



THE EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Response to the consultation on the draft Belfast Agenda (community plan) and Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Strategic Level.

April 2017

Executive summary

1. The Equality Commission welcomes Belfast City Council's efforts to mainstream the Section 75 equality and good relations duties into the development of the Belfast Agenda. We also welcome that the Council has conducted an equality impact assessment of the Belfast Agenda at a strategic level, and that it is committed to further equality screening and EQIAs, as necessary, of the programmes and projects which are developed to help achieve the aims and desired outcomes of the Belfast Agenda.
2. The Commission welcomes the level of consultation and engagement that the Council appears to have undertaken to involve stakeholders, Section 75 groups and people in the community generally in the process of developing the Belfast Agenda.
3. We **welcome** the inclusion of equality and good relations as shared values in the Belfast Agenda and the prioritisation of the reduction of inequalities, including those in health and education, in the proposed city priorities. We also welcome the proposed further consideration of equality and good relations in the workstreams and strengthening of data development.
4. We **recommend** that the **draft vision** includes:
 - a high level **commitment** to address key inequalities experienced by the Section 75 equality groups, as well as to promote good relations

- makes it clear that the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations are **cross-cutting themes** within the Strategy and are central to achieving economic growth and prosperity
 - includes a clear **commitment** to ensure compliance with the UK Government's obligations under international human rights conventions, including the UNCRPD.
5. **Workstreams** – Crucially, it is essential that all of these high level commitments are underpinned by the inclusion of robust outcome focused action measures and are capable of being measured through the proposed indicator framework.
 6. **Tracking progress** – We recommend that all relevant Belfast agenda measures are not only tracked in aggregate but also for the impact on individuals from each of the Section 75 grounds.
 7. We note there is no reference to the **UK exit from the EU**. We have recommended that Government ensures, that the promotion of both equality and good relations in Northern Ireland are treated as a priority and core issues in the context of the UK's exit negotiations and final agreement with the EU.
 8. In respect of the **Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)** that the Council has undertaken, the Commission's response to this is contained in the enclosed consultation questionnaire to the policy consultation instead of the online EQIA consultation questionnaire. A summary of this advice is set out in the paragraphs below.
 9. The Commission has met with Council officers to discuss and advise on the further development of the EQIA and has recommended consideration of the following:
 - **Partnerships:** The Commission recommends greater input of statutory partners into the EQIA, particularly relating to gathering evidence, assessment of impacts and establishing Section 75 monitoring mechanisms.
 - **Evidence:** The Commission recommends consideration by the Council of some further evidence and setting the evidence base out by functional area (in addition to by Section 75 group) in order to

assist with prioritisation of addressing inequalities and identifying gaps in data.

- **Mitigation/Alternative policies:** The Commission recommends that the EQIA highlight what changes are/will be made to the Belfast Agenda as a result of undertaking the EQIA.
- **Monitoring:** The Commission recommends that the final EQIA report indicates what Section 75 monitoring mechanisms will be put in place. The Council committed to considering the establishment of a *fifth equality work stream* focusing on Equality Data Development, Analysis and Section 75 Monitoring within the Belfast Agenda.
- **Inter-relationship with other Council Policies** – The Commission highlights the need to ensure alignment of the Belfast Agenda and EQIA, in particular with the *Council's Local Development Plan and EQIA*.
- **Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) and Section 75** – The Commission recommends it is important to ensure the Council's Section 75 obligations are integrated within the OBA approach.



Draft Belfast Agenda (community plan) Consultation Questionnaire

*Please send completed questionnaire to: communityplanning@belfastcity.gov.uk or
Post to : The Community Planning Team, Room 212, City Hall, Belfast, BT1 5GS*

Chapter 1 : About you

1A. What is your name?

Roisin Mallon (Senior Policy Officer) and Patrice Hardy (Equality Manager)

1B. What is your email address?

rmallon@equalityni.org phardy@equalityni.org

1C. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation or group? (compulsory)

☐ Individual

Or

☒ Statutory Organisation

☐ Community or voluntary sector organisation/group

☐ Business or Commercial Organisation

Name of organisation: Equality Commission

1D. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or group, and have held a group workshop/discussion on the Belfast Agenda, how many people have helped to inform your response to the consultation:

Number of participants/contributors:

1E. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation that primarily represents the interests of a particular equality or minority group please tell us which category or categories you represent.

☒ BME

☒ Children and young people

☒ People with disabilities

☐ Ex-offenders

☒ Faith group

☒ Irish traveller

☒ LGBT

☒ Men's group

☒ Older people

☒ People with dependents / caring responsibilities

☒ Women's group

☐ Other (please specify):

Chapter 2: Vision, Outcomes and Ambitions to 2035, and 4 year priorities

We previously asked people in Belfast what they want life in Belfast to be like in the future, as well as ideas for priorities that we should focus on in the next four years.

This part of the consultation asks for your views on whether you think we have heard you right and are going in the right direction.

2A. To what extent do you agree with the long term vision for Belfast?

A NEW VISION FOR BELFAST

Belfast will be a city re-imagined. A great place to live for everyone.

It will energise and drive a successful economy where everyone can reach their potential. Beautiful, well connected and culturally vibrant, it will be a city shared and loved by its people and admired around the world. It will be a producer of and magnet for talent, investment, innovation and creativity - a compassionate place where people create value and are valued.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☒ Strongly disagree

If you think this vision can be improved, please tell us your suggested changes:

We welcome that the draft Belfast Agenda makes it clear that it has been influenced by the shared values of equality and good relations.

Aligned to these shared values, we recommend the inclusion of additional text to support and explain the draft vision, that includes the following high level commitments relating to the promotion of equality and good relations.

