provides social enterprises (crèche & café), and flexible space / offices for information, training, advice and education for women and families, which support local social needs.</p> <p>Eastside Ballymacarrett Greenway</p> <p>The project upgraded the section of the Comber Greenway from the C.S. Lewis Square to Titanic Halt including Island Street. The capital works now provides a safer, more welcoming, accessible and greener route between East Belfast and the City Centre whilst encouraging accessibility and connectivity for the residents of East Belfast as well as visitors.</p> <p>The project delivered a range of enhancements which included:</p> <p>Physical and Environmental: improved accessibility with a segregated cycle lane at Island Street together with new hard and soft landscape, lighting and street furniture as well as public realm improvements.</p> <p>Social: Improved opportunity to encourage healthier, more active communities with better life chances which are</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>safer.</p> <p>Economic: to the economic regeneration of East Belfast through investment and tourism i.e. encouraging visitors to the Ballymacarrett area; promoting the Greenways in the media; encouraging ownership through volunteer activities.</p> <p>Additionally, the project has created an inclusive and shared space, fostered shared positive community identities and facilitated the opportunity for communities to work together to promote good relations, more active lifestyles and improved mental and physical health and wellbeing;</p>
A28 - Leisure Transformation Programme	Property & Projects /City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>Our Strategic Leisure Operator (GLL) has signed up to a Programme to align their policies and operating procedures with those of the council. The latest report in this regard to the ABL board stated, 'At 9th November 2020, Belfast City Council and GLL policies and operational procedures in relation to Equality and Diversity are closely aligned with no significant variances or areas of concern to address.'</p> <p>GLL also provides a regular progress updates to the ABL board on participation by underrepresented target groups in centres managed by GLL in Belfast.</p> <p>Following the opening of Lisnasharragh and Brook leisure centres in December 2019, the new Andersonstown leisure centre was due to open in April 2020. The opening was delayed due to the first Covid-19 lockdown. Apart from a very brief trial period in the Autumn of 2020 the centre remained closed throughout the year.</p> <p>Covid-19 lockdown restrictions led to the closure of all leisure centres in March 2020. Apart from a brief period leading up to Christmas 2020, during which restricted activities were permitted, centres remained closed throughout the 2020-21 financial year.</p> <p>Apart from a three month period between November 2020 and January 2021, the ABL board was 'stood down' in line with Belfast City Council Covid-19 recovery management strategy. Service delivery and contract compliance were maintained and monitored throughout both lockdowns (March – July 2020 and December 2020 – March 2021) by City & Neighbourhood Services.</p>

Priority B: Understanding our communities through information and consultation

Our society is becoming more diverse. Today it is impossible to assume we know the composition of our communities – we have to find that out through gathering information known as data. The prosperity and cohesion of all people and communities can be affected by age, gender, marital status; if you have, or have not, a disability or dependents, religious and/ or racial background, political opinion and different sexual orientations. It is also important to understand the different needs within communities, for examples there are many forms of disability, and like the other Section 75 characteristics, every individual straddles all of the groups in some way, with great differences, as well as similarities between socio-economic groups.

and engagement with our communities will also help us to understand their needs better and we need to use different ways of will involving communities and neighbourhoods. Consultation.

