

Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section
Chief Executive's Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



21st March, 2011

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Dear Councillor,

The above-named Committee will reconvene in the Lavery Room (Room G05), City Hall on Monday, 28th March, 2011 at 4.30 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

PETER McNANEY

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters
 - (a) Apologies
2. OPENCities - Project Update (Pages 1 - 114)
3. Department of Education and Learning - Consultation (Pages 115 - 222)
4. Provision of Generalist Advice - Consultation (Pages 223 - 284)
5. Belfast City Council Framework to Tackle Poverty & Inequalities (Pages 285 - 316)
6. Ballymacarrett, 16/03/2011 Development Committee (Pages 317 - 318)
7. Travellers Report & Appendices, 16/03/2011 Development Committee (Pages 319 - 326)
8. B-Team, 16/03/2011 Development Committee (Pages 327 - 330)
9. Cathedral Quarter, 16/03/2011 Development Committee (Pages 331 - 332)

10. Committee Site Visits - Update (Pages 333 - 334)
11. Events Programme - Update (Pages 335 - 340)
12. Employment Services Board / Employee Services (oral report of Director of Development)
13. Community Chest - Easter Programme (Pages 341 - 346)



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	OPENCities Project Update
Date:	16 March 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Laura Leonard, European Manager, ext 3577

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will recall that they receive regular reports on EU projects. The following report outlines the outputs and final stages of the OPENCities project.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>OPENCities is a fixed term project within the Council's European unit which is funded under the European Urbact II programme. The project concept was developed by the British Council and is led by Belfast City Council in partnership with eight other European cities namely; Bilbao, Cardiff, Dublin, Dusseldorf, Nitra, Poznan, Sofia and Vienna.</p> <p>It runs from October 2008 to September 2011, and is the only UK led project with a European Commission Fast Track label. In practice, this means that the project is closely followed by the EU Commission who believe that the funding will impact and influence emerging European policies and funding programmes, with regard to the integration of economic migrants.</p>
2.2	An "open city" is a city's ability to attract and retain international populations and this contributes to a city's international competitiveness. It is about looking at economic migrants as an asset to a city and addressing barriers to their integration.

	<p>The OPENCities project attempts to address these barriers under three themes; Leadership and Governance, Internationalism, Integration and Social Inclusion, and all these are interdependent if a city is to become a successful open city to new populations.</p> <p>The project is managed by a fixed term two person team within the European unit and is greatly supported by NI managing authorities for EU funding, namely the Department of Finance and Personnel, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the Department of Employment and Learning. Working closely with member state managing authorities is an essential part of the Urbact programme to ensure that policy makers and funders are tracking and contributing to projects such as OPENCities, with a view to considering how to take and use the findings and recommendations and make a real change at local level.</p> <p>2.3 <u>Why engage in the OPENCities project?</u> With the accession of the twelve new member states to Europe in 2004, cities in western Europe including Belfast began immediately to see an increased flow in migrant populations. This in turn began to have health, housing and economic impacts in the city. Coupled with the continued loss of Belfast's indigenous populations known as the brain drain, it became apparent that city stakeholders needed to be proactive to try and retain population and harness the opportunities and talents that new international populations i.e. economic migrants could bring to the city. Belfast City Council recognised that the city could learn a lot from other more experienced cities on migrant issues namely Vienna, Dublin, Madrid and others. The Urbact II programme offered a funding opportunity to engage in exchange and learning and ultimately provide resources for Belfast to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify who the new migrant populations were, what skills they brought to Belfast and what jobs they were seeking and securing. 2. Identify the issues and barriers to the successful integration of Belfast's economic migrants. 3. Identify and coordinate the existing services provided to assist economic migrants. NOTE: The OPENCities project does not address social integration issues such as health, housing, hate crime etc however these are indeed interlinked with economic issues. 4. Identify initiatives still required to successfully integrate economic migrants, encouraging entrepreneurship and removing barriers to employment and employability. 5. Promote Belfast as a competitive open city that harnesses international talent. <p>2.4 <u>How will the project make an impact in Belfast?</u> The second essential element to an Urbact project is that each participating city must set up a Local Support Group of key stakeholders and beneficiaries, (LSG). This LSG then has to produce a Local Action Plan (LAP) as a final output of the project. The LAP is the culmination of three years work looking at best practice in Europe, practical transferable case studies and critically identifying and providing an evidence base for the city along with proposed solutions to the issues identified within the project.</p> <p>Belfast City Council along with the Belfast Local Support Group members have been working on a LAP for the last six months based around the cities needs relating to the three themes; Leadership and Governance, Internationalisation and Integration and Inclusion.</p>
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	<p>The Local Action Plan sets out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EU, National and Local migrant policy context. 2. A Belfast baseline produced at the start of the project which outlines the state of play with respect to the level of migrants, their role and needs in 2008. 3. Information on the OPENCities international monitor. 4. A detailed plan of what kind of actions/support/projects are required to successfully integrate economic migrants, from information and sign posting to language training and business development. 5. Recommendations for Belfast as a city to promote the city as an open city for international populations to work, live and visit, which in turn will make Belfast more competitive and attractive in a global economy. <p>Extensive consultation on the Local Action Plan took place with migrant groups, employers, trainers and all relevant stakeholders in November and December 2010 and the plan was equality proofed and finalised in January 2011. Once agreed and signed off by Belfast City Council as lead partner, the plan will be presented and promoted at the OPENCities final conference in Brussels on 25 May 2011. This is a very important event and an opportunity to promote the results of the project to the European Commission and influence future policy and funding for migrant issues.</p> <p>2.5 A copy of the final Local Action Plan is attached as Appendix I of this report.</p> <p>2.6 <u>Deliverables</u> Outputs</p> <p>Ultimately the outputs of the OPENCities project have been:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Networking and exchanging experience with the other cities as well as British Council as partners. 2. Production of case studies of existing successful work ongoing across Belfast to support migrants. These are detailed and available within the European unit and have been hailed a best practice by the EU Commission, Urbact and other cities in Europe. This is a tribute to the fact that relevant and successful work is already ongoing with migrants in Belfast. 3. Establishment of a Belfast Local Support Group with key government departments, academic players, employers, migrant support agencies and migrants themselves all working on economic issues. This Local Support Group will continue to exist as a unique resource beyond the OPENCities project. 4. Series of city exchanges allowing stakeholders on the ground to see what works well for attracting and retaining economic and talented migrants in other cities. 5. Development of the Local Action Plan itself, which highlights existing successful work with migrants and what the gaps are in Belfast. 6. Development of an OPENCities monitor. This was developed and resourced by the British Council and essentially is an online tool that participating cities can use to assess their level of openness through 54 indicators. Users bear in mind that an open city is a city that draws international talent and is therefore a competitive city. Belfast as an example, has attracted much foreign direct investment and many international workers in recent years without which the city would be less open, competitive and with a reduced international profile.
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	<p>7. Increased profile of Belfast on the EU stage. During the course of the project, Belfast City Council has been asked to present at many events throughout Europe due to the high profile label that this project has at European level.</p> <p>8. Production of EU and global influenced reports on best practise approaches at city level with respect to leadership and governance, internationalisation and integration and inclusion.</p> <p>2.7 <u>Deliverables, cost implications and implications for department plans</u> The deliverables of the Local Action Plan are outlined on pages 31-45 of the attached plan. There are six overall objectives under the three themes of the project and under these are the actual required actions to meet these objectives. The entire plan including the objectives and actions was developed based on the original Belfast baseline and based on identified needs for the city. These needs were articulated and evidence based by the Local Support Group (Appendix 1 page nine).</p> <p>The potential required actions within the plan to take OPENCities further have not been costed as each of these would be a project in itself. Potential funding streams have been identified as have potential partners but resources for the overall project come to an end in June 2011. In addition, the remit for most of the strands within the action plan does not lie within the council's European unit. Some actions identified within the Local Action Plan are already underway or will be resourced within the Council's Peace Plan, and some are the remit of other Belfast stakeholders. The key to resourcing and implementing the Plan will be to identify and appoint an elected champion who will take the lead in driving forward the implementation of the Plan</p> <p>2.8 <u>Summary Overview</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Local Action Plan provides an opportunity to map existing projects and new initiatives as well as solutions to problems associated with managing migration and the benefits to the city. - Local pilot projects are identified and developed based on learning gained from transnational workshops which were attended by Local Support Group (LSG) members. - LSG members helped translate this knowledge into local projects which will seek financial support from a range of funding sources including European Structural Funds. <p>2.9 <u>Existing BCC Initiatives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anti-racism and good relations training - Belfast Migrant Forum - Shared City Project developed to create greater engagement and collaboration within and between political leaders, migrant organisations, and relevant agencies - Cultural and integration festivals and programmes held throughout the city - PEACE III funding of various migrant projects & organisations <p>2.10 <u>New Initiatives being developed (LAP influenced)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCC tender to develop programme to build the capacity of advice workers to address migrant needs. - BCC tender to develop an online multi-lingual information hub
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<p>2.11</p>	<p><u>Hoped for Initiatives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Contribute to the implementation and development of the LAP by funding projects delivering on key actions through PEACE III & future Structural Fund Programmes. – BCC agreement to sign Eurocities Inclusive Cities Charter. – BCC support for projects that encourage the formation, growth and internationalisation of migrant businesses. – Programmes that build the capacity of migrant groups to identify, take action and advocate for their needs. – Programmes that increase migrants’ awareness of Belfast’s current & historical political, social and cultural context. – BCC Economic Development Unit potential interest in adapting business development programmes for migrants to begin to build their entrepreneurial capacity. – BCC continued championing of actions that promote Belfast internationally as an Open City. <p>Belfast’s OPENCities LAP will help deliver on Belfast Corporate Plan, improving good relations and promoting social cohesion between migrants and the local community. It will do this through existing and new programmes, projects and supports which aim to increase and promote awareness amongst existing population of religions and cultures outside of the traditional local faiths. These initiatives will promote a greater understanding of the economic, social and cultural contributions made by minority ethnic groups to Belfast as a city.</p>
<p>2.12</p>	<p><u>Openness monitor – Belfast’s position?</u></p> <p>The openness monitor is an index produced by the British Council over the life of the project. It has just gone live and can be accessed at www.opencities.eu using the guide on English at http://www.youtube.com/user/opencities. The monitor groups 54 indicators into 11 areas which are all weighted differently:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Migration 2. Freedom 3. Barriers of entry 4. International events 5. International presence 6. Education 7. International flows 8. Infrastructure 9. Quality of living 10. Standard of living 11. Diversity actions <p>This allows participating cities to measure their level of openness compared to other cities and then measure and analyse the 11 different areas. The value of this is to allow cities to see how well they are doing with respect to attracting and retaining international populations and then take action to develop new approaches.</p>