In particular, we recommend the Belfast Agenda: includes a high level commitment to address key inequalities experienced by the Section 75 equality groups, as well as to promote good relations; makes it clear that the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations are cross-cutting themes within the Belfast Agenda; includes a clear commitment to ensure compliance with the UK Government's obligations under international human rights conventions, including the UNCRPD and with the Sustainable Development Goals, in areas that are relevant to the implementation of the Belfast Agenda.

Crucially, it essential that all of these high level commitments are underpinned by the inclusion of robust outcome focused action measures and are capable of being measured through the proposed indicator framework.

2B(i). To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following long-term outcome for Belfast?

Everyone in Belfast benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy

By 2035, Belfast will have a diverse and growing economy and a bigger and more competitive business base, capable of attracting increased visitors and investment. It will provide high levels of employment, supported by a skilled workforce and the city will create wealth that can be enjoyed by all.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

If you think this outcome can be significantly improved please provide your comments here:

2B(ii). To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following long term outcome for Belfast?

Belfast is a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive city for all

By 2035, Belfast will be a place where everyone will continue to feel welcome and safe and will be treated fairly with equality and respect in a city that values diversity/difference and encourages civic participation.

☐ Strongly agree ☒ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

If you think this outcome can be significantly improved please provide your comments here:

We welcome the reference to 'everyone will be treated fairly with equality and respect' and to a 'city that values diversity/difference and encourages civic participation'.

We recommend that 'shared' is added to this proposed outcome. In particular, '...everyone will continue to feel welcome and safe and will be treated fairly with respect in a shared city...'.

2B(iii). To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following long term outcome for Belfast?

Everyone in Belfast fulfils their potential

By 2035, everyone will be supported and enabled to reach their full potential to succeed and make a positive contribution to city life. Everyone will have access to information, education, training and lifelong learning and can access jobs and opportunities to actively participate in all areas of life.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

If you think this outcome can be significantly improved please provide your comments here:

We recommend the addition of a commitment to 'reduce educational inequalities' in this outcome. We consider that this links with the proposed commitments in Chapter 6 on 'working and learning' which refers to 'addressing educational inequalities'.

We refer BCC to our draft Statement on Key Inequalities in Education (2015) underpinned by independent research commissioned by ECNI (2015).

For further information see www.equalityni.org/KeyInequalities-Education.

2B(iv). To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following long term outcome for Belfast?

Everyone in Belfast experiences good health and wellbeing

By 2035, everyone will live a healthy lifestyle and will experience the best possible physical health and emotional wellbeing. Health inequalities will be reduced and those who suffer from poor health will receive the care and support they need in a compassionate city.

☐ Strongly agree ☒ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

If you think this outcome can be significantly improved please provide your comments here:
We welcome the reference to reducing health inequalities in this draft outcome.

2B(v). To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following long term outcome for Belfast?

Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally friendly city

By 2035 everyone will enjoy attractive, well-serviced, clean neighbourhoods and a thriving city centre equipped with a range of facilities, activities and things to do. It will be a city that will encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport, as well as recycling waste and improving energy efficiency. It will be a city where everyone will be able to enjoy the natural and built beauty of Belfast, linked to its hills, parks, river, lough, fine buildings and public space.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

If you think this outcome can be significantly improved please provide your comments here:
We note that there is no reference in any of the proposed outcomes to a commitment to reducing housing inequalities. We therefore recommend the addition of a commitment to 'reduce housing inequalities' in this outcome.

We refer BCC to our draft Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing (2016) underpinned by independent research commissioned by ECNI (2015).

For further information see www.equalityni.org/KeyInequalities-Housing.

2C. We have proposed four big ambitions for our city to work towards by 2035. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these proposed ambitions?

Our 4 big ambitions for Belfast in 2035

By 2035

- Our city will be home to an additional 70,000 new residents
- Our urban economy supports 50,000 more jobs
- There will be a 50 per cent reduction in the life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods
- Every young person leaving school has a destination that fulfils their potential

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Our city will be home to an additional 70000 new residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our urban economy supports 50,000 new jobs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There will be a 50 per cent reduction in the life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every young person leaving school has a destination that fulfils their potential	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments (Please be clear in any comments which of the above 'Ambitions' you are referring to):

We recommend the inclusion of an additional ambition linked to the promotion of equality and good relations reflecting the proposed outcome 2. Examples include an ambition linked to increased respect across the Section 75 equality groups; increased reconciliation; or increased sharing. Our recommendation is also consistent with the proposed indicators for outcome 2 relating to the promotion of good relations.

2D. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed city priorities for focus over the next four years?

Our proposed city priorities (2017 to 2021)

Growing the economy	Living here
Create employment and opportunity	Improve neighbourhoods
Attract investment into Belfast	Improve the city living experience
Foster business growth in Belfast	Improve community relations
Strengthen business relationships and make it easy to do business	Reduce life inequalities
Maximise the impact of the city region	Enable active, healthy and empowered citizens
Increase tourism spend	Provide fit-for-purpose city services
Reduce economic inequalities	Support and care for people who face multiple challenges
	Support younger and older people
City development	Working and learning
Promote and position the city to compete	Address educational inequalities and increase skills attainment
Develop the city's infrastructure and improve connectivity locally, nationally, and internationally	Address barriers to employment at a structural and personal level
Drive the physical and cultural regeneration of the city centre	Enhance and increase the skill levels of our residents and attract and retain even more

	skilled people
Deliver key strategic physical projects and policies	Match people and skills to opportunities across Belfast
Attract more tourists	Reduce poverty and economic inactivity
Protect and enhance our environment and built heritage	

Priority	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Growing the economy: Creating jobs and investment in the city	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Living Here: Creating a great city and neighbourhood living experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
City Development: Creating the right infrastructure and regenerating our city	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working and Learning: Supporting growth and connecting people to opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments (Please be clear in any comments which of the above Priorities you are referring to):

We ask that BCC considers whether the proposed priority 'improve community relations' might be viewed as referring only to improving relations between the 2 main communities in Northern Ireland. We ask that consideration is given to using the broader term 'improve good relations'.