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2021-21
B1 Develop an appropriate system to collect information about communities' needs and aspirations.	Strategic Planning & Policy Manager / Statistician / Equality & Diversity Officer	<p>Last summer we procured a new engagement platform (Engagement HQ) to enable us to deploy a wider range of engagement tools and to support more interactive and ongoing engagement. We launched our site - Your Say Belfast in December 2020. All council consultation and engagement will be managed through this platform. Since its launch we have published a number of consultations including engagement around our response to Covid-19.</p> <p>A Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector panel and network was also established in 2020 to strengthen the involvement and participation of the sector in community planning. We have created a dedicated 'hub' on the Your Say Belfast to support the panel and network to enhance communication and engagement.</p>
B2 Services use relevant city data when developing policies and services	Corporate and Departmental Policy Officers / Equality & Diversity Officer	<p>As Strategic Planning and Policy team members we carry out EQIA's or equality screenings as appropriate to ensure as far as possible we are integrating equality and diversity into our work including in policy development, service planning and delivery. We ensure we are using wherever possible the most up to date statistics we have around the protected groups by working in partnership with advisory/representative bodies and other teams across the organisation. In particular for us over the past 18 months this has included looking at the effects of Covid-19 on certain groups of citizens and also in areas of deprivation. This knowledge is informing our on-going work around the Belfast Agenda refresh, the Inclusive Growth City Charter and our Your Say platform.</p> <p>Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (GBIP)</p> <p>The council adopted the GBIP in January 2020 and it remains a corporate framework document that should inform council decision-making, including in relation to new capital projects, ongoing operations and investment decisions.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2021-21
	Place & Economy	<p>Sundays in the City Programme</p> <p>The consultation on the Sunday's in the City Programme was presented to City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 12 February 2020. At that meeting elected members agreed not to support the designation of the city centre as a holiday resort, in line with the legislation as set out in the The Shops (Sunday Trading &c.) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 but to develop a programme of cultural animation and an associated marketing programme.</p> <p>As per the previous update, the analysis considered frequency and ease of accessing the city centre as well as identifying improvements that could be made to attract more families and others to the city centre on a Sunday. Suggested improvements included:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating play facilities/ open space • more frequent public transport scheduled and • reducing the number of cars in the city. <p>This analysis has highlighted the need for additional programming to encourage everyone to use the city centre including those with dependants. It was used to inform the development of a programme of cultural animation and an associated marketing programme. However, as a result of Covid-19 the Sundays in the City animation programme was not able to progress. There are however partnership-based plans to reanimate the city as part of city centre recovery work, in order to enhance footfall, spend and a repositioning of the city centre as an open, safe, welcoming and playful space for citizens and visitors. Business Improvement Districts are key partners as are Visit Belfast, Department for Communities, Maritime Belfast Trust, and other council departments such as Equality and Diversity Unit and City Regeneration Unit.</p> <p>The findings from the research will be built into future plans to animate the city and the Sundays in the City programme will also feature within 2023 Year of Culture plans. Accessing the city centre is now being considered under the connectivity study and programme being delivered by CRD.</p>
B3 Develop a city dashboard to share city data including equality-related information between community planning partners and	Strategic Planning Manager / Statistician	<p>Work around this action has now been superseded by our work on developing a central hub of city information and insights which we are calling The State of the City. The purpose of this is to provide data and analysis that inform Council policies and strategies, as well as improve Council culture regarding data and analyses.</p> <p>This work is on-going and continues to develop the city's evidence base aligned to the Belfast Agenda and in particular we are focusing on including how this data breaks down by equality groupings. Recent support to the Economic Development team has displayed this when looking at the planning and delivery of our Employment Academies and the Labour market Partnership as it has enabled a greater understanding of the impacts of Covid-19 on certain groups of citizens and areas.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2021-21
publish to citizens		In addition, we have recently carried out a refresh, supported by Queen's University Belfast of our inclusive growth cohort groups to ensure our statistics and subsequent insights are as up to date and accurate as possible. This information is currently being developed into a briefing for Elected Members and then will be shared with other relevant officers to aid decision making across the organisation.
B4 Establish an appropriate mechanism for Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) representation and facilitate participation of CVS in the community planning process	Director of City & Neighbourhoods / City Solicitor/ Strategic Planning & Policy Manager	<p>The Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sectoral Advisory Panel was formally established (post lockdown) in Spring 2020, following an open call selection process managed by NICVA on the Community Planning Partnership's behalf.</p> <p>The 15 representatives, drawn from Belfast's large and diverse third sector reflect a spread of themes, areas of the city, gender and size of (large and small) organisation. Meeting every 2 weeks, the Panel's aims are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the sector's voices are represented as part of the community planning process • develop and improve cross sectoral relationships and partnerships and • promote effective community engagement. <p>Full Terms of Reference were formally approved at the CPP meeting on 27 October 2020. Throughout the year, representatives from the Panel were identified to join the existing community planning structures (delivery boards) ensuring that the third sector were represented (as an equal partners) within the community planning process.</p> <p>Stratagem continued to provide a supporting role to Panel members including secretariat, facilitation and strategic engagement. The Panel held an inaugural conference on 30 November 2020 representing its first strategic intervention into the community planning and associated public policy space. Over 150 people from voluntary, community and social enterprise groups joined the online Zoom conference to share their experience of improving the lives of people and communities across Belfast.</p>
B5 Roll out corporate consultation and engagement plan	Strategic Planning & Policy Manager / Policy Officer	In November 2020, our Elected Members adopted a Corporate Consultation and Engagement Framework which sets out our approach to consultation and engagement. As part of this framework, we have committed to continually improving how we consult and engage. In December we launched a new engagement platform and established consultation and engagement leads within each Department; relevant officers have been trained and a forward consultation pre-forma has been developed to manage and support engagement activity across the council. More information about our framework and platform is available here: https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk/get-involved

Priority C: Services accessible to all

Providing services, whether provided directly or procured/commissioned, remains central to what we do and through the Equality Action Plan this priority will be central to how we do business.