<p>2.13</p>	<p>Such approaches could be more directly competitive foreign direct investment measures, strategies to proactively market and attract international students or effective and inclusive diversity and good relations policies.</p> <p>The monitor also offers valuable strategies, policies and practical case studies within the eleven areas and 54 indicators that work successfully in other cities and that can be applied in other cities to improve their openness.</p> <p>The city of Belfast as a partner in the OPENCities project is profiled within the monitor free of charge until 2012. After this time an annual fee of 4,000 euros will be charged to remain within the monitor.</p> <p>To date, the British Council has still to train city council staff on the use of the monitor and until this happens a full report on Belfast's status is not available.</p> <p>Belfast City Council will be approached before the summer of 2011 to provide the annually required update data with respect to remaining in the monitor. To participate in the survey conducted by the monitor technical experts Bak Basel consultants, there is a cost of 4,000 euros.</p> <p>The European unit will consider the value of the monitor before taking a further report to Committee to decide whether or not to commit to and pay for remaining within the monitor.</p> <p><u>Brussels Open Days</u></p> <p>Given that OPENCities is labelled as a European Commission fast track project, it is followed closely by policy makers and funding programme designers at the EU level. One of the biggest EU calendar events is the annual October Brussels Open Days. Belfast City Council has engaged in the Open Days since their inception nine years ago and has been invited to both attend and speak at workshops each year.</p> <p>NOTE: In 2010 Councillors Maire Hendron, David Rodway and Conor Maskey spoke separately at events, highlighting Belfast's expertise in a number of areas.</p> <p>The council through the EU unit has been invited to join the city of Sofia and other partners to co-host a workshop at the 2011 Open Days. The workshop will look at city approaches to openness elaborating on experience and good practice in creating diverse cities, building balanced and cohesive human resources embracing diversity and creating good relations.</p> <p>It is probably more relevant that the Good Relations Unit/Partnership engages in this workshop however this can be defined nearer the time. Chief officers are asked to note this recommendation.</p>
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<p>3</p>	<p>Resource Implications</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>This project was funded under the EU Urbact II programme. The total cost of the paper was 518,850 euros with a cost of 17,295 euros to Belfast City Council.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	The Opencities Action plan will be presented to the Good Relations Partnership in March 2011.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note and endorse the content and completion of the Belfast Local Action Plan 2. Agree to the presentation of the plan to the March Good Relations Partnership 3. Consider where ownership of the delivery of the plan should lie 4. Agree the attendance of the Chair of Development or nominee, the Director of Development and EU Manager at the OPENCities final conference on 25 May 2011. NOTE: The Chair and deputy chair of Development would normally have been invited to attend however, due to the May 2011 elections, Committee chairpersons will not yet be appointed at this time. 5. Agree the participation of Belfast City Council in the October 2011 Brussels Open Days programme in partnership with the city of Sofia. NOTE: Full details and cost implications will be presented at a future date

6	Decision Tracking
<p>Further to approval the Chair of Development or nominee, the Director of Development and EU Manager will attend the OPENCities final conference on 25 May 2011 and BCC will participate in partnership with Sofia, in the Brussels Open days programme in October 2011.</p> <p>Time line: October 2011 Reporting Officer: Laura Leonard</p>	

7	Abbreviations
<p>LAP – Local Action Plan LSG – Local Support Group</p>	

8	Documents Attached
<p>Appendix I – Copy of Local Action Plan and related papers.</p>	

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**BELFAST City Council
Local Action Plan
January 2010**

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1. Foreword

QUOTE - "Openness is the capacity of a city to attract international populations and to enable them to contribute to the future success of the city". (Understanding Open Cities, 2010 British Council)

FOREWORD

The OPENCities Project sought to demonstrate that a diverse population can be a true asset; bringing talent and new ideas from all over the world, supporting innovation and therefore enhancing the competitiveness, the success of cities, as well as the welfare and well-being of its citizens. It was initiated because of a belief that cities that attract international populations are more competitive than cities that don't. By attracting new international populations, cities will inevitably attract more international events, investors and visitors. A key output of the project is the production by each city of this publication, a Local Action Plan based on the needs of a city's migrant population. The development of this Local Action Plan was informed by a Local Support Group made up of key representatives and government departments. This Local Action Plan maps existing and new initiatives as well as solutions to problems associated with managing migration and recognises the benefits diversity brings to our city. The migrant groups this plan addresses are from the relatively new EEA member states often described as A8 and A2 nationals - from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia (A8 States); Bulgaria and Romania (A2 States).

The vision for Belfast within this plan is of an open, inclusive and welcoming city which embraces the diversity of needs, aspirations and contributions of migrant and existing populations living, working and learning here. This is what the Local Action Plan will help the city of Belfast work towards achieving.

I would like to thank the British Council and our partner cities who we have worked with on this prestigious 'Fast Track' project. The work would not have been possible without funding received from the European Commission through the European Regional Development Fund & URBACT II programme. OPENCities a British Council project has been led by Belfast City Council in collaboration with a network of European cities including Bilbao, Cardiff, Dublin, Dusseldorf, Nitra, Poznan, Sofia and Vienna. This transnational partnership has supported us all to exchange knowledge and good practice on migration, it has enabled us to bring creative ideas and achievements on shared challenges together for discussion and has supported transnational and local level partnering for positive social change.

The role of cities in driving their national economies is now well accepted and thoroughly demonstrated. Their role in framing the new societies will soon also be so, driving the way into a better quality of life, improved services and opportunities for local and international populations; and more integrated nations, prosperous economies and enhanced international understanding.

Openness is a real advantage for cities like Belfast as we seek to strengthen our international connections and play key international roles. Cities can and do influence how open they are and how they are able to benefit from international population flows. There are both local and external factors that make cities such as Belfast attractive and open to international populations. Whilst some factors such as the national immigration policies, or macro-economic instruments, are beyond our direct control there are many factors of openness that

are within our immediate influence: the city's identity and character and cultural offer; the kind of local democracy we practice and the forms of participation we encourage. Openness can now be measured thanks to the Family Index of Openness developed within the OPENCities project, so Belfast can now compare our developments against other cities, promote ourselves internationally and mark the progress we make.

QUOTE – 'The ability of a city to attract international populations over time is a key indicator of long-term city success.' (Understanding Open Cities, 2010 British Council)

Like other Open Cities Belfast seeks to attract international populations in order to achieve key urban accomplishments that will allow us to:

- create a larger critical mass of people to support public infrastructures and private services
- attract specific skill sets that city economies need in leading sectors and in important services functions
- foster economic internationalisation and specialisation
- promote a creative/cultural cosmopolitan milieu which is attractive for innovators, investors, visitors, and residents.

Since the OPENCities project was launched in March 2008 much has been learned about what makes a city open and why cities want to become open. International research has confirmed that, Openness is a real advantage for cities if they are pursuing plans to be internationally connected and play international roles, be they operating in knowledge based industries and providing a supportive platform for knowledge based companies, being an urban tourism destination or becoming a creative hub.

Openness and the diversity it brings provide very significant advantages not least of which is the potential for economic recovery out of the current economic recession. As recent research into the economic effects of migration in the UK demonstrates there is a clear divide between the long term prospects in the migrant-intensive and non-migrant-intensive regions. All the best-performing regions in the long term are expected to be those currently displaying the highest concentrations of migrants, including London, the South East of England and Northern Ireland. As a 'new' EU migrant-intensive region, Northern Ireland and the city of Belfast have a host of economic, social and cultural reasons for welcoming diversity and the Local Action Plan contained within this document demonstrates our commitment to work in partnership with other agencies to do just that.