We note that the text explaining these priorities (p25) does refer to transforming the city into one that is 'shared by all', which we welcome. We also welcome the reference to dealing with division and segregation; as well as the recognition that diversity (including arising from new people from other countries making Belfast their home) has enriched culture and diversity.

We recommend a more explicit reference (on p25) to the need to 'improve good relations' between communities from different religious and political backgrounds and to improve good race relations; as well as work to tackle prejudicial attitudes and hate crime across the Section 75 grounds. We recognise that reference is made to the plan to 'improve good relations' on p27.

Chapter 3: Growing the economy

In this chapter we ask for feedback on more detailed aspects of the 'Growing the Economy' priority, including the commitments, stretch goals, and workstreams.

Everyone is welcome to respond to the questions in this chapter however we recognise that organisations or groups involved in delivery of services or representing groups that are impacted by the proposals may be best placed to offer feedback on these more detailed aspects of the plan.

3A. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the commitments set out under this priority, as areas for city partners to focus on over the next 4 years, are right for Belfast?

More Information - our commitments for 'Growing the economy':

- Create employment and opportunity
- Attract investment into Belfast
- Foster business growth in Belfast
- Strengthen business relationships and make it easy to do business
- Maximise the impact of the city region
- Increase tourism spend
- Reduce economic inequalities

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the above commitments you are referring to):

3B. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the stretch goals set out for 'Growing the Economy' over the next four years are right for Belfast?

More Information - Stretch goals for 'Growing the Economy'

1. Create 15,000 new jobs
2. Attract £1 billion of private sector Foreign Direct Investment
3. Support 4,000 small business start-ups
4. Double the economic value of out-of-state tourism
5. Welcome 1.5 million overnight tourist stays per year

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the above 'stretch goals' you are referring to):

3C. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the workstreams identified for building momentum are the right ones for Belfast to deliver our 'Growing the Economy' priority?

More Information - Workstreams for building momentum (Growing the Economy)

So that the city can address the priorities for economic growth and achieve the ambitions that we have set, partners have identified a number of 'game-changing' work streams. These will require long-term collaborative commitment by many organisations. Some of the proposals are already in train but most will require significant development work over the coming months.

We want to know if you think these collaborative pieces of work are the right ones to make a difference, and are there any other key collaborative areas of work that you think should be included.

The suggested workstreams are:

- Develop and deliver an integrated, sustainable approach to inclusive economic growth and investment
- Work locally to drive inclusive growth
- Drive city region sustainable growth
- Build the city's position as a magnet for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)
- Maximise the city's connections to drive growth
- Create a resilient city
- Make Belfast a great place to do business and supporting entrepreneurs and business starts
- Provide sector specific support
- Harness innovation to drive city growth

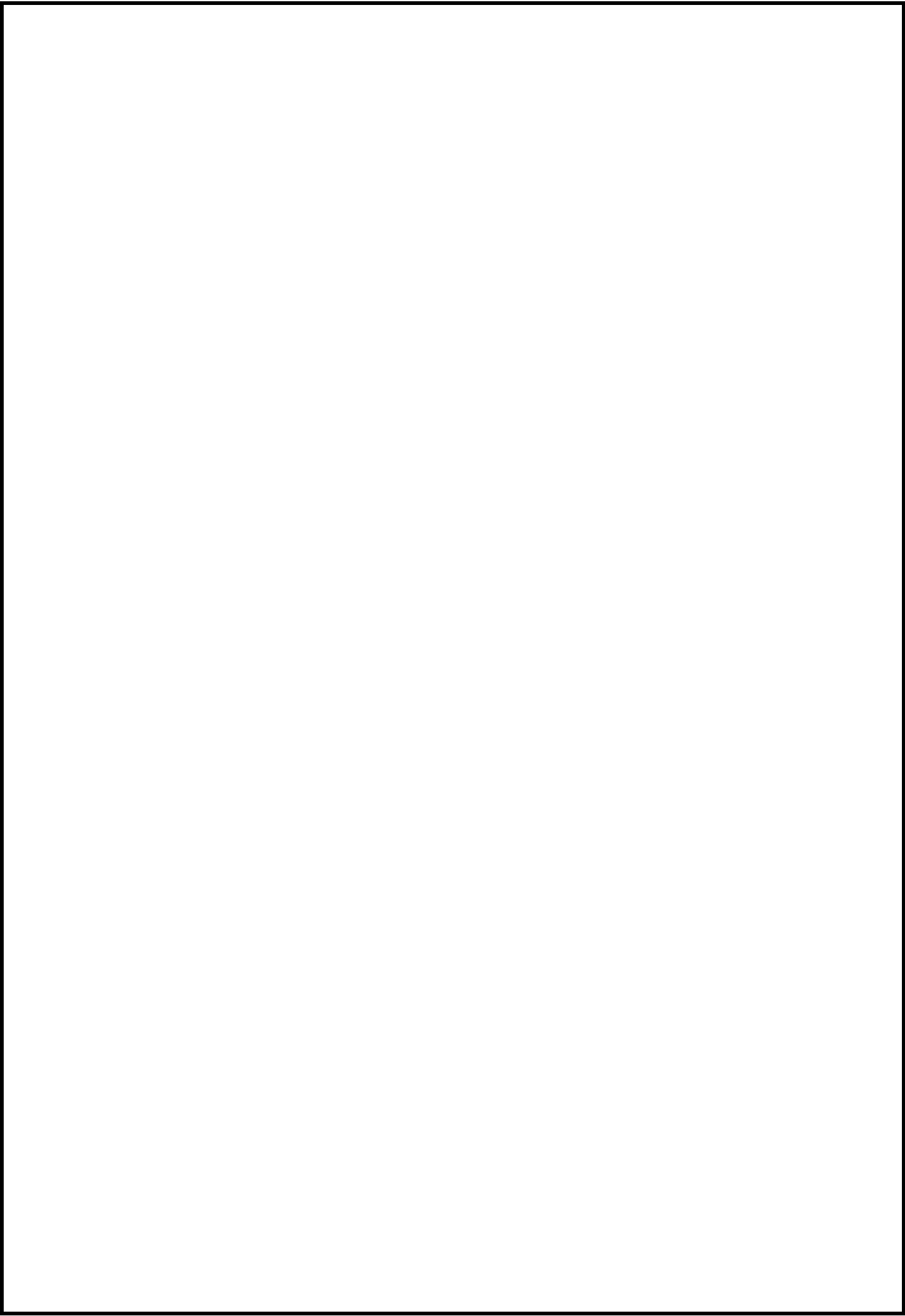
Please see **pages 22-23** of the main document for more information on these workstreams.