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21
C1 Demonstrated promotion of equality and diversity embedded in departmental business plans	All Chief Officers	<p>As with the corporate plan the formal monitoring of the Departmental plan was suspended during 2020-21, enabling resources to be put to the council's emergency response. However Corporate Programmes managed through the department have specific actions in relation to diversity and inclusion and these are reported at relevant programme Boards and as such as represented as individual actions within the Equality and Diversity Framework. In addition all committee reports take account of equality issues and therefore are included in the decision making process. A selection of further actions are included below:</p> <p>City & Neighbourhood Services</p> <p>The Playground Improvement programme continues to make a significant and positive impact and has greatly improved accessibility by providing more inclusive equipment and safety surfacing.</p> <p>As part of a Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Fund, the council has retro fitted 62 No new inclusive swing seats across the city.</p> <p>The council is currently drafting a new playground equipment supply tender and is inviting suppliers to provide a greater choice of accessible playground equipment which will be used in future/new playground installations.</p> <p>Also see Action A6 (above, 'Develop an Age-Friendly Action Plan 2018-21 through health and safety programme and deliver programmes of work supporting older people and encouraging Active Ageing') for the Department's work in this regard.</p> <p>Belfast Zoo has opened a new Changing Places facility, a specialist accessible toilet with changing facilities, providing people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, their carers, assistants and families the confidence to enjoy a day out at Belfast Zoo. The accessible facility is designed with enough space and equipment for people who are not able to use the toilet independently. Located in the zoo's Visitor Centre, the space offers a height-adjustable adult-sized changing bench, a ceiling mounted hoist, a centrally placed toilet with space either side, non-slip floor, privacy screen, adjustable washbasin and emergency alarm.</p> <p>The zoo has also upgraded its accessible car parking bays to provide direct low-level access to the zoo's Visitor Centre. Further, visitors to the zoo can avail of a range of accessible provisions at Belfast Zoo such as a wheelchair-friendly</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>guided tour of the zoo (booking essential), free entry for carers, free wheelchair hire, free audio tour and fast track access for visitors with sensory requirements.</p> <p>Finance & Resources</p> <p>‘Putting you first. Transforming Customer Experience’</p> <p>The customer focus vision is the primary document to inform and guide all aspects of the customer focus programme until 2023.</p> <p>It continues to promote positive images of disabled people and is available to all sections of the community in a choice of formats.</p> <p>The vision sets out our commitment of ensuring all our customers, <u>whatever their needs</u>, have an excellent customer experience, across all channels, when they deal with us. We know that while some residents prefer traditional ways of contacting us, an increasing number of our customers would use digital self-serve facilities if they were improved and available, or are willing to use digital channels if supported. We will support customers who want to get online.</p> <p>Customer Focus Vision, Equality Screening Consultation</p> <p>The customer focus programme equality screening was completed in February 2020. It was screened out with minor impacts. Outcomes are being monitored and future screenings will be carried out if required.</p> <p>Customer Function Detailed Design Plan</p> <p>Significant progress has been made to date at IOC stage to improve accessibility for all customers and enable a more proactive approach to meeting both our equality goals and our disability duties. This includes the launch in April 2021 of a new multi-channel customer contact Hub for all council customers and stakeholders accessing our services. Operating across the board the Hub is now the main point of contact for all council services providing <u>initially</u>, a ‘wide and thin’ contact service for the majority of operational services. And, with more in-depth customer contact and service request management for cleansing, waste. A walk-in Hub in the Cecil Ward Building was approved earlier this year. Designed to meet customer needs it is currently being fitted out.</p> <p>Also, council put significant investment into a new website that is easier to use with improved accessibility. The principles of the redesign centred on accessibility, Disabled users were involved in the User Experience stage of the project. Launched in July 2020, the website has important enhancements to improve navigation, while providing support for customers via the Hub who aspire to use digital channels but might need assistance in getting online. It is automatically scanned for accessibility using a tool called Silktide. The current score is rated ‘Excellent’. The council</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>has also made a commitment to an annual independent manual check of the site, with testing carried out by users with a range of disabilities. This provides an improvement roadmap.</p> <p>Service Design Journey Mapping</p> <p>There is now in place an initial programme of service design journey mapping to facilitate customer led service improvements and the future onboarding of council services to the Hub. This programme builds on the inclusive ethos of customer journey mapping and customer segmentation previously undertaken by Fathom Research. This work is in conjunction with the Continuous Improvement team responsible for detailed customer journey mapping. For example, mapping is underway for missed bins to inform the redesign of cleansing services. To date, this work was undertaken in conjunction with the pilot of a missed bins app to bring about improved customer service and identify ownership and resolution of bin collection issues.</p> <p>Customer Service Standards</p> <p>Customer Service standards, protocols and improvement plans were launched across the council in April 2021 for two main channels, telephony and email. Hub staff have been trained in all aspects of customer service including awareness of equality, good relations and disability duties. The council is now a member of the Institute of Customer Service (ICS). The Customer Hub team now includes accredited ICS trainers. 20 Customer facing staff have now been trained in the ICS First Impression course. This Course will be considered for wider Corporate Rollout.</p> <p>Sign Video</p> <p>The contract for sign video has been extended, until 31 October 2021 we are able to offer Irish Sign Language (ISL) in addition to British Sign Language (BSL) Video Relay Service for the first time. The ISL service will be monitored over the next six months of the contract in terms of usage.</p> <p>Channel Management Planning</p> <p>While it is still early days in the development of channel management, channel planning and analysis is already underway to help identify opportunities to bring about improvements to our channels for the benefit of all our customers. This is a significant opportunity for key equality and disabled groups to have improved access to council services and is an important element of the Hub's customer service, working in tandem with other services. Including for example Marketing and Communications who publish and manage the council's website.