The Right Honourable
The Lord Mayor
Councillor Pat Convery
Belfast City Council

Belfast Local Support Group Members

Alan Morrow
 Andrea Da Silva
 Barry Rooney
 Brian Wilson
 David Wilkinson
 Deborah Johnston
 Denise Wright
 Elaine Nesbitt
 Emily Wilcox
 Frances Dowds
 Frances McCandless
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 Wilfred Mitchell
 William McKee

Invest NI
 Belfast Metropolitan College
 Belfast City Council Economic Development Unit
 British Council Northern Ireland
 Department of Finance and Personnel
 Business in the Community NI
 South Belfast Round Table
 British Council Northern Ireland
 British Council Northern Ireland
 Belfast City Council OPENCities Project
 NICVA
 Belfast City Council Good Relations Unit
 Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
 Department of Education and Learning
 Belfast City Council Development Department
 Belfast City Council OPENCities Project
 Grafton Recruitment
 OFMDFM Racial Equality Unit
 Belfast City Council European Unit
 Belfast City Council Good Relations Unit
 Queens University Belfast
 Polish Association
 Embrace
 Place
 Department of Education and Learning
 NICEM
 Department of Finance and Personnel
 Belfast City Council Development Department
 Botanic Inns
 GEMS Northern Ireland
 Federation of Small Businesses
 Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Special thanks to

Alan Morrow
 Denise Wright
 Jim Walker
 Leish Dolan
 Liam O'Dowd
 Margaret McNulty
 Pascal McCulla
 Susan Russam

Invest NI
 South Belfast Round Table
 Department of Education and Learning
 Belfast City Council Good Relations Unit
 Queens University Belfast
 Embrace
 Department of Education and Learning
 GEMS Northern Ireland

II. Overview

OPENCities is a British Council project funded by URBACT and led by Belfast City Council in collaboration with a network of European cities. The partner cities include Bilbao, Cardiff, Dublin, Dusseldorf, Nitra, Poznan, Sofia and Vienna. www.urbact.eu/opencities
Launched in January 2009 at the Belfast Waterfront, the project runs from December 2008 until June 2011.

III. OPENCities Rationale

The main objective of the OPENCities project is to identify what makes a city attractive to international populations and to develop practical strategies for tackling economic and social integration issues, which can help cities, better attract and retain international populations thus contributing to their improved competitiveness. Due to the economic crisis the link between migration and competitiveness has become even more important.

OPENCities was initiated because of a growing body of evidence demonstrating that cities that attract international populations are more competitive than cities that don't. International populations are seen as contributors to the labour force. More importantly, they can make contributions that increase the local quality of life and the attractiveness of the place for international events, investors and visitors. Via different channels, internationalisation and the resulting human diversity is a spur to economic success of the cities. Cities which intend to be attractive for international populations need to be "open". Openness can be defined as the quality and sum of the local conditions that attract and retain international populations over time.

IV. The URBACT II Programme (2007-2013)

The OPENCities Project is a Thematic Group co-financed by the URBACT II programme (2007-13). URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme¹ promoting sustainable urban development. URBACT enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes. Cities have a vital role to play in the achievement of EU 2020 and previously, the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategy aims. URBACT helps cities to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions; to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe.

URBACT II aims to:

- Facilitate the exchange of experience and learning among city policy-makers, decision-makers and practitioners;

¹ This European programme is part of Europe's cohesion policy: its goal is to help implement the Lisbon Gothenburg Strategy, which prioritizes competitiveness, growth and employment (see glossary)

- Disseminate good practice and lessons drawn from these exchanges and ensure the transfer of know-how;
- Assist city policy-makers and practitioners (including managers of operational programmes) to define, and put into practice, Action Plans for sustainable urban development.

2. Executive Summary

Developing a Local Action Plan to meet the needs of Belfast migrant population, harnessing learning from international best practice and matching this to local needs has been a stimulating and rewarding process. The importance of the URBACT programme in identifying and exchanging best practice case studies and in identifying and promoting the best in Belfast cannot be over emphasised, the learning has been invaluable. Belfast's Local Support Group made up of cross sector representatives has produced a plan to be proud of. We hope it will make a real difference to the lives of our migrant communities and local people alike. We also hope other agencies will take ownership of the contents and be inspired to take forward various actions they may have responsibility for such as migrant business start up and promoting the city as an attractive destination.

The URBACT project has helped the city learn from best international practice under our three themes of Leadership & Governance, Internationalisation and Integration and Inclusion. We have been able to identify our weaknesses and strengths and to acknowledge that there is a lot to be proud of in our practice in working with and supporting migrant communities to date. Unlike some of our city partners Belfast has access to EU funding programmes such as Peace III and Structural Funds (ESF & ERDF) that have a migrant focus; these EU programmes have facilitated local level financial support for a wide range of projects. There is of course a continued need for such resourcing to continue and for future Structural Fund Programmes to ensure budget lines that will continue to resource such activities. Some of these projects have been highlighted within Belfast's Best Practice publication (The Best of Belfast); they range from capacity building initiatives like Belfast's Migrant Forum to projects that assist migrant workers in knowing and asserting their employment rights such as the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Migrant Workers advice project (A Shared Workplace, A Shared Future). These EU funds have resourced a wide number of migrant projects from integration festivals to anti-racism training programmes that are all invaluable in supporting migrants and local people to get to know and understand each other. Integration and Inclusion is undoubtedly the strongest theme for the City of Belfast and there are examples of good practice and promising developments in relation to Leadership and Governance. We particularly need to focus on Internationalisation, building and supporting the economic potential that lies within our migrant communities, for this area is as yet, a mainly untapped resource.

There have been promising developments on many of the actions identified within Belfast's Local Action Plan such as the successful tendering to develop a training programme for advice providers dealing with migrant issues, moves toward the design and creation of an information web portal as well as a Leadership programme for Belfast City Council elected members, to name a few. As lead partner within OPENCities Belfast City Council has been involved in working with the British Council to support our sister cities to understand and promote the fact that migrant workers contribute significantly to the economic performance of a city, that cities need to be proactive with their economic and integration policies to attract migrant workers and that diversity is important for the internationalisation and future economic development of cities.

There has been a wealth of learning gained as a result of leading this innovative OPENCities project and key policy recommendations identified that will help strengthen the cities best practice for all those who want to work with Belfast toward becoming a truly open city.

I. Key Policy Recommendations and observations

Immigration Policy

The key policy drivers in relation to wider immigration policy rest at a UK Government level within the Home Office. The Home Office has control over non-EU migrant movement through adjustment of the Points-Based System. By comparison, the Home Office must comply with European law when it comes to the movement of European citizens although it has some powers to introduce restrictions. The reality of the current economic recession has required the UK Government to revise its quotas for non-EU migrants but we need to bear in mind that admitting less non-EU migrants during downturns and more during up-swings may have a negative impact on economic recovery and future economic performance as a Point-Based System cannot respond quickly to rapidly changing economic circumstances. It is important to consider the specifics of the Northern Ireland economy in relation to inward migration and there is a real need for a mechanism that supports local businesses in identifying and reporting on the short and long-term employment and skills needs that can feed quickly into the UK Migration Advisory Committee mechanism.

Research and Forward Planning

Research into migrant groups, issues and needs has improved significantly in the last two years and this must continue. This is essential in improving understanding and influencing a wider policy and public debate. Such work should explore and expound the economic, social and cultural benefits diverse groups of skilled and non-skilled migrants bring to the city of Belfast. Research findings need to be considered in terms of planning for public expenditure and investment strategies.

Challenges and Opportunities of Migrant Labour

Research has indicated that the 'challenge' from 'imported' labour has raised the bar locally, just as competing internationally has done with NI becoming part of the global economy. The opportunities migrants bring should be embraced and encouraged in order for us to become the tolerant, welcoming, dynamic economy we aspire to be. The likelihood is that migrants will be an important part of the NI economy for the foreseeable future so there is a need to prepare the labour market and other public services for this eventuality and to harness the as yet untapped entrepreneurial potential and markets of our migrant populations.

Local Context

Consideration needs to be given to managing potentially increasing levels of competition for jobs between migrants and local workers. Being sensitive to the realities of a greater number of locals out of work and the sentiment this could generate towards migrants must be considered and addressed. Opportunities should be maximised to harness the long-run economic potential of migrant labour by promoting opportunities for them to use their skills and qualifications; to help stimulate knowledge based sectors and grow international trading links and to make sure the jobs they might leave can be filled by local or new incoming migrants. Greater consideration needs to be given by employers to on-the-job training and progression routes to address a potential skills gap developing in some sectors where migrant workers plan to return to their country of origin having seen their jobs here as short term employment.