☐ Strongly agree ☒ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the workstreams you are referring to):

We recommend greater recognition of the employment inequalities that particular Section 75 groups experience. For instance, in setting out the need to support entrepreneurs and business starts, the Belfast Agenda could refer to learning from and building on earlier work including supporting women entrepreneurs.

For further information on the Commission's recommendations on addressing key inequalities in employment, see our PfG recommendations (2016) at www.equalityni.org/PfG.



Chapter 4: Living here

In this chapter we ask for feedback on more detailed aspects of the 'Living Here' priority, including the commitments, stretch goals, and workstreams.

Everyone is welcome to respond to the questions in this chapter however we recognise that organisations or groups involved in delivery of services or representing groups that are impacted by the proposals may be best placed to offer feedback on these more detailed aspects of the plan.

4A. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the commitments set out under this priority, as areas for city partners to focus on over the next four years, are right for Belfast?

More Information - our commitments for 'Living Here'

Together, we will:

- Improve neighbourhoods
- Improve the city living experience
- Improve community relations
- Reduce life inequalities
- Enable active, healthy and empowered citizens
- Provide fit-for purpose city services
- Support and care for people who face multiple challenges
- Support our young people and older people

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the above commitments you are referring to):

4B. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the stretch goals set out for 'Living Here' over the next four years are right for Belfast?

More Information - Stretch goals for 'Living Here'

1. Deliver £1billion of investment in our neighbourhoods
2. Deliver 1,800 social housing units
3. Invest £1million in communities to drive social innovation
4. Ensure 4,000 young people participate in shared city programmes
5. Make progress towards our 2035 ambition of 50 per cent reduction in the life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods
6. Make progress towards reducing the number of interface barriers

☐ Strongly agree
 ☐ Agree
 ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 ☐ Disagree
 ☐ Strongly disagree

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the above 'stretch goals' you are referring to):

The Commission recommends the inclusion of additional goals for 'Living Here' linked to BCC's current and proposed work relating to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

Such goals could include, for example, reducing hate crime (linked to the proposed hate crime indicator); increasing respect across Section 75 groups (linked to potential Respect Index indicator); increasing reconciliation (linked to proposed respect for cultural identity indicator); increasing shared space; increasing well-being across Section 75 groups (linked to potential 'wellbeing' measure).

Other goals could include improving mental health (and as per our later recommendation in Chapter 7, including a corresponding indicator on improving mental health -as proposed in the draft Programme for Government).

4C. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the workstreams identified for building momentum are the right ones for Belfast to deliver our 'Living Here' priority?

More Information - Workstreams for building momentum (Living Here)

So that the city can address the priorities for living here and achieve the ambitions that we have set, partners have identified a number of 'game-changing' work streams. These will require long-term collaborative commitment by many organisations. Some of the proposals are already in train but most will require significant development work over the coming months.

We want to know if you think these collaborative pieces of work are the right ones to make a difference, and are there any other key collaborative areas of work that you think should be included.

The suggested workstreams are:

- Design and deliver a fully integrated, inter-agency approach to early intervention, including early years support and family programmes
- Deliver a city and neighbourhood Community Safety programme
- Ensure an age-friendly Belfast
- Design and deliver Belfast City Shared Space, Peace IV and Interfaces programmes
- Deliver an integrated cultural and arts strategy
- Design and deliver an integrated city programme to address health inequalities, including enhancing mental wellbeing and reducing social isolation
- Maximise the benefit of our natural and built environment
- Use social innovation to unlock service transformation
- Supporting children and young people to fulfil their potential

Please see **pages 26-28** of the main document for more information on these workstreams.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the workstreams you are referring to):

We welcome the references in the proposed workstream 'Living Here' to a number of planned actions/initiatives that relate to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. We are aware that BCC is currently progressing a number of equality specific action plans; for example, action plans on equality relating to gender, disability, sexual orientation, etc. We recommend that BCC ensures that these action plans and associated outcomes are aligned with, and reflected in, the proposed workstream (Living here), as well as the other proposed workstreams.

In summary, we recommend that BCC's current and planned work on equality across all the Section 75 grounds is more visibly referred to in the proposed work streams in 'Living Here' and other priority areas in the Belfast Agenda.

As regards the proposed work stream 'Living Here', we recommend specific reference to a number of actions; encouraging civic participation (for example, through participation in local decision making and specifically for underrepresented groups including women, minority ethnic communities and disabled people-as well as supporting the role of women in peacebuilding), reducing hate crime and gender based violence; tackling prejudicial attitudes, behaviour, and gender stereotypes.

Chapter 5: City development

In this chapter we ask for feedback on more detailed aspects of the 'City Development' priority, including the commitments, stretch goals, and workstreams.

Everyone is welcome to respond to the questions in this chapter however we recognise that organisations or groups involved in delivery of services or representing groups that are impacted by the proposals may be best placed to offer feedback on these more detailed aspects of the plan.