</p> <p>Central to this initiative was the launch of a new website and the ongoing development and improvement of online services. And, providing support to our customers who wish to use the most appropriate channels to meet their needs at any given point in time.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>We want as many people as possible to be able to use the website. Website accessibility is on the monthly agenda of the Web Governance Panel to ensure we are adhering to The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.</p> <p>We've also made the website text as simple as possible to understand and it is approved by Plain English Campaign on an annual basis.</p> <p>And, recently introduced customer service channel standards actively promotes staff training in the use of Plain English.</p> <p><u>Audit Plan for 2020/21</u></p> <p>The council's Audit Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) have delivered the Audit Plan 20/21 and provided assurance and consulting advice over a number of the key programmes and initiatives which underpin the Equality and Diversity Framework.</p> <p><u>Language Action Plan; Sign Language Action Plan & Ulster Scots Action Plan</u></p> <p>The council has developed a Language Action Plan; Sign Language Action Plan and Ulster-Scots Action Plan in 2021. The aim of which was to present a range of actions and targets enabling the council to provide a greater range of services through languages other than English. Thus increasing equality of opportunity.</p> <p>Throughout 2020-2021, the Equality and Diversity Unit held a number of virtual events as part of this strategy as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burns Week Celebrations (Jan 21) • International Mother Tongue Day (22/2/21) • Seactain na Gaelige (1-17/3/21) • Sign Language Week (13-19/3/21) <p>and will host events for:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ulster Scots Week (Nov 21) • International Day for People with Disabilities (3/12/21) <p>An Accessible Communications Guide was also developed and implemented.</p> <p>Place and Economy</p> <p>The Place and Economy Department is represented on the council's Equality & Diversity Network Strategic and Operational groups with staff identified as equality contact points in each of the divisions to cascade equality information and support the mainstreaming of equality across the Department's work. Staff also participate in corporate 'network' groups that have been established such as Proud.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>Work continues to identify improvements to the Department's approach to managing these issues.</p> <p>The Department contributes to delivering the Belfast Agenda and inclusive growth through its various work streams, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage and support enterprise; • support employability and skills. Geospatial analysis of European Social Fund provision has taken place to support intelligence activity and inform future delivery. This will support targeted activity to supports access. • delivery of the Cultural Strategy which encourages equality and recognises the value of diversity in our communities and celebrates cultural expression, with an important focus on neighbourhood co-design, funding and development of projects at grassroots level. The Strategy and evolving ten year Tourism Plan references local-led tourism projects – funding for 'City Connections' for Eastside Partnership and Failte Feirste Thiar continues. Local tourism development and repositioning the city will be delivered as part of our new ten-year Tourism Plan which was created during 2020. <p>maximising the inclusive regeneration and development of the city centre to promote an accessible and shared space that is welcoming to all.</p> <p>Employability and Skills (Youth Initiatives)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research commissioned in 2019/2020 identified gaps and barriers (lack of meaningful work experience, inconsistent quality of careers advice and guidance, and disjoints between different statutory stakeholders) that prevent disadvantaged young people accessing guidance and information regarding their education, training and employment choices. To date, engagement with Senior Educational Welfare Officers continues to develop and inform future delivery in supporting disadvantaged young people at greatest need. <p>The Skills and Employability team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered digital literacy and literacy and attainment to support disadvantaged young people's education via place-based interventions. This was in response to local needs across city and supported those most adversely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic; • Delivered a Pre-Apprenticeship Programme with support from the Department for Education (DfE) Challenge Fund. This supported young people at greatest need (highly vulnerable) to remained engaged throughout Covid-19 pandemic; and • Began to develop a new plan of work to support young people to form and develop career pathways. This includes exploring elements that can support the council's Gender Action Plan. <p>The Skills and Employability team worked with city partners to shape programme delivery by:</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with the Department for Communities to identify opportunities to support young people accessing the JobStart programme; Providing input on research that further investigates educational under achievement to the Expert Panel at the Department of Education (DfE); and <p>Continuing to engage with DfE, with the intention of undertaking a data study to support intelligence gathering around place-based and needs-based interventions that will benefit young people.</p> <p>The annual events programme, delivered through the City Events Team, has been adapted due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A Christmas animation programme was delivered in November/December 2020 and plans are in place to deliver a Maritime event in September and a Christmas animation programme in November/December 2021. All of these events are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> diverse, varied and free to access; profile groups from across the city from a range of cultural, ethnic and mix-ability organisations and are designed to be intergenerational, non-religious and to comply with Disability Discrimination Action (DDA) guidance and created so patrons were attracted to safe and welcoming shared spaces. <p>An Equality Screening template is completed for each annual programme of events and an inclusive events plan is completed providing practical considerations for each specific event.</p> <p>City Centre Connectivity Study</p> <p>The City Centre Connectivity Study, A Bolder Vision for Belfast Phase 1 was ratified by council in March 2020 and subsequently approved by the Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Ministers. The Vision is ambitious and transformational and involves a fundamental rethink of how streets and places are used to make them attractive, inclusive, accessible, healthy, and vibrant places.</p> <p>Phases 2 and 3 of the Study will roll out over the next 12 months. Initial work is underway for Phase 2 which will take place between May-September 2021 and will create the documentation for the public consultation in Phase 3. Key outputs in Phase 2 consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder Engagement and Public Awareness Communications Plan