Impact of Economic Recession - Protection

Experience indicates that exploitation rises during a recession. The success of the UK Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) in combating exploitation in the food processing and agriculture industry suggests there are policy models to root out severe forms of exploitation that could be replicated in Belfast. Migrants need to have access to information and representation in terms of their employment rights and access to services and importantly access to free specialist legal redress where exploitation occurs. Tied to this there is a need for the protection of unprotected migrants experiencing hardship such as A2 nationals from Bulgaria and Romania. A2 groups have no recourse to public funds unless they have been in uninterrupted registered employment for a year (or if they are exempted from the Worker Authorisation Scheme). Limited access to the labour market and no emergency services support has resulted in these migrant communities being particularly vulnerable to economic hardship and poverty. Many Romanian Roma are reliant on certain individuals for employment within the city of Belfast and there is anecdotal evidence to suggest they are subject to exploitation and hardship should they lose their unemployment. The need for action on rights and entitlements of A2 Nationals should be an EU and UK policy priority.

Local Leadership

The importance of political, civic and community leadership in challenging racism and promoting integration cannot be overstated. The key messages presented by our political leaders are essential in challenging negative media representation and scapegoating in order to promote awareness and appreciation of the benefits an increasingly diverse population brings to our city.

Working Together

Regulatory efforts and local projects and activities that ensure good race relations and community cohesion are crucial in the efforts to achieve better integration. Belfast must continue to invest further in immigrant integration and this investment must involve all 'actors' in central and local government, local and new communities, voluntary and community sectors and representative migrant agencies. Consideration must be given to how the process of integration can be developed as a reciprocal, rather than an assimilationist process. This could involve creating spaces and opportunities for members of new migrant communities to have an active input into the wider social, political, religious and cultural aspects of Northern Irish society. Education and awareness programmes could involve a two way process to help migrant populations appreciate and adapt to the cultural norms and expectations held by Northern Ireland inhabitants. Such programmes would also inform local people of what is culturally acceptable behaviour within new migrant populations. A lack of mutual understanding can act as a breeding ground for disinformation, negative stereotyping and resentment. Cultural learning and exchange programmes and activities can help develop mutual understanding and appreciation and help avoid potential areas of community conflict.

Developing the Economy and Promoting Belfast as an attractive destination

There is a real potential opportunity to attract more highly skilled migrants to the city's to play a role in the development of higher value sectors and to fill genuine 'higher-end' skills gaps in health care, ICT and engineering by positioning NI and Belfast as a friendly and attractive destination for migrant workers. Building the city's cultural infrastructure further will contribute to raising the international profile of Belfast city, making it a more attractive destination for tourists, businesses, students and migrant workers alike.

Future Implementation

To ensure the more aspirational aspects of Belfast's Action Plan become a reality the city's policy-makers and practitioners must work together sharing responsibility for implementing the plans goals and actions you will find detailed below.

3. Policy Context - I. EU Policy Context

The flow of migrant workers within the European Union has become an increasingly important factor in terms of a range of agendas, from wider economic growth and competitiveness to diversity and integration. In recognition of this reality, the European Commission set about developing policy proposals to better manage migration flows and to establish a more co-ordinated approach to respond to such economic and demographic shifts. From a political perspective, the label 'economic migration' is often defined by special legal frameworks. Third country citizens being admitted to the European Union for family reunification are by definition not economic migrants, whereas migrants who come through a special scheme for highly-skilled migrants are. From a legal point of view, economic migration to EU-countries for third country citizens is differentiated from intra-EU-migration. Intra-EU-migration is less restricted and is often referred to as 'mobility', while economic migration of third country citizens is much more strictly regulated in relation to the rights to take residence and to work.

There are many treaties, policies and declarations at EU level of importance to the OPENCities project. In relation to immigration and integration the key policies are outlined in the Hague Programme 2004, the Stockholm Programme 2010, the Zaragoza Commitment 2010 and European Union 2020 strategy. Of particular relevance is the Schengen Agreement which has virtually guaranteed free movement within the EU since 1995². Many of these sources acknowledge the importance of immigration being recognised as a source of cultural and social enrichment, in particular by contributing to entrepreneurship, diversity and innovation. Its economic impact on employment and growth is also significant as it increases labour supply and helps cope with bottlenecks. The Hague Programme identified the management of economic migration as an important issue to put in place common criteria across the European Union and confirmed by the European Council of 4/5 November 2004³, its role in enhancing the knowledge-based economy in Europe, in advancing economic development, and thus contributing to the implementation of the Lisbon strategy.

The Stockholm Programme asserts the EU recognition of 'both the opportunities and challenges posed by increased mobility of persons and underlines the fact that well managed migration can be beneficial to all stakeholders.'⁴ This report acknowledges the importance of a changing EU demographic context which necessitates an increased demand for labour and flexible migration policies, as these will make an important contribution to the future of the European Unions economic development and performance. As the Official Journal outlines, the European Council emphasises the need to take into account the long term consequences of migration on the labour market and the social situation of migrants, as the relationship between migration and integration is crucial to the values of the European Union. This

² The UK is not party to Schengen Agreement. Instead the UK is part of the Common Travel Area which is sometimes understood as a "mini-Schengen" area of free travel between UK, Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man & Channel Islands. Note however, that 'free travel' does not apply to persons subject to immigration control.

³ Hague Programme, European Council Nov 2004

⁴ European Council (2010)

report also recognises the 'need to find practical solutions which increase coherence between migration policies and other policy and trade, employment, health and education policy at a European level.

Importantly it also emphasises the 'need for the creation of flexible admission systems that are responsive to the priorities, needs, numbers and volumes determined by each member state and enable migrants to take full advantage of their skills and competencies.' This report also emphasises that 'integration is a dynamic two way process of mutual interaction, requiring not only efforts by national, regional and local authorities but also a greater commitment by the host community and immigrants.'

The European Ministerial Conference on Integration (Zaragoza 15th & 16th April 2010) reaffirmed the many European Council commitments to integration. It agreed to focus on and explore the key aspects of integration as a driver for development and social cohesion by incorporating integration issues in a cohesive way in all relevant policy fields and by giving particular attention to: employment and education, with particular reference to a gender dimension. Equal emphasis was placed on the importance of immigrants being given opportunities to participate and develop their full potential as well as the creation of appropriate mechanisms for the recognition of professional qualifications.

The same report acknowledged that 'immigration had played an important part in the development of the EU's Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs which recognised that appropriate management of economic immigration was essential to increasing the EU's competitiveness..... in meeting the needs of the labour market and contributing to skills shortages.'⁵

Europe 2020 - A strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth

The Lisbon Treaty introduced and EU 2020 underlines the importance of cities, the 'local level' in terms of managing immigration and promoting integration through the principle of territorial cohesion (next to economic and social cohesion) across Europe.

*'The European Union will be most successful in pursuing its growth and jobs agenda, if all regions – especially those with the greatest potential for higher productivity and employment – are able to play their part. Cities are essential in this effort. They are the home of most jobs, businesses, and higher education institutions and are key actors in achieving social cohesion. Cities are the centres of change, based on innovation, entrepreneurship and business growth.'*⁶

Europe 2020 is the new 10-year vision of Europe's social market economy for the European Union and replaces the Lisbon Agenda, the previous ten year plan. It outlines how the EU can come out stronger from the crisis and how it can be turned into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. It also asserts that in order to deliver rapid and lasting results, stronger economic governance will be required. The Europe 2020 Strategy vision for Europe's social market economy rests on three interlocking and mutually reinforcing priority areas: Smart growth, developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation; Sustainable growth, promoting a low-carbon, resource-efficient and competitive economy; and Inclusive growth, fostering a

⁵ EU Declaration, (Zaragoza 2010)

⁶ Commission of the European Communities, (2005)

high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion. EU 2020 aims to ensure co-ordination of activities with a clear focus for implementation and commitment on a series of flagship initiatives. Implementing these initiatives will require action at all levels: EU-level organisations, Member States, local and regional authorities. With regard to Europe 2020, the EC Communication for a new agenda for migrant integration explicitly mentions migrants as a priority group for the 'headline target' of raising the employment rate to 75%.

II. UK Policy Context

Immigration in Northern Ireland is a reserved matter and lies under the jurisdiction of the UK government in Westminster. The policy context for Belfast has to be considered in light of a UK policy framework. (See Annex E for UK Immigration Policy Table) The population of the United Kingdom in the 21st century is larger and more diverse than at any point in its history. As the global recession bites, early evidence shows a reduction in the numbers of immigrants coming to work. However, fundamental dynamics indicate sustained net immigration is here to stay. Although the United Kingdom has received immigrants for centuries, the country has traditionally been a net exporter of people; only from the mid-1980s did it become a country of immigration.

The last decade nevertheless differs markedly because of high levels of net immigration, an increase generated in large part by sustained economic growth for the last 15 years. Since 2004, immigration levels have been boosted by an extraordinary level of movement from Eastern European countries, particularly Poland, whose citizens have free movement and labour rights following European Union (EU) enlargement.