5A. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the commitments set out under this priority, as areas for city partners to focus on over the next four years, are right for Belfast?

More Information - our commitments for 'City Development'

Together we will:

- Promote and position the city to compete
- Develop the city's infrastructure and improve connectivity locally, nationally and internationally
- Drive the physical and cultural regeneration of the city centre
- Deliver key strategic physical projects and policies
- Attract more tourists
- Protect and enhance our environment and built heritage

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the above commitments you are referring to):

5B. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the stretch goals set out for 'City Development' over the next four years are right for Belfast?

More Information - Stretch goals for City Development

1. Grow the city's rates base by 5%
2. Create 1.5 million square feet of Grade A office accommodation
3. Create 2,500 new hotel bed spaces
4. Increase the use of sustainable transport by 15%
5. Reduce the level of household waste going to landfill to 35%
6. Increase the percentage of residents satisfied with the city living experience
7. Move to 14 or higher in the UK Retail Ranking

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the above 'stretch goals' you are referring to):

5C. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the workstreams identified for building momentum are the right ones for Belfast to deliver our 'City Development' priority?

More Information - workstreams for building momentum (City Development)

So that the city can address the priorities for 'City Development' and achieve the ambitions that we have set, partners have identified a number of 'game-changing' work streams. These will require long-term collaborative commitment by many organisations. Some of the proposals are already in train but most will require significant development work over the coming months. We want to know if you think these collaborative pieces of work are the right ones to make a difference, and are there any other key collaborative areas of work that you think should be included.

The suggested workstreams are:

- Create the Belfast Local Development Plan
- Create a partnership and plan for sustainable urban infrastructure
- Develop an integrated city transport plan
- Deliver city centre regeneration and investment projects
- Seek devolution of comprehensive development powers
- Increase the supply of mixed tenure housing
- Build citywide commitment to Belfast place positioning
- Deliver the integrated tourism strategy
- Develop a further world-class visitor attraction
- Establish a Belfast sustainable development framework
- Manage resources and waste
- Develop a city energy programme

Please see **pages 32-33** of the main document for more information on these workstreams.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the workstreams you are referring to):

We recommend reference to ensuring accessible transport systems and to ensuring buildings / open spaces are accessible, including for disabled people. In general, there is an absence of reference in this section as regards the need to ensure the city's urban and transport infrastructure is accessible for disabled people.

Chapter 6: Working and learning

In this chapter we ask for feedback on more detailed aspects of the 'Working and Learning' priority, including the commitments, stretch goals, and workstreams.

Everyone is welcome to respond to the questions in this chapter however we recognise that organisations or groups involved in delivery of services or representing groups that are impacted by the proposals may be best placed to offer feedback on these more detailed aspects of the plan.

6A. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the commitments set out under this priority, as areas for city partners to focus on over the next four years, are right for Belfast?

More Information - our commitments for 'Working and Learning'

Together we will:

- Address educational inequalities and increase skills attainment
- Address barriers to employment at structural and personal level
- Enhance and increase the skill levels of our residents and attract and retain even more skilled people
- Match people and skills to opportunities across Belfast
- Reduce poverty and economic inactivity

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the above commitments you are referring to):

Educational outcomes

We recommend that outcomes are monitored across the Section 75 grounds to determine areas of under achievement, and develop in partnership with others, targeted action to tackle underlying issues, beyond social deprivation, such as educational inequalities experienced by disabled children and Traveller children.

Sharing in education

As regards educational inequalities, we note that there is no reference to increasing sharing in education. The Commission considers that sharing across the education system could better provide learners with shared awareness, understanding and experience of the value and range of diverse cultures, identities and backgrounds in Northern Ireland; while also enabling learners from different cultures / communities to experience a shared society.

Furthermore, sharing can allow pupils to access the full range of the curriculum and may encourage study of wider subjects at a further or higher education college. Pairing more effective schools with less effective schools may also offer the potential to close achievement gaps by improving standards and outcomes for all learners.

The Commission considers that sharing in education has the potential to improve educational access and attainment for pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds and abilities.

Barriers to employment

We recommend greater recognition of the barriers that particular Section 75 groups experience in accessing / remaining in employment, including the need to increase employment rates for disabled people, or tackling the exploitation / forced labour of migrant workers; and encouraging more women into STEM related professions. We welcome the reference to affordable childcare as a key issue and reference to the issue of women concentrated in part time work / underemployment.

6B. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the stretch goals set out for 'Working and Learning' over the next four years are right for Belfast?

More Information - Stretch goals for Working and Learning

1. Reduce the gap between Belfast's economic inactivity rate and the Belfast average.
2. Reduce the proportion of the working age population with no qualifications to fewer than 14 per cent
3. Increase the proportion of the working age population with Level 2 qualifications and above to more than 82 per cent
4. Increase the percentage of school leavers entering employment, education or training to 98%
5. Reduce the gap between percentage of school leavers and the percentage of Free School Meal Entitled school leavers achieving at Level 2 or above, including English and maths, from 33% to less than 30%.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the above 'stretch goals' you are referring to):

6C. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the workstreams identified for building momentum are the right ones for Belfast to deliver our 'Working and Learning' priority?

More Information - workstreams for building momentum (Working and Learning)

So that the city can address the priorities for 'Working and Learning' and achieve the ambitions that we have set, partners have identified a number of 'game-changing' work streams. These will require long-term collaborative commitment by many organisations. Some of the proposals are already in train but most will require significant development work over the coming months.

We want to know if you think these collaborative pieces of work are the right ones to make a difference, and are there any other key collaborative areas of work that you think should be included.