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario planning and development of interventions, including the development of a multi-criteria assessment framework to assess the scenarios and the initial identification of short, medium and long term interventions for our streets and places • Draft Monitoring Strategy and Strategic Environmental Assessment • Draft Strategy for public consultation <p>The scenario planning will look at provision for access and service requirements, for public transportation, improved connections to communities, and developing a more sustainable streetscape for pedestrians, cycles, residents and visitors while addressing issues related to the dominance of road space.</p> <p>In advance of the public consultation, there will be focused co-design sessions consisting of a Visioning workshop and thematic workshops with cross-sector stakeholders including council Members between mid-June to mid-July to shape the scenarios and interventions. The purpose of these initial sessions is to shape the draft Strategy document prior to the public consultation in the autumn. This early engagement may take a hybrid approach and take place online via an interactive platform, such as Mural or via webinars and Virtual Rooms. Subject to Covid-19 guidelines, there may also be the opportunity to hold face-to-face sessions that are pre-booked and will consist of a blend of virtual information and in-person interaction.</p> <p>A Stakeholder Engagement and Public Awareness Communication Plan is being developed and will be supported by both the Jacobs team and Belfast City Council, Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure Corporate Communications. Plans are underway for a shared launch of the Study that will take place in the coming weeks and will highlight the cooperative approach among Belfast City Council, Department for Infrastructure and Department for Communities in setting out the need and the ambition for change, as well as setting out a timeline, including when the public consultation period will begin.</p> <p>This work will link in with key council strategies including the Resilience Strategy, the Cultural Strategy and the Clean, Green, Inclusive and Safe Programme as well as major capital programmes including the Belfast Streets Ahead, Belfast Rapid Transport Phase 2, and the Junctions Improvements work strands to ensure an holistic approach to addressing our issues through adequate infrastructure planning and provision. It will also consider major development planned for the city centre, as well as the criticality of connections with communities.</p> <p>Phase 3 is scheduled to take place between September 2021-May 2022 and the key activity is the 12-week public consultation programme which is envisaged to take place between September-December 2021.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21												
C2 Support departments in carrying out equality screenings of emerging policies	City Solicitor / Equality & Diversity Officer	Sign Language Users Forum The Forum continued to meet virtually on:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">01 January 202003 June 2021 Screenings completed during 2021/21 are listed below:												
		<table><tr><th>Title of Screening</th><th>Screening Decision</th></tr><tr><td>Covid-19 Household Waste & Recycling Centre Recovery Plan</td><td>Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)</td></tr><tr><td>Covid-19 Recovery Micro Funding</td><td>Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)</td></tr><tr><td>Covid-19 Community Support Fund</td><td>Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)</td></tr><tr><td>Springfield Dam Park Project</td><td>Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)</td></tr><tr><td>Introducing a Scheme for the Licensing of Pavement Cafes</td><td>Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)</td></tr></table>	Title of Screening	Screening Decision	Covid-19 Household Waste & Recycling Centre Recovery Plan	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)	Covid-19 Recovery Micro Funding	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)	Covid-19 Community Support Fund	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)	Springfield Dam Park Project	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)	Introducing a Scheme for the Licensing of Pavement Cafes	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
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Introducing a Scheme for the Licensing of Pavement Cafes	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)													