Public anxiety across the UK about immigration, fuelled by media attention, has risen in parallel to the numbers. Monthly polling data from a leading research agency shows that beginning in the late 1990s, people identified race and immigration as one of the top three most important issues facing the country for all but a couple of months. In response to rising numbers and rising anxieties, UK policymakers have attempted to draw up policies to manage migration. They have responded by implementing a points-based system for migration, and a cap which already has interim reductions in place, is due to come into force in April 2011. This will reduce migrant numbers from outside the EU and establish new institutional arrangements presenting a complex set of challenges. Securing borders and convincing the public that government is able to control and meet the needs of the labour market as well as accelerating immigrant integration remains a much debated issue.

UK Immigration policy since 1971 has been based on a triple-barrelled approach focused on legislation, integration and security. The former established strong control procedures while the integration pillar was inspired by the US Civil Rights movement. The latter security pillar was accelerated since 2001 and has been built on greater efforts to combat illegal immigration and reduce bogus asylum seeking, particularly through visa controls, epitomised by the title of the UK Government's 2005, five year strategy 'Controlling Our Borders: Making Migration Work For Britain?'. In addition, the Labour government also reinforced antidiscrimination measures under an agenda of equality and has developed ideas and policies around 'community cohesion', which roughly means bringing together segregated communities and fostering shared values and belonging. However, the immigration 'exception' means that racial equality duties do not always apply in immigration contexts. It would seem apparent that it is not enough to strengthen anti-discrimination provisions if they bypass immigration policy. For further information see: <http://www.ilpa.org.uk/publications/rreactintro.html>

The Labour Government passed six major pieces of legislation on immigration and asylum over a 12 year period. (See Annex A)

Legislation introduced in 2002 can now be identified as a key turning point in UK Immigration policy. The government expanded economic immigration and, for the first time, introduced visas for highly skilled economic immigrants to come to the United Kingdom without a job offer, but simply on the basis of their skills. Among these were policies to encourage international students, new labour market programs culminated in the development of a points-based system, and above all the government's decision to allow labour market access to citizens of a newly enlarged Europe. There have been many measures introduced by government in relation to the management of asylum seekers and refugees including the tightening up of visas and introduction of an increasing number of immigration-related offences, which has resulted in a much more restrictive framework for these groups. Reinforcing this framework are institutional changes, especially the creation of an enlarged arm's-length agency, the UK Border Agency (UKBA), which has greater powers than its predecessor, the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND). The UK and Ireland opted out of the 2008 Schengen Agreement; instead the UK is part of the Common Travel Area which is sometimes understood as a 'mini-Schengen' area of free travel between UK, Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man & Channel Islands. However, that 'free travel' does not apply to persons subject to immigration control.

III. Northern Ireland Policy Context

There are a number of key pieces of equality legislation in Northern Ireland:

- [Equal Pay Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1970](#)
- [Sex Discrimination \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1976](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1995](#)
- [Race Relations \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1997](#)
- [Fair Employment and Treatment \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1998](#)
- [Northern Ireland Act 1998](#)
- [Equality \(Disability, etc.\) \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2000](#)
- [Employment Equality \(Sexual Orientation\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2003](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2005](#)
- [Disability Discrimination \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2006](#)
- [Employment Equality \(Age\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2006](#)

- [The Equality Act \(Sexual Orientation\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2006](#)

The two key strategies of relevance for Belfast's migrant population are the Racial Equality Strategy 2005-10 is Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The latter places a statutory obligation on public authorities in carrying out their various functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity –

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, Public Authorities are also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, and racial group. The statutory obligations are implemented through Equality Schemes, approved by the Equality Commission, and by screening and carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) on policies.

The Review of Public Administration (currently on hold), the Budget and Programme for Government, and future economic policies set the wider context in which the former operate. The Racial Equality Strategy recognised the positive contribution of minority ethnic communities to social reality in Northern Ireland, with their effects stretching well beyond the economic sphere. The Strategy stresses that the ever increasing diversity of a society can transform its character and that the presence of increasing numbers of members of ethnic and national minorities has 'a genuinely leavening effect on a society that has long been frozen in its 'two traditions' divide'.⁷

It also recognises, however, that the context of long-standing sectarian divide shaping community relations requires actions that are specific to Northern Ireland and the need to take that context into consideration. The Programme for Government refers in a number of contexts to 'a shared and better future for all' and to the centrality of 'equality, fairness, inclusion and the promotion of good relations' to policy-making across Government. Following the consultation on the Draft Programme for Government, the Executive also committed itself to '[...] bring forward a programme of cohesion and integration for this shared and better future'.⁸ The aims of the Racial Equality Strategy have been previously 'adopted' as complementary to those of A Shared Future, and brought into the A Shared Future action plan and reflected in its priority outcomes. The Shared Future policy is currently being 'refreshed' through public consultation in the form of a Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration for a Shared and Better Future. This programme aims to include racial equality

⁷ OFMDFM (2005)

⁸ OFMDFM (2005)

and cohesion but not to replace the Racial Equality Strategy. A 'Migrant Workers Strategy for Northern Ireland, (March 2009)⁹' initially developed in 2006 for the devolved government was recently updated to frame and reflect departmental thinking and actions.

As can be seen the policy base for equality in NI is strong, what is apparent from discussions and consultations with representative migrant organisations and migrant workers alike is knowledge of the policies that exist and access to appropriate and informed support is using them when required. Belfast's Local Action Plan contains a number of practical recommendations for projects to begin work to address this deficit.

Research Context - IV. UK Immigrant Population

Sustained inflows of immigrants have resulted in increases in the United Kingdom's stock of foreign born and foreign citizens; the latter group has nearly tripled in size since the early 1980s. The current picture shows that the United Kingdom had about 6.9 million foreign born in 2008, 11 percent of its population, and 4.4 million foreign citizens, about 7 percent of the population. The latter figure is lower primarily because of naturalisations. The five largest foreign-born populations were from India (639,000), Poland (526,000), Pakistan (436,000), Ireland (424,000), and Germany (293,000). The Polish are the United Kingdom's largest foreign-national group. According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), in the fourth quarter of 2008, 522,000 Polish nationals were living in the country. The next-largest groups were from Ireland (355,000), India (307,000), Pakistan (202,000), France (133,000), and the United States (127,000).

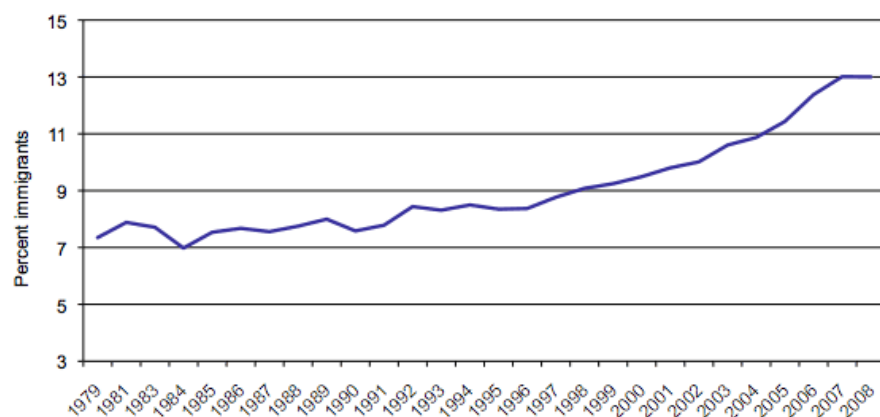
EU citizens are less likely to apply for British citizenship. The key analytical point remains the increasing diversity of immigrants to the United Kingdom. Many have come from European countries and former settler colonies, such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, while immigration from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Caribbean, and African countries including Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda have continued. A second characteristic of the UK immigrant population is its transience. Research has found that about 40 percent of male immigrants and 55 percent of female immigrants who arrived in the early 1990s and stayed for at least a year returned home within five years. These percentages have likely increased since the beginning of large-scale immigration from Eastern Europe.

V. Economic Migration, Enlargement, and the Recession

The United Kingdom, until it hit the wall of the global recession, enjoyed high growth, low unemployment, and large numbers of unfilled job vacancies. Consequently, significant numbers of foreign workers filled many of the gaps. Foreign-born workers from different entry categories made up more than 13 percent of the country's labour force in 2008 — up from 7 to 8 percent a few decades ago (see Figure 2). In response to public and media disquiet over this increase in economic migration, the government introduced a new approach in 2008 that it first announced in 2005: a Points-Based System (PBS) incorporating revised and consolidated versions of existing labour migration schemes.

⁹ DEL (March 2009) Ref: <http://www.delni.gov.uk/de/index/publications/pubs-employment-rights/other-employment-rights-publications/migrant-workers-strategy-for-ni.htm>

Figure 1. Share of Immigrants in the UK Working-Age Population



Source: Labour Force Survey - 2009

PBS has five tiers:

- Tier 1 is aimed at the highly skilled and does not require a job offer.
- Tier 2 offers entry to those with a confirmed job offer in a sector of labour market shortage as designated by the Migration Advisory Committee. It is expected that Tier 2 will account for the majority of non-EU economic migrants. In 2006, around 141,000 work permits were issued. Approximately half of work permit holders come to take up jobs in professional occupations.
- Tier 3, aimed at filling 'lower-skill' jobs, is a highly restricted migration route. This route has been suspended indefinitely because of intra-EU migration; indeed, all low-skilled migration schemes, such as the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS), have been slated for closure.