The suggested workstreams are:

- Deliver an integrated approach to employment and skills
- Deliver a 'Belfast Works' employability programme
- Devolve funding to the city region for the delivery of a large scale skills and employability programme
- Deliver an integrated city programme to address educational inequalities
- Maximise the benefits of our higher and further education offer
- Establish a city pledge for our young people and a commitment to being a learning city
- Leverage the power of Belfast's anchor institutions and city partners.

Please see **page 37** of the main document for more information on these workstreams.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the workstreams you are referring to):

Chapter 7 : Tracking our progress – population level indicators

We have identified a series of population indicators that could be used to measure Belfast's progress towards achieving our long term outcomes.

7A. If you have views on any of the proposed population indicators to monitor progress towards our outcome 'Everyone in Belfast benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy', please indicate whether you think these should be included, excluded or changed for inclusion in the final version of the plan.

Everyone in Belfast benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy	Keep in	Exclude	Change	Not sure
1.1 City productivity levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Investment into Belfast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 Performance of the Belfast Urban Area economy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4 The number of new business start-ups verses the number of business deaths (Business Churn Rate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5 The proportion of the population living in relative poverty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6 The proportion of working-age population in Belfast who are unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.7 The employment rate of 16-64 year olds by deprivation quintile	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.8 Skills barometer measure – the gap between current and future skill needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.9 Economic inactivity rate (excluding students)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.10 Average earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.11 Total spend by external visitors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.12 Supply of suitable housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the above population indicators you are referring to):

We recommend that all relevant (those that relate directly to people) indicators are not only tracked in aggregate but also for the impact on individuals from each of the Section 75 grounds.

Proposed indicators

We recommend the inclusion of the following additional indicator.

- A Better job index (we note that draft PfG has indicated that consideration is being given to developing this indicator.)

In order to ensure effective tracking of all relevant indicators across the Section 75 equality groups, and to more widely to enable BCC to track progress on promoting equality of opportunity and good relations, we also recommend actions to address key gaps in equality data at council level; including on the grounds of gender identity, sexual orientation and race and to rectify the lack of data disaggregation in relation to ethnicity, disability and gender.

7B. If you have views on any of the proposed population indicators to monitor progress towards our outcome 'Belfast is a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive city for all', please indicate whether you think these should be included, excluded or changed for inclusion in the final version of the plan.

Belfast is a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive city for all	Keep in	Exclude	Change	Not sure
2.1 Number of victims of any crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2 Number of hate-motivated crimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3 Proportion of people who feel safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4 Number of anti-social behaviour incidents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5 Number of interfaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.6 The number of people who agree that people from different background get on well together	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.7 Proportion of population who believe the cultural identity is respected by society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the above population indicators you are referring to):

We recommend that all relevant (those that relate directly to people) indicators are not only tracked in aggregate but also for the impact on individuals from each of the Section 75 grounds. For instance, that the indicator at 2.7 of the percentage of the population who believe their cultural identity is respected by society should be measured across the Section 75 equality groups.

In addition, we recommend that educational outcomes are monitored across the Section 75 grounds to determine areas of under achievement, and develop in partnership with others, targeted action to tackle underlying issues, beyond social deprivation such as educational inequalities experienced by disabled children and Traveller children.

Proposed indicators

We welcome the proposed inclusion of a number of indicators relating to tracking progress on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations, including, for example, an indicator on numbers of hate crime.

We recommend the inclusion of the following additional indicators:

- encouraging civic participation (eg an indicator that would measure the participation of Section 75 equality groups in public life/ local decision making);
- number of crimes related to gender-based violence;
- the inclusion of A Respect index that is able to track levels of respect across all Section 75 categories (we note that consideration is to be given to this indicator);
- a measure of life satisfaction for people across Section 75 categories (we note that consideration is to be given to a 'measure of individual wellbeing') - this should be capable of tracking life satisfaction across all Section 75 categories;
- increased sharing in workplaces, education and housing.

As set out above, we recommend actions to address key gaps in equality data at council level; including on the grounds of gender identity, sexual orientation and race and to rectify the lack of data disaggregation in relation to ethnicity, disability and gender. We note, for example, the inclusion of the proposed indicator on the number of victims of any crime. It is important to note that the Northern Ireland crime survey data does not currently cover children or crimes towards children, nor does it collect data on the grounds of sexual orientation or political opinion.

Further, we note that the Council is proposing to use a number of draft PfG indicators. In our response to the draft PfG we have highlighted that a number of proposed PfG indicators do not currently collect data across all the Section 75 equality grounds, including on the grounds of sexual orientation and race.

For further information on our response, see www.equalityni.org/ PfG

7C. If you have views on any of the proposed population indicators to monitor progress towards our outcome 'Everyone in Belfast fulfils their potential', please indicate whether you think these should be included, excluded or changed for inclusion in the final version of the plan.

Everyone in Belfast fulfils their potential	Keep in	Exclude	Change	Not sure
3.1 Proportion of population who have attained Level 2 or above	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2 Gap between percentage of school leavers and percentage of free school meals school leavers achieving at Level 2 or above, including English or maths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3 Proportion of school leavers entering employment, education or training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4 Proportion of care leavers who aged 19 were in education training or employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.5 Proportion of children who have reached attainment at Key Stage 2 (up to 11 years)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.6 Proportion of pre-school children at the appropriate stage of development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.7 School attendance rates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the above population indicators you are referring to):

We recommend that all relevant indicators are not only tracked in aggregate but also for the impact on individuals from each of the Section 75 grounds.

For example, we recommend that educational outcomes are monitored across the Section 75 grounds to determine areas of under achievement, and develop in partnership with others, targeted action to tackle underlying issues, beyond social deprivation such as educational inequalities experienced by disabled children and Traveller children.

7D. If you have views on any of the proposed population indicators to monitor progress towards our outcome 'Everyone in Belfast experiences good health and wellbeing', please indicate whether you think these should be included, excluded or changed for inclusion in the final version of the plan.