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21	
		Development Brief - Inner North West – Northern Cluster Sites	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Good Relations Strategy	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		Peace IV Connecting Open Space Project	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		Report It App	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		Strategic Sites Assessment	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Response to Covid-19 Pandemic	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		Department for Communities Covid-19 Business Revitalisation Fund – Business Grants	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Luminous City – A Lighting Strategy for Belfast	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21
C3 Annual reporting to the Equality Commission	City Solicitor / Equality & Diversity Officer	Co-ordination and feedback from the Equality & Diversity Network (EDN) operational tier has contributed significantly to the annual reporting process.
C4 Advice and guidance for services to promote participation and inclusion for underrepresented groups	City Solicitor / Equality & Diversity Officer / departments Place & Economy	<p>Themes identified in the advice and guidance sought included interdependencies between equality and good relations outcomes and monitoring. Updated guidance on monitoring from Equality Commission Northern Ireland (ECNI) would be welcomed.</p> <p>Employability & Skills – Employment Academies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All individuals selected to begin any academy are guaranteed an interview on completion of training. All reasonable adjustments are put in place in partnership with employers to ensure that participants, including those with a learning disability are not disadvantaged. • Council seeks opportunities to work closer with disability organisations to further strengthen and provide better understanding of any gaps in provision of support available. <p>To address participant barriers, the council has previously offered a translation service to participants whose first language was not English, provided headphones to participants that were hard of hearing in training session and ensured that additional time was added into the theory test to assist participants with dyslexia</p> <p>Future City Centre Programme</p> <p>The Future City Centre (FCC) Programme was initially developed around the key findings and recommendations outlined in the Pragma Consulting retail analysis report. However, given the significant challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and taking on board the views of a number of stakeholders, as well as recommendations from elsewhere (inc. the Institute of Place Management, High Street Task Force in England etc.) the FCC Programme has been recast to help address the issues impacting on the city centre.</p> <p>The FCC Programme is linked to the longer-term ambitions of the Belfast Agenda and Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy but is also integral to the delivery of the council's Recovery Programme. It is charting a way forward for diversification of uses, enhanced connectivity, investment and inclusive economic and cultural growth but it is recognised that it needs to remain agile to deal with the ever-changing challenges of the city centre. The FCC programme currently has six cross cutting pillars aimed at revitalising the city centre and creating a vibrant shared city centre where people will want to live, work and invest, but also enhancing connectivity with surrounding communities.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>Regeneration and Connectivity This priority is around creating the physical built environment from a place making perspective to help bring about vibrancy, diversification of use including increased city centre living, enhanced connectivity and sustainability, supporting innovation and jobs to sustain economic recovery and support an inclusive, accessible and connected city centre.</p> <p>Business and Investments This priority workstream is around supporting and sustaining existing and new businesses and attracting new investment. Integral to this is how we will work with businesses outside the city centre to support business recovery in a drive to enhance their future resilience and sustainability.</p> <p>City Centre Vibrancy This priority workstream is around encouraging vitality, vibrancy and increasing city centre footfall; and maximising our cultural and tourism offering. A number of strands of work are currently under development. These include examining the opportunities for culture and creativity to play an important role across the overall Future City Centre Programme and to fully integrate into recovery plans. This includes areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative approaches to addressing current short-term vacancies and the role of culture and leisure in the longer-term future uses within the city centre. • Animation and city dressing projects to improve the look and feel of the city centre to support a more welcoming and vibrant place. • Importance of shared cultural events to attract additional footfall and enhance the year-round offer. This will include programming in public and outdoor spaces. • Seasonal programmes of activity to enhance the offer within the city centre to create more experience driven opportunities aligned to future marketing and communications campaigns. <p>Digital Innovation This priority workstream is around maximising and deploying digital technology and innovation solutions to position the city as a key location for innovation and support indigenous and new businesses to thrive and grow.</p> <p>Position the City to Compete</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>This priority workstream is around building on our reputation as a unique destination for investment, tourism and development. Examples: Renewed Ambition – public private partnership Vacancy interventions</p> <p>Clean, Green & Safe (Multi-Agency) This priority work stream is around enhancing the city centre experience through a clean, accessible, safe and pleasant environment. City and Neighbourhood Services Department are currently undertaking a Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Study and Action Plan for a Belfast City Centre Clean, Green, Inclusive and Safe Initiative. The consultant appointed has been tasked to review the strategic and policy context, and examine research / statistics in terms of how Belfast is performing against key Clean, Green Inclusive and Safe indicators, and to benchmark best practice from elsewhere. The next steps include conducting an online survey that will offer the opportunity to feedback on their ideas and priorities to help enhance the city centre, with a framework developed to engage with a range of key stakeholders. It is intended that this work will inform the development of an action plan that will be embedded within an overall approach to the re-opening and future of the city centre and the longer-term priorities within the overall FCC programme.</p> <p>The Future City Centre Programme is a high-level regeneration plan. Projects taken forward within the plan will be screened in their own right by the lead delivery division. Where appropriate, emerging work strands will be individually screened for Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment.</p> <p>City Lighting Strategy – A Luminous City Luminous City – A Lighting Strategy for Belfast has been developed in conjunction with city stakeholders. The strategy seeks to explore new and innovative approaches to placemaking and regeneration within the city centre, informed by objectives including enhancing connectivity and permeability and encouraging more families and young people to use the city centre. The strategy is a project which sits within the FCC programme. Whilst sitting within the Regeneration and Connectivity priority workstream the development of a lighting strategy is also identified as a priority, one that can make a significant contribution across all other physical (and many non-physical) workstreams within the FCC programme.</p> <p>Park Hood were commissioned to assist council with the preparation of the strategy and action plan. Across a range of key stakeholders there is a renewed focus on developing an accessible, well connected and sustainable city which supports our social and economic ambitions, celebrating our built environment and heritage as well as improving connections to communities by reducing the severance of harsh infrastructure. The strategy aims to support and enable</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>this ambition by setting out the key considerations that should inform approaches to lighting, and by providing clear guidance for streetscapes, buildings, and points of interest (e.g. bridges, entries, architectural features).