- Tier 4 is dedicated to student visas. It differs from the previous system by compelling colleges and universities to act as "sponsors" for which they must undertake obligations, such as checking student attendance.
- Tier 5 is aimed at a variety of exchange programs including five subcategories under temporary workers and a youth mobility scheme.

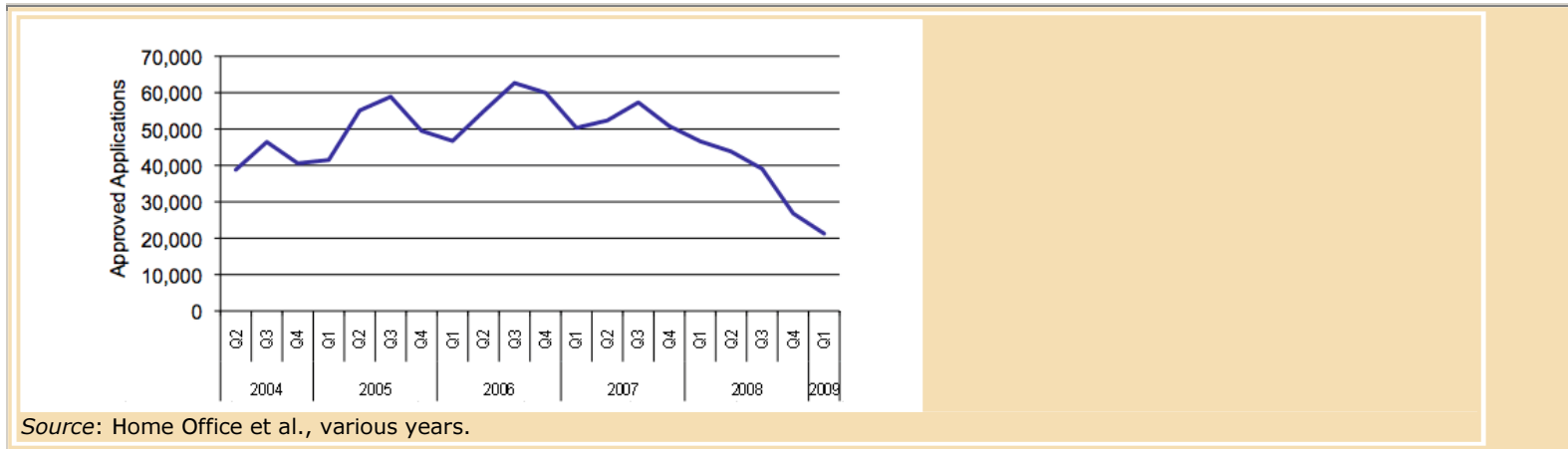
VI. EU Accession A8 & A2

When eight Central and Eastern European countries joined the European Union in May 2004, (Poland, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia), the United Kingdom, along with Ireland and Sweden, allowed nationals from these new Member States known as the accession eight (or A8) to access employment. Within the UK this is subject to workers registering their employment with the Worker Registration Scheme. Nationals of Romania and Bulgaria (or A2), which joined the European Union in 2007, face comparatively greater restrictions. The booming UK economy proved an attractive destination for many A8 citizens. Together with restrictions elsewhere in Europe, high unemployment at home, favourable exchange rates, and pent-up demand, this range of factors created an encouraging climate for immigration. About 1.3 million people from the A8 arrived in the United Kingdom between May 2004 and May 2009. Analysts estimate about half left by the end of that period. Polish nationals jumped from being the United Kingdom's 13th-largest foreign-national group at the end of 2003 to number one by the end of 2008.

Eastern European migrants have worked mainly in low-paid jobs in sectors such as hospitality and catering, administration, and construction. In 2008, only 12 percent of Eastern European immigrants worked in highly skilled occupations, and more than half worked in 'routine' ones. The full effect of the current recession on economic migration from Eastern Europe will not be clear for some time. However, some preliminary trends can be established.

Data from the Worker Registration Scheme (which gives an indication of the number of arrivals from the A8) shows a substantial drop-off in applications. The number of approved applications in the first quarter of 2009 was the lowest since EU enlargement in 2004 and represented a drop of 53 percent from one year earlier (see Figure 3).

Figure 2. Number of Initial Work Applications from A8 Immigrants, 2004 to 2009



Evidence from past recessions suggests some changes in certain categories of immigration during a downturn, but overall flows do not seem highly responsive to the economic cycle or to changes in unemployment. Analyses show that trends in unemployment and relative income (of source and host countries) had only a modest impact on net immigration to the United Kingdom. Other factors, such as the level of inequality relative to source countries, immigration policies, and the size of the migrant community from a given source country (a predictor of future family reunification flows), had significantly greater influence over the volume of net migration. Thus, the recession appears unlikely to have major impacts on future flows of immigrants. A temporary blip in volume is more likely than a permanent adjustment, although immigrants from the A8 countries and immigrants coming under Tier 2 (which requires a job offer) will be affected most; the inflow of A8 nationals in particular may not fully recover¹⁰.

The question of illegal immigration climbed the policy agenda at much the same time and was often confused with mainstream immigration. Several high profile cases pressured Parliament into passing legislation regulating gang masters or 'labour providers' - employers who hire and deploy short-term agricultural workers. The Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA), the body tasked by Parliament to reduce exploitation, was established in 2005. But GLA works only within certain labour market sectors, namely the agriculture and fish-processing industries.

Romanian & Bulgarian A2 Nationals

Most A2 nationals do not enjoy freedom of movement across the European Union until they complete 1 full year's employment through the Worker Authorisation Scheme. Exceptions apply and so Romanian or Bulgarian nationals who are self-employed, students or those who are self-sufficient can exercise freedom of movement rights immediately. This policy, which prevents many A2 nationals from

¹⁰ http://www.unison.org.uk/file/MW_Racism_and_the_Recession_-_final_report%5B1%5D.pdf

exercising freedom of movement rights, contributes to a situation which causes hardship for many within this group. This is because such nationals are not entitled to work or to access services or social security provision unless they complete the requirements imposed by the Worker Authorisation Scheme. Many Romanian Roma have been totally dependent on certain individuals from within their own community for employment within the city of Belfast and there is anecdotal evidence to suggest they are subject to exploitation and hardship should they lose this employment for any reason. This makes this group very vulnerable to poverty and their circumstances highlight the imperative for policy action to address this situation of vulnerability. A8 restrictions will end 30th April 2011, whereas in contrast, A2 restrictions will remain in place until 31st Jan 2011 although the UK has powers to increase this qualifying period until 31 Dec 2013.

VII. Projected UK Immigration Figures

At the time of publication, October 2010, the Office for National Statistics assumes a net immigration level of 190,000 people per year in the next decade. Forecasts have been lowered in light of the current global recession, but analysts expect continued net immigration at high levels. The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Bill became an Act in 2009. The Act increases the length of time (and cost) associated with becoming a British citizen by introducing a 'probationary citizenship' stage into the process. The details regarding these markers and milestones due to come into force in July 2011 and it remains unclear what impact these new restrictions will have on net immigration. There is also likely to be much change on the political scene, both with the seismic impacts on public spending expected as a result of the recession and a recent change in government in the general election of June 2010.

VIII. Northern Ireland Immigration Figures & Recent Research Findings

Belfast city is the capital of Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom and borders the Republic of Ireland. For many decades Northern Ireland remained relatively isolated from the rest of the United Kingdom and Ireland because of ongoing internal conflict known as the 'Troubles'. Many people left because of extreme poverty and economic decline, resulting in continual reduction of the population throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Over the last decade Belfast has experienced significant political, economic and social change. During this period there has been marked economic growth and investment, producing a renewed and revitalised Belfast, along with a dynamic job market and cultural change. Increasing political stability and a return to devolution in 2007 contributed to a sense of renewed optimism. More recently, in line with the rest of the United Kingdom, Belfast has suffered from the global economic recession.

Between 2001 and 2004 the population of Northern Ireland grew by around 7,000 people or 0.4% each year. This increase was due to natural change (more births than deaths) with virtually no change in the size of the population due to migration. Over the next four years from 2004 to 2007 annual increases in population have doubled. This change is primarily due to European Union expansion and the subsequent increased migration seen in Northern Ireland. Between 2007 and 2008, the population is estimated to have increased by 1% or 15,900 persons. The unprecedented change to the make-up of its population has occurred as a result on an increase in international inward migration, many people have come here to take up employment. Others have come for educational reasons, while growing numbers have accompanied or joined relatives and family members.

Measuring migration is challenging, the United Nations definition of a long-term migrant based on a 12-month residency rule is used in Northern Ireland. All official migration estimates for Northern Ireland population statistics refer to long-term migration; at present there are no official statistical estimates of the number of short-term migrants or migrant workers in Northern Ireland.