Everyone in Belfast experiences good health and wellbeing	Keep in	Exclude	Change	Not sure
4.1 Healthy life expectancy at birth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2 Gap in healthy life expectancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3 Preventable deaths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4 Proportion of the population of adults and/or children who are obese	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5 Proportion of population who smoke	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.6 Proportion of adults drinking above sensible drinking guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.7 Proportion of people who rank themselves as having high levels of well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.8 Proportion of adults participating in moderate exercise at least five days per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.9 Number of households in housing stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.10 Proportion of population living in decent homes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.11 Proportion of the population volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.12 Proportion of the population participating in culture, arts and sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the above population indicators you are referring to):

We recommend that all relevant indicators are not only tracked in aggregate but also for the impact on individuals from each of the Section 75 grounds.

We recommend the inclusion of additional indicators linked to:

- improving mental health (as per draft PfG indicator);
- encouraging civic participation (see recommendation above).

We recommend actions to address the key gaps in equality data, including on the grounds

of gender identity, sexual orientation and race and to rectify the lack of data disaggregation in relation to ethnicity, disability and gender.

7E. If you have views on any of the proposed population indicators to monitor progress towards our outcome 'Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally friendly city', please indicate whether you think these should be included, excluded or changed for inclusion in the final version of the plan.

Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally friendly city		Keep in	Exclude	Change	Not sure
5.1	Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Percentage of household waste that is recycled or composted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	Percentage of all journeys which are made by walking, cycling or public transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4	Visitor numbers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5	Renewable energy as a percentage of all energy consumed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.6	Number of miles of cycle lanes, footways and footpaths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.7	Proportion of homes that are energy efficient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.8	Visitor satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.9	Satisfaction with Belfast as a place to live	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments (Please be clear, in your comments below, which of the above population indicators you are referring to):

We recommend that all relevant indicators are not only tracked in aggregate but also for the impact on individuals from each of the Section 75 grounds.

Chapter 8: Any other comments

This section of the questionnaire provides an opportunity for you to add any final comments on the draft Belfast Agenda or this consultation.

8A. If you have any other comments about the Belfast Agenda or this consultation survey please use the space below.

Comments:

UK exit from EU

We note that there is no specific reference in the draft Belfast Agenda to the implications of the UK decision to leave the EU.

We have recommended to Government, as the UK exits the EU, that there is no regression from existing protections and no negative impact on equality and good relations. We have recommended that the Government ensures that the promotion of equality and good relations are treated as a priority and core issues in this context.

We have recommended the Government, after the UK leaves the EU, considers and fully mitigates any potential negative impact on work to promote equality and good relations. This should include addressing the potential impact of the loss of EU funding on programmes aimed at supporting peace and reconciliation, equality and good relations and social inclusion, including the impact on the voluntary and community sector.

We consider that there is a need to effectively tackle prejudicial attitudes and hate crime in NI, including on the grounds of race, which may arise as a direct result of the negotiations or in the aftermath of any agreement. This includes tackling prejudicial attitudes and hate crime towards EU workers, wider migrant workers or asylum seekers, and their families.

For further information on our recommendations see www.equalityni.org/EUexit.

The Belfast Agenda (Belfast City Council Community Plan) 2017-2021 Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Strategic Level - ECNI advice set out below

The Commission welcomes that Commission officers have met with Community Planning and Equality Officers of the Council twice during the consultation period, to discuss the Belfast Agenda, prior to the submission of this consultation response. The Commission has found this engagement very useful and productive. The advice below, in respect of the EQIA, notes the issues discussed and proposed during these discussions, as well as a number of additional advice points.

The Equality Commission welcomes Belfast City Council's efforts to mainstream the Section 75 equality and good relations duties into the development of the Belfast Agenda. We also

welcome that the Council has conducted an EQIA of the Belfast Agenda at a strategic level, and that it has committed to further equality screening and EQIAs, as necessary, of the programmes and projects which are developed to help achieve the aims and desired outcomes of the Belfast Agenda.

In addition, the Commission welcomes the level of consultation and engagement that the Council appears to have undertaken to involve stakeholders, Section 75 groups and people in the community generally, in the process of developing the Belfast Agenda.

In summary, the Commission's EQIA response/advice is as follows:

- **Welcome:** The Commission welcomes the EQIA along with the policy document and the work undertaken by the Council engaging with consultees.
- **Partnerships:** The Commission recommends greater input of statutory partners into the EQIA, particularly relating to gathering evidence, assessment of impacts and establishing Section 75 monitoring mechanisms.
- **Evidence:** The Commission recommends consideration by the Council of some further evidence and setting the evidence base out by functional area (in addition to by Section 75 group) in order to assist with prioritisation of addressing inequalities and identifying gaps in data.
- **Mitigation/Alternative policies:** The Commission recommends that the EQIA highlight what changes are/will be made to the Belfast Agenda as a result of undertaking the EQIA.
- **Monitoring:** The Commission recommends that the final EQIA report indicate what Section 75 monitoring mechanisms will be put in place. The Council committed to considering the establishment of a fifth equality work stream focusing on Equality Data Development, Analysis and Section 75 Monitoring within the Belfast Agenda.
- **Inter-relationship with other Council Policies –** The Commission highlights the need to ensure alignment of the Belfast Agenda and EQIA, in particular with the Council's Local Development Plan and EQIA.
- **Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) and Section 75 –** The Commission recommends it is important to ensure the Council's Section 75 obligations are integrated within the OBA approach.

Further detail on these recommendations are set out below.

Partnerships

The Commission recognises that the Council, with its new powers, is the designated lead partner in the development of Belfast City Council's community plan (i.e. the Belfast

Agenda). However, the Equality Commission emphasises the importance of ensuring that the other statutory partners (including health, education, housing organisations, etc.) are wholly involved, engaged in and contributing to the development of the Belfast Agenda and associated EQIA.