</p> <p>Accessibility, safety and quality were key considerations which informed the approach, recommendations and design guidance as set out in the strategy.</p> <p>The development of the strategy was informed by an audit of existing infrastructure, analysis of current delivery approaches, and review of international best practice. A robust engagement and consultation programme was undertaken with a range of public, private, third sector and statutory city stakeholders including Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee. Additional engagement was carried out in relation to city re-opening and recovery. The feedback gathered from a wide range of groups impacted both in terms of 'end users' and delivery agents was used to shape the strategy. Presentations were also made to Belfast City Council's Disability Advisory Panel, The Equality Consultative Forum and Belfast City Council's Seniors and Age Friendly group.</p> <p>The strategy went out for Public consultation via council's online engagement platform Citizen Space for a 6 week period over October and November 2020. Detailed engagement was undertaken with key Section 75 groups through council's Equality and Diversity Team.</p> <p>In terms of delivery, lighting interventions are embedded across a range of projects currently being developed, with the strategy document informing and guiding these. For example, projects such as the 5C's public realm, Entries Phase 1 and Cathedral Gardens all have significant lighting elements which have been developed in line with the recommendations in the strategy document. A number of pilot projects were agreed in the strategy's methodology which assisted with informing final recommendations. Projects are also emerging through the Department for Communities funded Revitalisation Programme which incorporate lighting features at Castle Place, Adelaide Street, Brunswick Street, James Street South, Union Street and Exchange Place. Entries Phase 2 will also incorporate innovative approaches to lighting, for which designs are in development. Work is also ongoing to bring forward stand-alone lighting projects in 2021-22 and beyond.</p> <p>A draft equality screening exercise and a draft rural needs assessment exercise were undertaken during the preliminary engagement process. Documents were shared on Citizen Space to help elicit views from respondents. During the public consultation process, officers engaged with key council touchstone equality groups, namely the Disability Advisory Panel, the Equality Consultative Forum and the Seniors Forum.</p> <p>Strategic Site Assessments (SSAs)</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<p>The SSAs has assessed the development and regeneration potential of the council's surface car parks and adjacent public sector land holdings in the city centre. Specialist advice was procured to identify the regeneration opportunities arising from the rationalisation of council car parks and adjacent public sector land, and highlighted the contribution that public sector assets within the city centre could make to delivering on the objectives of the Belfast Agenda, e.g. mixed-use development, housing, and green space.</p> <p>It is recognised that there is a housing need within the city, together with an aspiration to grow the population of the city by 66,000 and increase city centre living to meet the demands from all sectors. Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) refers to the aim of encouraging the development of a self-sustaining quality residential market environment providing a mixture of tenures that meets the range of needs of a growing city centre population. The use of public sector lands presents an opportunity therefore to help address these issues and potentially provide the mechanism to bring forward the right mix of housing stock that meets the various housing demands and results in a successful functioning city centre that connects into the adjoining communities. In bringing forward proposals for potential development, it will be important to ensure this is done in the context of stitching in the adjoining communities and considering those sites that have the most potential to do so.</p> <p>Consultation and engagement was carried out as part of the INW Masterplan and furthermore with elected members in 2019 and 2020 through workshops, site visits and party briefings.</p> <p>Feedback from Members as detailed below has been built into future phases of the SSAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for engagement with neighbouring communities • Ensuring inclusive, shared development • Agreement that the city centre offers significant regeneration potential and the opportunity to maximise the regeneration potential through working collaboratively with other landowners • Potential to provide social enterprise / community infrastructure • Support the need to unlocking city centre living including working with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, utilising public sector lands for mixed tenure opportunities, exploring potential public sector funding mechanisms and engaging with investors and developers • Support for a comprehensive place-making approach and the potential opportunities to maximise this through strategic land assembly • Desire for council to retain control over development through title retention, detailed development briefs or joint ventures and to ensure social and economic benefits are maximised. <p>As the programme progresses and agreement is reached on delivery models for identified cluster sites further consultation and engagement will be carried out.</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21
C5 Facilitated testing of website by people with different abilities, including online forms and transactions	Corporate Communications Manager	<p>We employed a user experience company to assist with user testing with a range of people of different abilities during the development stage of www.belfastcity.gov.uk</p> <p>We followed this up with post go-live testing (which was done through remote video due to Covid restrictions).</p> <p>In March 2021, we commissioned manual testing carried out by people with a range of disabilities and using different devices. This was carried out in March 2021 by a company called Digital Accessibility Centre. We received a report of recommendations and implemented these.</p>
C6 Benchmarking of website by an external organisation	Corporate Communications Manager	<p>The websites are benchmarked in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily automated testing using a platform called Silktide. This measures the quality and accessibility of our sites and will highlight areas for us focus on to improve accessibility. • Annual manual testing carried out by people with a range of disabilities and using different devices. This was carried out in March 2021 by a company called Digital Accessibility Centre. We received a report of recommendations and implemented these. • Annually we are monitored by Plain English Campaign to ensure we are communicating clearly to our audiences. We have maintained our Crystal Mark. <p>Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO) part of the Cabinet Office has carried out an audit of our site and highlighted 27 issues to be dealt with within a 12 week period.</p>
C7 Scoping development of a range of inclusive communication channels to meet different needs	Corporate Communications Manager	<p>.</p> <p>Signvideo has been implemented on the contact page of Belfast City Council website. Signvideo is a Video Relay Services and Video Remote Interpreting provider who provides British Sign Language (BSL) video interpreting services. British, Irish and International sign language video clips for Belfast City Hall Exhibition and Tropical Ravine placed on Youtube. Browsealoud is implemented on Belfast City Council website, Belfast Zoo website, Public-I website, Minutes3 website and online forms. This software adds speech, reading, and translation to our websites to facilitate access and participation for people with Dyslexia, Low Literacy, English as a second language, and those with mild visual impairments.</p> <p>The new website aims to conform to the latest accessibility requirements under The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations: (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/852/contents/made)</p>