Using births and health card registrations and other data sources together, the NI Statistical Resource Agency (NISRA)¹¹ estimate that between mid 2007 and mid 2008 15,400 people came to live in Northern Ireland from outside the United Kingdom. In addition, again over this time period, NISRA estimate a further 12,100 people came to live in Northern Ireland from Great Britain. The number of people leaving Northern Ireland is harder to estimate as there are limited data sources. NISRA have assessed information on school population loss, health card deregistration and household surveys of people emigrating from Northern Ireland. Taking these and other sources together, leads to an overall estimate between mid 2007 and mid 2008 of 11,000 people leaving Northern Ireland to live outside the United Kingdom. In addition NISRA estimate that again over this time period, a further 10,700 people left Northern Ireland to live in Great Britain.

According to Johnston¹² the largest most established community in Belfast is the Chinese community while the Indian community also has a long established population. Polish migrants are the largest group of migrants from the EU countries, accounting for some 60% of migrants from A8 countries and Northern Ireland has received a larger number of people from Lithuania than anywhere else in the United Kingdom. The top requested languages recorded by the Northern Ireland Regional Interpreter Service for the Health Service in 2009 were: Polish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, Slovak, Lithuanian, Romanian, Hakka, Russian, Portuguese, respectively and newcomers to Belfast are predominantly within the age range of 18 to 35 years of age.

The overall effect between mid 2007 and mid 2008 is of population growth due to migration of 5,700 people (net 4,300 international migrants and net 1,400 people from Great Britain moving to Northern Ireland). Taken with a natural increase the Northern Ireland population increased from 1.759 million people in 2007 to 1.775 million people in 2008. Given the current economic climate it is difficult to predict whether the latest positive trend in migration will continue. The very latest 2009 statistics are pointing towards a further reduction. National Insurance number registrations, Home Office Worker Registration and Work Permit scheme data are showing a fall in Northern Ireland registrations; however the latest data on School Census and birth registration all remain strong.

There has been an increase in research into Belfast's new migrant populations with consideration being given to a number of topics such as employment and access to services. According to the study into migrant workers carried out by the Department of Employment and Learning the large scale arrival of migrant workers into Northern Ireland has been a very recent phenomenon. However, migrant workers in Northern Ireland have made a significant positive contribution to the NI economy, filling labour shortages during a 'golden era' period for the economy and bringing a strong work ethic welcomed by their employers. This was when unemployment was at a historic low and

¹¹ Northern Ireland & Statistics Agency (August 2009)

¹² Building Healthy Communities (April 2010)

the majority of non-employed natives were not applying to work in the jobs migrants were taking.

The NI economy has changed beyond recognition in the last decade and migration is just one of the ways in which this can be observed. In addition, the arrival of migrants highlights both the increasing attractiveness of NI and a further normalisation of economic activity since political stability was restored. Since there is no official mechanism for recording their departure from the UK, it is difficult to calculate exactly how many migrant workers are currently in Northern Ireland (and indeed the UK as a whole). It is estimated that between 33,000 and 41,000 people born outside the UK and Republic of Ireland were in employment in NI in 2008 (representing between 4 and 5 percent of the regional workforce).

The arrival of many eastern European migrants seeking employment since 2004 has produced rapid and recent change in many parts of the NI labour market, and indeed the region now has one of the UK's highest concentrations of 'new' migrant workers from EU countries. Of these, an estimated 21,000-25,000 arrived after 2004, 20,000 of them from Poland. While this concentration may appear high and has risen from less than 2 percent in 2001, it is worth noting that the share of foreign-born workers in other economies is much higher – in Australia (26%), and the UK (11%). Sectorally the highest concentrations are in hotels & restaurants (16 percent) and manufacturing (10 percent). Migrant workers are not dispersed evenly across NI: the highest absolute numbers are in Belfast and Dungannon, but the highest concentrations, as a proportion of total population, are found in Dungannon, Craigavon and Newry & Mourne. In general, migrant workers in Northern Ireland fit the popular profile of being young, hard-working and over-skilled for their jobs, with an interest in improving their English skills and a short-term focus on maximising hours and earnings before returning home.

Perhaps as a result of their frequently short-term focus, lower skilled migrant workers are rarely trained beyond basic or statutory minimum employment requirements; they do not create additional training opportunities for local workers, and there is concerning evidence that their availability is masking flaws in Northern Ireland's (and indeed the UK's) vocational and youth training systems, particularly in the skilled trades such as construction (though employers may need to take equal responsibility for this).

Migrant workers have generally filled labour rather than skill shortages: though some are in higher or middle-tier occupations, particularly in healthcare and construction, in most cases they have helped facilitate rapid rates of economic expansion by filling lower-skilled jobs, including those local workers 'no longer want'. As in the rest of the UK and ROI, there has been strong evidence of so-called 'occupational segregation' between local people and migrants, meaning that, at least during the recent years of economic growth, the involuntary displacement of local employment appears to have been minimal. There is much variation, however, by nationality and year of arrival: eastern European males, for example, have made a notable contribution filling labour shortages in the region's recent construction boom, while Asian females from the Philippines and India have played a more longstanding role filling positions in the health sector.

Employers report strong on-the-job performance from migrant workers, with both overall performance and reliability comparing very favourably to their local counterparts; a third of employers say migrants have been important for company survival, and there is evidence that certain sectors, most notably elements of food processing, could have disappeared entirely from Northern Ireland in the absence of available migrant workers.

The recession is likely to have reduced the total number of migrant workers in both Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK, and this trend is likely to continue while the UK falls further behind other countries in embarking on its economic recovery – particularly those developed, high-wage nations who are similarly attractive to migrants. The observable increase in late 2009 of ‘job vacancy’ signs outside bars, cafes, restaurants and hotels is one manifestation of the recent decline in attractiveness of the UK as a working location for many eastern European migrants. Despite some challenges along these lines, it is not believed that the 2008-2009 recession will lead to ‘mass exodus’ of migrant workers from either Northern Ireland or the UK, partly as economic conditions remain weak in many other countries and partly as a number of important ‘non-economic’ drivers of migration (such as the desire to learn English, for example) remain in force. Northern Ireland is likely to remain an attractive destination for migrant workers once both the global and local economies begin to expand again.

The findings of the Department of Employment & Learning’s¹³ (DEL) analysis of migrant workers’ net contribution to the economy show that on balance the story is positive, though the economic period ahead, even after the recovery has ensued, will be more challenging and the balance of net benefits could potentially change. The overall net impact of post-2004 migrant workers in Northern Ireland in 2008 is estimated at 39,920 jobs and £1.2bn GVA (at 2003 prices). Including migrant workers arriving in Northern Ireland before 2004 who were still resident in 2008, the total impact rises to 58,400 jobs and £1.7bn GVA.¹⁴ To put the impacts in context, the overall *net* GVA migrant contribution of £1.7bn is close to the GVA contribution of the whole Northern Ireland construction sector – hence calculations suggest migrant workers have made a sizeable economic contribution. Future migrant flows and stocks are difficult to predict: the recession is having a short-term impact, but beyond this the signs indicate that NI could remain a popular migrant destination within the UK. The DEL research highlighted that despite being critical of their performance and work ethic; most employers displayed a surprising loyalty towards Northern Ireland-born workers, and actually recommend that access to the Northern Ireland labour market is made more difficult for migrants in the future.

Additional UK research carried out by Wilson and Phillips¹⁵ into regional economic performance has asserted that the UK is clearly in the grip of a severe recession. Overall, short-term economic prospects look gloomiest in London, where 350,000 jobs are forecast to be lost by the end of 2010, though the plight of manufacturing is also hitting midlands and northern English regions hard. This study into the economic effects of migration in the UK found that there is a clear divide between the long-term prospects in the migrant-intensive and non-migrant-intensive regions. All the best-performing regions in the long term are expected to be those currently displaying the highest concentrations of migrants, including the East of England, London, the South East, and Northern Ireland. As a ‘new’ EU migrant-intensive region, Northern Ireland, insulated by its large public sector, is forecast to lose a comparatively modest 3.7 per cent of employment over the two years of the downturn.

¹³ The Economic, Labour Market and Skills Impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland, Oxford Economics - FGS McClure Watters and Perceptive Insight Market Research - Oxford Economics, 2010

¹⁴ Northern Ireland & Statistics Agency (August 2009) - *All these figures refer to the impact of all non-UK and ROI-born workers, and – in theory at least – to impacts that would not have occurred if migrant workers had not come to NI.

¹⁵ Regional Economic Performance: A migration perspective, Economics paper 4, Alan Wilson and Mike Phillips - Sept 2009, Oxford Economics - Communities & Local Government

4. OPENCities Key Policy Recommendations

OPENCities Key Policy recommendations

In all transnational projects the importance of local level context cannot be over emphasised. Belfast City Council was the lead partner in OPENCities project yet the key policy drivers in relation to wider immigration policy rests at a UK Government level within the Home Office. The UK Border Agency is responsible for securing the UK border and controlling migration, enforcing immigration and customs regulations and considering applications for permission to enter or stay, for citizenship, asylum and family reunification purposes in the UK. The UK Government has greater control over non-EU migrant movement and it can adjust flows through the Points-Based System and must receive claims of asylum for those escaping persecution.