We note that the Governance structures are not yet established for Community planning and that these structures will be key in ensuring a joined up approach to assessing and monitoring the impacts of the Belfast Agenda on Section 75 groups.

Evidence

The Equality Commission welcomes that the Council has outlined a number of the key societal inequalities, in the draft Belfast Agenda and associated EQIA that it hopes to target/address through the Belfast Agenda, its projects and programmes. The Commission also welcomes that the Council has referenced a number of the Equality Commission's key inequalities policy positions.

The Council indicated at a meeting that it has considered the relevant international conventions in the development of the Belfast Agenda. However, reference to international conventions in the Belfast Agenda/EQIA documents is limited. The Equality Commission advises that it is important that the Council makes clear references to international conventions in the Belfast Agenda and associated EQIA and outlines how the programmes and projects developed as part of the Belfast Agenda will aim to address some of the goals of the UN Conventions. The Commission highlighted that the Council could access the Commission's references to the UN conventions in Commission policy papers and consultation responses (for example, Programme for Government, Delivery Plans, etc) on the Commission's website.

The Commission welcomes that the Council is aiming to align its Section 75 equality action plan to the Belfast Agenda. The Commission advises the Council to use its audit of inequalities as a useful evidence base for the EQIA.

The Commission notes that although some key inequalities experienced by the Section 75 groups are referred to in Belfast Agenda (e.g. education, housing inequalities), others are not. The Commission advises that it is not immediately clear from the Belfast Agenda and EQIA how the Council prioritised the inequalities that it hopes to address.

The Commission welcomes that the Council has set out the key inequalities information by Section 75 group in the Belfast Agenda EQIA. However the Commission suggests that the Council also set out the evidence base by functional area, for example: crime, public participation, health inequalities, education inequalities etc. This could assist the Council to identify where there are gaps in data and assist with prioritising actions in the Belfast Agenda to reduce inequalities identified by the EQIA.

There are currently four work streams proposed within the Belfast Agenda. The idea of

developing a fifth equality work stream within the Belfast Agenda was proposed when the Commission and Council officers met. The potential remit would be to ensure that equality is kept central in the development of the Community Plan and its associated projects/programmes, that time and resources are allocated to consideration of equality issues, to develop the equality evidence base as proposed above and to ensure effective monitoring by Section 75 group within the indicators. (See also monitoring comments below).

Mitigation/ Consideration of Alternative Policies

The Commission advises that in the final EQIA report the Council set out clearly what mitigations measures or consideration of alternative policies has been considered by the Council as a result of the EQIA. For example whether the Belfast Agenda had been changed or been re-prioritised as a result of the EQIA process. The Commission suggests that any learning or good practice identified by the Council as a result of undertaking the EQIA could be shared with other Councils.

Monitoring / Data Development

The Council outlined at meetings that the Belfast Agenda's targets and outcomes are influenced to an extent by the data the Council has available to it, and indicated that a lot of the data that it has been able to access is Northern Ireland-wide data and it has only been able to access a limited amount of local/Belfast level data.

The Commission advises that whilst it recognises that the NI Assembly, in its data development agenda linked to the Programme for Government, has committed to improving equality data gathering/monitoring systems, the Commission would recommend that the Council includes a commitment in the Belfast Agenda EQIA to addressing some of the key gaps in equality data, by putting monitoring systems in place and/or commissioning research to gather data on the Section 75 groups.

The Council should ensure that the impacts of the programmes/projects of the Belfast Agenda on the Section 75 groups are being monitored and reviewed, in accordance with the Council's Section 75 monitoring obligations.

In order to assess the impact of the Belfast Agenda's programmes/projects on the Section 75 groups the Commission recommends that data collected is disaggregated by Section 75 group. It is important that the work the Council is developing on Indicators, ensures monitoring mechanisms are established early on to collect Section 75 data and that the monitoring data is disaggregated by Section 75 groups.

The Commission notes that the Belfast Agenda/EQIA document contains limited data, e.g. health data. As noted above in our partnerships recommendation, the Commission advises the need for greater collaboration with the Council's community planning partners (e.g. Public Health Agency, HSC Trusts, housing, education authorities) in order to gather relevant equality data.

The Council is considering further work on the EQIA via a potential fifth equality work stream focusing on Equality Data Development, Analysis and Section 75 Monitoring within the Indicators for the Belfast Agenda. In this way the EQIA could be developed with input from statutory partners and become a meaningful working document – useful to policy makers who will undertake the subsequent screening and EQIAs of initiative under the Belfast agenda. This could make the EQIA more meaningful and longer term in its influence.

Inter-relationship with other Council Policies

The Commission notes and highlights the need to ensure alignment of this policy with other Council policies. In particular it is important to assess the inter-relationship of the Belfast Agenda with the Council's Local Development Plan and EQIA. The Commission notes the need to align the policy and EQIA work on the Belfast Agenda with the Belfast Local Development Plan in order to seek out opportunities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. The Commission previously advised Council officers in relation to the local development plan EQIA.

OBA & Section 75

The Commission note that Belfast City Council are using the Outcomes-Based Accountability (OBA) approach to developing their community plans. We also note that the Council has aligned the Belfast Agenda to the Executive Office's Programme for Government (PFG) outcomes as much as possible, and that partner organisations' existing programmes/projects have also influenced the Belfast Agenda's programmes of work and projects. Whilst the Commission recognises that the Council is using the OBA approach, it is important to ensure the Council's Section 75 obligations are integrated within the OBA approach.

The Commission hopes this response to the Council's Belfast Agenda EQIA is useful. We are happy as discussed to work with the Council as it develops this piece of work moving forward. If you require any further information on Council's Section 75 responsibilities, please do not hesitate to contact Brenda Hodkinson or Patrice Hardy at the Equality Commission