



<b>Subject:</b>	Community Planning update: Belfast Agenda Review, City Development & Jobs, Skills and Education Board Boards
<b>Date:</b>	06 April 2022
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<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on the progress of the Belfast Agenda Review, including the action planning phase, with a specific focus on the work being taken forward by the City Development and Jobs, Skills and Education delivery Boards.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Note that a report was presented to the March SP&amp;R Committee outlining the progress of the development of the refreshed Belfast Agenda Strategy document and supporting four-year Delivery Action Plans.</li> <li>ii. Note the progress for the City Development and Jobs, Skills and Education Boards as set out in this report.</li> <li>iii. Consider and provide comments on the emerging strategic intents and measures of success (stretch goals) as set out in slides 12-22 in Appendix 1.</li> <li>iv. Note the proposed next steps and timeline as set out in slide 33 in Appendix 1.</li> <li>v. Note the plans for continued elected member engagement, detailed in section 3.5.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p>Members will be aware of the <i>Belfast Agenda: Continuing the Conversation</i> engagement that commenced in June 2021 to inform the refreshed Belfast Agenda for the period 2022-26. During this engagement there was broad agreement that the existing long-term vision and outcomes of the Belfast Agenda remain relevant, and the proposed priorities of focus were the things that stakeholders and communities believed community planning could help address over the next 4-year period. As a result of feedback received some minor changes have been made to the framing of priority areas such as changing ‘Economic Recovery’ to ‘Sustainable &amp; Inclusive Economic Growth’ and the creation of a specific priority for City Development. A summary of the current Belfast Agenda priority framework is attached at Appendix 1</p>
3.2	<p><b><u>Bringing focus and commitment to delivery</u></b></p> <p>Members will recall that in order to ensure that the vision and ambitions set out within the Belfast Agenda translates into delivery, four cross-sectoral Boards have been formed (City Development   Jobs, Skills and Education   Living Here   Resilience and Sustainability) under the auspices of the Community Planning Partnership.</p>
3.3	<p>Building on the recommendations and consensus reached through Phase 1, the Community Planning Partnership, Delivery Boards and Council have committed to co-design specific and measurable action plans which underpin the priority areas of focus. This has been the focus of each of the respective delivery boards, who have designated small groups of core partners to develop the co-design approach for each priority area. This has involved analysing the range of outputs from the phase 1 engagement process; assessing relevant strategies, plans and local intelligence; feedback from community focus groups &amp; surveys; feedback from Delivery Board workshops and legacy actions contained within previous action plans.</p>

3.4	<p>Based on this initial analysis, partners prepared a strategic framework to help bring focus to the emerging co-designed action plans consisting of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are we trying to achieve over the next 4 years (<b>strategic intent</b>)</li> <li>2. How will we measure success (<b>stretch goals</b>); and</li> <li>3. How will we realise such success (<b>SMART Action Plan(s)</b>).</li> </ol> <p>Sections 3.3 &amp; 3.4 outlines how a structured and informed approach is being taken forward with respect to the City Development Board &amp; Jobs, Skills &amp; Education Board priority areas, ambitions, measures of success and importantly the focus for collaborative action.</p>
3.5	<p><b>City Development Update</b></p> <p>Members will recall that in January 2022, an update was presented on the City Development Board workshop which took place in November 2021. Since the workshop, significant work has been undertaken with partners to co-design action plans. Some specific points we would highlight for Members include:</p>
3.6	<p><b><u>Housing-Led Regeneration</u></b></p> <p>A Housing-Led Regeneration Group, chaired by the NIHE Chief Executive with representation from BCC, DfC, and LPS has been established to drive forward collaborative action through community planning. The following draft strategic intents have been defined:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Increase housing supply across all tenures</b> in the Belfast City Council area (including a strategic sites assessment exercise of all public sector assets).</li> <li>2. <b>Increase the city centre residential population</b></li> <li>3. <b>Address dereliction</b> in local areas</li> <li>4. Adopt a <b>placeshaping approach</b> to local development</li> <li>5. Identify housing stock which requires <b>retrofit</b> to <b>reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency</b></li> </ol>
3.7	<p><b><u>Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel</u></b></p> <p>Work is underway with partners from DfI, Translink, Sustrans, Council and community partners to establish the right mechanism to deliver on this priority. The following draft strategic intents have been defined:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Reduce private car use</b> to improve individual, community, environmental and economic well-being</li> </ol>

2. Enable connections to and from the city centre, **enhancing permeability with neighbourhoods by improving active travel and sustainable travel routes across Belfast**

3.8 **City Regeneration and Investment**

Work is underway with partners from SIB, Council, the private sector and community representatives to establish the right mechanism to deliver on the City Regeneration and Investment priority with recognition that this priority must have citywide impact. To date, the following draft strategic intents have been defined:

1. Working collaboratively to **maximise** social, environmental and economic **benefits of citywide regeneration schemes**
2. Working collaboratively to **unlock barriers** to driving forward major regeneration schemes
3. Working in partnership to **address dereliction and maximise placemaking and regeneration opportunities** across the city and neighbourhoods
4. To **create a vibrant, thriving city centre** which positions the city to compete
5. Developing opportunities in line with strengths to **position the city to compete globally**

3.9 **Future City Centre Programme**

Members will also recall that in January 2022 it was agreed that a City Centre Delivery Group would be established to focus on the city centre. Particular areas of focus include regeneration, city centre living, connectivity, investment, vibrancy, cultural and tourism offering and digital innovation. On-going work is currently being undertaken via City & Neighbourhoods Services in relation to a Clean Green, Safe and Inclusive Action Plan based on a multi-agency approach. Discussions are underway with various partners to bring focus to the Future City Centre priority including accelerating some areas of work which have been identified in A Bolder Vision. To date, the following draft strategic intents have been identified:

1. **Drive the physical, cultural and tourism regeneration** of the city centre
2. Create a thriving city core through **diversifying and enhancing the city centre offer**
3. To build the foundations and establish Belfast as a **globally significant destination for innovation**
4. Facilitate a **clean, green, safe and inclusive city centre**

	<p>We will continue to work with partners and communities, including a recent City Development Board meeting held on 11 March 2022, to co-design delivery plans over the forthcoming weeks and months. This represents an ongoing and complex process, which requires participation and involvement across public and private sectors and communities at multiple levels, which has resulted in some priorities being more developed than others. It was also agreed at the recent meeting of the Board that there be VCSE / community representation on emerging sub structures. The emerging frameworks for each of the priorities are attached as part of the presentation attached at Appendix 1 (slides 12 to 22) which had been discussed with the All-Party Working group on Community Planning when it met on 23 February 2022. The strategic intents and stretch goals have subsequently been further developed, particularly the City Development elements following the Board meeting on Friday 11 March. This reflects the dynamic nature of the co-design process which remains a <b>work in progress</b>.</p>
<p>3.10</p> <p>3.11</p> <p>3.12</p> <p>3.13</p>	<p><b>Jobs, Skills and Education Update</b></p> <p>The Jobs, Skills &amp; Education Board met on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and agreed on the following strategic framework for its three priority areas of focus, to be considered further at the next meeting of the Community Planning Partnership and through wider consultation and engagement.</p> <p><b><u>Educational Inequalities</u></b></p> <p>Community planning partners have committed to ensuring that everyone in Belfast fulfils their potential, which means that upon leaving school young people will be supported into a positive destination of their choosing where they enjoy active participation in all areas of life. Educational attainment has a strong impact on individual wellbeing and the opportunities that people have to fulfil their potential. A specific task group comprised of community planning partners has been established to drive activity in this area, aligned with the Department of Education’s A Fair Start Report &amp; Action Plan.</p> <p><b>Strategic Intent:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Every child and young person is supported in their wellbeing and learning so that they develop the skills and capabilities to fulfil their potential and progress to a positive destination.</li> </ol> <p><b>Targets to be achieved by 2026:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All schools, family and community place-based partnerships will devise and implement a whole community approach to the learning and development of children and young people; this will be evidenced in School Development Plans, relevant action plans and community partnership plans;</li> </ul>

- Increase the percentage of school leavers progressing into positive destinations from 93% to 96%;
- Support children in their early years in disadvantaged areas in a seamless journey from antenatal, to pre-school, school and beyond;
- Reduce the proportion of pupils with less than 85% attendance from 12% to 8%.

3.14

### **Employability & Skills**

Having a good job is important to people in Belfast and is key to ensuring we deliver inclusive growth for all our residents. The labour market in Belfast is complex and changing and there are many challenges regarding the skill levels of the city's resident. In order to make Belfast a city where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy and fulfils their potential, it is imperative that we work collectively to increase skills attainment while also matching people and skills to opportunities. Within this context we have worked with the Department for Communities and community planning partners to establish a labour market partnership that will seek to achieve the following:

3.15

### **Strategic Intent:**

1. **Quickly back to work** – mitigate the economic impact of Covid-19 on the labour market by supporting those who have been or are at-risk of being made unemployed.
2. **Increase opportunities** – empower those furthest from the labour market to succeed and progress in employment.
3. **No-one left behind** – target disadvantaged groups through the delivery of an integrated, comprehensive, inclusive, holistic and local employability approach.
4. **Catching-up** – support access to careers paths, reskilling and upskilling for those who are out of work and those on low incomes.

3.16

### **Targets to be achieved by 2026:**

- Decrease the proportion of residents who are unemployed, yet actively seeking employment, to 1.5%.
- Cut the proportion of working-age population with no qualifications to 12.0%.
- Reduce the working-age economic inactivity rate (excluding students) within the city from a baseline of 23.5% to 18%.
- Increase to the working-age population who have attained Level 4 or above qualifications to 56.0%.