Action	Responsibility	Update on delivery 2020-21

Priority D: Skilled and diverse workforce

The ability to deliver responsive services to increasingly diverse communities will depend in a large part on the composition, skills, understanding and commitment of a workforce in how we build their capacity and understanding of the need to promote equality and diversity. Through the development of a workforce which is broadly representative of the communities it serves the council will deliver better outcomes for all.

Action	Timescale	Update on delivery 2020-21
D1 Learning and development programme developed and delivered	Ongoing	<p>Restrictions have prevented normal face to face training and technical issues with the e-learning platform prevented online delivery of our general equality and diversity training. These technical issues are now being addressed</p> <p>Staff took the opportunity to review and update the training content e.g. additional information on autism; Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+) staff network; good relations</p> <p>We delivered the following training as part of our Health and Wellbeing Strategy: Mental Health First Aid- 19 participants Stress Awareness for Managers- 51 participants Webinars on various disability and health and wellbeing topics</p> <p>As part of Mental Health Awareness Week, a number of articles were shared on the staff intranet to help encourage staff to look after their mental health e.g. mindfulness walk podcasts; meditation and mindfulness session, personal story on recovery from depression; signposting to support services</p> <p>Continued signposting/ awareness raising relating to mental health during the Covid-19 crisis, via management updates and the health and wellbeing section on staff intranet</p> <p>We have engaged with a wide variety of partner organisations to avail of their virtual programmes e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stonewall delivered four awareness raising sessions to staff<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Steps to Trans Inclusion➢ Introduction to Allyship➢ First Steps to Bi Inclusion➢ First Steps to LGBT Inclusion <p>A Championing LGBT Inclusion awareness session was delivered to Corporate Management Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• WRDA delivered a number of awareness raising sessions relating to sexual harassment and consent;• Mindfulness walk podcasts shared as part of Mental Health Awareness week

Action	Timescale	Update on delivery 2020-21
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab culture awareness session delivered <p>Place & Economy Department staff continue to attend equality and diversity training, so that we can meet the needs of those who tend to be under-represented. In addition, to assist in service delivery staff have also attended specific sessions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Employability & Skills team attend all Migrant Forum meetings to better understand the needs of black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) people and ensure our employability programmes are accessible. We have maintained strong relationships through bespoke workshops across the year with a range of disability specialist organisations (Disability Action, Orchardville, AMH, Action on Hearing Loss, NOW Group, USEL etc. through NIUSE as the umbrella body) to ensure that employment academies and other interventions are accessible to people with disabilities. This includes providing match-funding to two disability projects within the city: Specialisterne and USEL. <p>Planning and delivery of a pilot Transport Upskilling Academy for Belfast City Council staff in City & Neighbourhood Services to be provided with the opportunity to gain a Category C (lorry) licence that will enable them to have the qualification and skills needed to access a better job.</p> <p>Other training course attended by staff include:</p> <p>LGBT+ Training First Steps to Bi Inclusion First Steps to LGBT Inclusion First Steps to Trans Inclusion Introduction to Allyship Mental Health Awareness for Managers Mental Health First Aid Stonewall Inclusive Leadership NI Housing Conference (would have equality and diversity aspects) NI Planning Conference (would have equality and diversity aspects) NI Infrastructure Conference (would have equality and diversity aspects)</p>

Action	Timescale	Update on delivery 2020-21
D2 Mechanisms to monitor the diversity of the workforce and applicants are further developed	2017-18	<p>Profile of workforce is broadly representative of the community it serves</p> <p>The fair employment monitoring form has been amended to capture sexual orientation and gender identity data.</p> <p>The IT system has the functionality to capture this data, as well as all other data to enable the council to fulfil its statutory monitoring and reporting obligations</p> <p>The planned voluntary monitoring survey, which was due to be carried out in 2020, was delayed due to Covid-19</p> <p>A significant number of staff do not have access to PC's. These employees would be required to complete a paper-based survey which was not viable due to the restrictions/ furloughing of staff etc.</p>
D3 Implementation of Organisational Development Strategy	2017-21	The council's diversity action plans are now delivered under the umbrella of the Equality and Diversity Framework and the People Strategy, which is currently under development. (See A8, A9, A10) and the Disability Strategy (encompassing Disability Discrimination Act & Disability Discrimination Order measures).
D4 – Achieving through our People		The Achieving Through People Framework will be embedded through the People Strategy. Staff consultation and the finalisation of the People Strategy was delayed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. This will recommence post pandemic.

Glossary

EDO – Equality and Diversity Officer

HR/OD – Human Resources and Organisational Development

GRU – Good Relations Unit