3.17

### **Sustainable & Inclusive Economic Growth:**

A thriving and prosperous economy is the engine of change for our city and the critical contributor to all the outcomes that we wish to achieve. As the region's capital city, its major population centre and the hub for business and employment, Belfast is critical to Northern Ireland's economic future. Therefore, growing an inclusive and sustainable economy is one of our key priorities. Creating more and better jobs that are sustainable, rewarding, provide a career path and are financially rewarding has consistently been the major concern raised by residents and other stakeholders.

As a city, Belfast faces a number of economic challenges which affect our ability to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth, some of these challenges are deep rooted structural issues, which have been further exacerbated through COVID-19. Some of our challenges include lagging productivity, low levels of business start-up, innovation and export and ongoing issues with economic inactivity and high rates of unemployment.

The next iteration of the Belfast Agenda will be informed by an economic strategy which will support sustainable and inclusive growth for the period 2022-30. The strategy will clearly articulate the role of Belfast in the regional economy and will identify a series of key propositions to build on areas of competitive advantage in a rapidly changing global business context while ensuring that structural and environmental challenges are considered in order to drive sustainable and inclusive economic growth. A number of strategic intents, which are subject to further consultation, are outlined below and will inform the strategic intent, targets and actions for this priority area within the Belfast Agenda.

3.18

**Strategic Intents:**

1. **Foster growth of indigenous businesses in Belfast** by improving innovation, scale up, growth and survival rates in sectors aligned with Northern Ireland's vision for a 10x Economy
2. **Create new and better jobs in the city** by driving innovation and increasing value add of business activity
3. **Build and maintain a skills pipeline that addresses the skills gaps of Belfast's current and future businesses**, with clear pathways for employee growth and development into priority sectors
4. **Improve socio-economic inclusion in the city** by providing fair access to well paid jobs
5. **Grow levels of exports and foreign direct investment in Belfast**, supporting businesses to capitalise on Belfast's unique geographical opportunities

3.19	<p><b>6. Establish Belfast as a vibrant place to invest, live, work and play</b> and attract a diverse and skilled workforce for the future</p> <p><b>7. Establish Belfast as a resilient, net-zero, circular economy</b> and deliver business opportunities in green technology such as green hydrogen.</p> <p><b>Targets to be achieved by 2026:</b></p> <p>While targets are still to be agreed through the progression of the economic strategy, some initial thoughts for further consideration include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of new business start-ups and the survival rates of existing businesses</li> <li>• Increase the number of businesses in the city who are exporting and undertaking R&amp;D activity</li> <li>• Decrease the proportion of residents who are unemployed, yet actively seeking employment, to xxx</li> <li>• Achieve an x% increase in our overall Inclusive Growth score (will depend on what framework we decide to go with)</li> <li>• Increase the GVA growth rate for Belfast and the surrounding region</li> <li>• Grow economic participation within priority sectors</li> <li>• Increase productivity of businesses and employees across sectors, focusing on skills required in priority sectors</li> <li>• Maintain improvements in ‘quality of life’ indices to maintain attractiveness of the city for current and future population</li> <li>• Reduce traffic congestion and improve transport links to areas of the city with potential for future growth</li> </ul>
3.20	<p>It is proposed that the timeline for developing the refreshed Belfast Agenda strategy document and underpinning delivery plans includes sufficient time for direct and genuine engagement with partners, communities/ communities of interest and specific sectors including the business and private sector over April and May 2022. In addition, more formal and intensive consultation activities are planned on the strategy document as well as further engagement to co-design the action plans during May and June 2022. Slide 33 in Appendix 1 outlines the proposed next steps and timeline for this process. It is felt that the timeline will allow for greater input and enable valuable buy-in to the emerging plans.</p>
3.21	<p><b><u>Political engagement with elected members</u></b></p> <p>It is intended that regular updates will be brought to future meetings of Committee for consideration and input. The intention would be to bring a further iteration of the draft strategy</p>



	and emerging action plans to Committee in May 2022 for further consideration, input, and refinement.
3.22	Members are asked to consider and provide feedback on the emerging frameworks outlined by 20 April 2022 to <a href="mailto:communityplanning@belfastcity.gov.uk">communityplanning@belfastcity.gov.uk</a> . This feedback will then be reflected in future iterations and can be discussed further with members as the strategy is further refined.
3.23	<b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b>
	Any financial implications arising from this report will be covered from existing budgets. The review process will continue to involve the participation of all community planning partners, who will need to commit their resources to the review process and the agreed action plans.
3.24	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>
	It is recommended that the consultation and engagement activities to review the Belfast Agenda will take account of the draft Audit of Inequalities and include specific sessions with targeted harder to reach groups to ensure that equality implications are considered as part of the review process.
4.0	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	<b>Appendix 1</b> Belfast Agenda Review Overview including emerging Action Planning Frameworks for agreed priorities (updated 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2022)