Conversely, national government cannot guarantee minimum levels of immigration that many recognise as the essential drivers of economic growth unless the long-term drivers are in place; i.e. migrants still want to come to Belfast and employers want to hire them. The reality of the current economic recession requires that the UK Government give due consideration to the fact that admitting fewer non-EU immigrants during downturns and more during upswings may have a negative impact on economic recovery and future economic performance as a Point-Based System cannot respond quickly to rapidly changing economic circumstances. The economic downturn presents risks to the potential recovery of the UK economy as protectionist sentiment could reverse the trend of openness to migration. The tendency toward economic nationalism is strong during downturns and is already apparent around the world as some states have launched programmes that pay migrants to return home and some have introduced restrictions on work visas.

Importance of civic leadership

The importance of political, civic and community leadership in challenging racism and promoting integration cannot be over stated. The key messages presented by our political leaders are essential in challenging negative media representation and scapegoating in order to promote awareness and appreciation of the benefits an increasingly diverse population brings to our city. There are a range of actions that could be initiated by city leaders to challenge a growing anti-migrant sentiment amongst sections of the public such as initiating a B-Inclusive Campaign, facilitating a public debate on the advantages of 'OPENNESS' and signing the Eurocities Charter on Integrating Cities and implementing the actions relevant to the city of Belfast.

Research

Research into migrant groups, issues and needs must continue in order to improve understanding and influence a wider policy and public debate. Research should explore and expound for public consumption the economic, social and cultural benefits diverse groups of skilled and non-skilled migrants bring to the city of Belfast. Research should investigate how the full potential of well-qualified migrant workers who contribute to the regional economy can be more effectively harnessed. The focus on economic growth, which requires attraction of new labour resources, should be matched with the responsibility for the wider social consequences. To date, there has been a lack of strategic preparation by government, employers, and service providers for dealing with the additional needs and expectations of new immigrant communities. Initially, policies have been reactive, and focused on the immediate provision of services. Forward planning is crucial, if the pressures and inequalities that follow are not to become a cause of sustained community conflict. In particular, planning is required in relation to access to information, monitoring, language provision, knowledge of employment rights and responsibilities as well

as access to informed representation. Inward migration also needs to be considered in terms of planning for public expenditure and economic and investment strategies.

Current Recession & Future Economic Performance

The main priority for the economy, during and post-recession, needs to be helping businesses to obtain the supply inputs they need – including, for example, infrastructure, skills and labour, financial assistance, and innovation support. In a world of much freer movement of labour, this means looking locally and internationally to plug skills and labour gaps as they arise with the best people available – therefore in some ways nationality of workers for businesses becomes as irrelevant as race or gender should be.

Research has indicated that the challenge from 'imported' labour has raised the bar locally, just as competing internationally has done with Northern Ireland becoming part of the global economy, hiding from labour and skills competition will not benefit the economy in the long-run. The opportunities migrants bring should be embraced and encouraged in order for us to become the tolerant, welcoming and dynamic economy we aspire to be. The challenges migrants lay down to local workers should be seen for what they are – challenges relating to the standards necessary in the globalised economy of which Northern Ireland is now part. The likelihood is that migrant workers will remain an important part of the NI economy for the foreseeable future so there is a need to prepare the labour market and other public services for this eventuality. Consideration may need to be given to managing potentially increasing levels of competition for jobs between migrant and local workers. Being sensitive to the realities of a greater number of local people out of work and the sentiment this could generate towards migrants must be considered and addressed.

There is an opportunity to maximise the long-run economic potential of migrant labour by promoting opportunities for migrant workers to use their skills and qualifications; to help stimulate knowledge-based sectors and grow international trading links and to make sure the jobs they might leave (in which they are currently employed) can be filled by local or new incoming migrants. Greater consideration should be given by employers to on-the-job training and progression routes to address a potential skills gap developing in some sectors where migrant workers plan to return to their country of origin having seen their jobs here as short-term employment. This situation could present opportunities for the cascading of skills from migrant workers to local people through vocational training and apprentice schemes ensuring local people are trained in the skills they need to prosper. Other economic opportunities exist that have as yet been unexplored such as investment in immigrant tailored business development programmes which should be developed to foster the as yet 'untapped' entrepreneurial potential and markets of our migrant populations.

A2 Bulgaria & Romania

In a UK and Belfast context there are other policy contradictions causing concern in relation to migration, not least of which is the situation facing A2 nationals from Bulgaria and Romania. Although Bulgarians and Romanians are European Union citizens and therefore do not require permission to enter the UK, they do not automatically enjoy automatic freedom to reside in the UK. Unfortunately this means that they have 'no recourse to public funds' and limited access to legitimate labour markets which leaves them vulnerable and liable to exploitation by unscrupulous employers. Having no entitlement to welfare benefits, (unless having met the Worker Authorisation requirements or falling within an exception category) and recourse to only very limited emergency services support, has resulted in a two tiered policy for EU immigrants. This contradictory situation whereby such nationals can enter UK but have limited access to employment and public funds has resulted in growing numbers of impoverished and vulnerable Romanian Roma and this in turn has fuelled negative

stereotypes and negative public opinion toward immigrants in general as many have no alternative but to beg for money on the streets. Many Roma are dependent on local gangmasters for employment within the city of Belfast and there is anecdotal evidence to suggest they are subject to exploitation and hardship should they lose this employment for any reason. This makes this group very vulnerable to poverty and hardship and their circumstances highlight the imperative for policy action on this issue.

Poverty & Hardship

Investment in and commitment to greater support for unprotected migrants should be considered especially for those who lose out from restructuring, or downsizing as a result of the recession: one possibility could be non-compulsory wage insurance schemes to provide protection over periods of unemployment.

Employment Rights & Working Conditions

The threat of economic nationalism means that integration policies, enforcement of labour standards and active labour market policies are needed to help all workers become more important during a recession and to reduce the risk that immigrants will become scapegoats.

Experience indicates that exploitation rises during a recession. The success of the UK Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) in combating exploitation in the food processing and agriculture industry suggests there are policy models to root out severe forms of labour exploitation that could be replicated in Belfast. Investment in labour standards for all workers, particularly in low skilled occupations, is important and there is a case for regulatory structures which could be of benefit for society as a whole through an increase in taxable revenues to help fund ever pressurised public services. The Belfast LAP proposals to improve access to information on rights and entitlements would be of benefit to local and new populations alike.

A key problem is that it can be extremely difficult for migrant workers (as well as local workers) to enforce their employment rights. This is partly due to the fact that legal aid is not available for employment claimants and that there are only a small number of organisations that can provide free advice and representation. It can be extremely difficult for employment claimants to represent themselves without access to free specialist employment advice given the complexities of employment law and given the potential costs involved in taking a case. Thus the lack of free advice and representation acts as a significant barrier to justice.

NI input to Migration Advisory Committee

It is important to consider the specific characteristics of the Northern Ireland economy. Local research informed by future economic development goals should indicate the nature of inward migration required, the numbers of workers and indeed their geographical locations. In this context, it is of the utmost importance that local analysis feeds into UK mechanisms such as the Migration Advisory Committee so that skilled and non-skilled migrants meet identified needs. With this in mind there is a requirement for a local mechanism that supports local businesses in identifying and reporting on their short and long term employment needs.

Good Relations –Diversity, Integration and Inclusion

Regulatory efforts and local projects and activities that ensure good race relations and community cohesion are crucial in the efforts to achieve better integration. As acknowledged in a recent MPI publication,¹⁶ the UK as a whole needs to invest further in immigrant integration and as this action plan emphasises, such investment must involve all 'actors' in central and local government, local and new communities, voluntary and community sectors and representative migrant agencies. Clarity is needed around what policies should be usefully adopted as a framework for integration and community cohesion and how they can support initiatives at institutional, community and individual level.

Language policy should move beyond provision of English as an additional language support towards providing locally accessible and affordable language classes at times that suit migrant workers employment commitments. Qualification equivalency frameworks must be made more accessible and affordable in order to enable skilled and educated migrants to access appropriate employment opportunities.

Consideration needs to be given to how the process of integration can be developed as a reciprocal, rather than an assimilationist process. This involves creating appropriate spaces and opportunities for members of new migrant communities to have an active input into the wider social, political, religious and cultural aspects of Northern Irish society. When introduced, community planning will have the potential to involve migrant workers and their families, in the process of social consultation. Local councils should strive to ensure that representatives of this section of the community take part in planning partnerships.

Public policy must consider the consequences for public service provision of its economic strategies. Such policies must take cognisance of the growing levels of migrant poverty due to the economic recession. Access to information and advice to support knowledge of entitlements with regards to health, education and social services is key to the successful integration of existing and future migrant populations and future immigration. The forthcoming Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration for a Shared and Better Future, which will update and take forward A Shared Future and the Racial Equality Strategy, is a real opportunity to develop a policy that provides for effective integration of all communities and also challenge prejudice and segregation of all kinds. The Programme needs to be Northern Ireland-specific and consider in detail the differences between this jurisdiction and the developments in both Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

Promoting NI/Belfast as an attractive destination

There is real potential opportunity to attract more highly skilled migrants to the city to play a role in the development of higher value sectors and fill genuine 'higher-end' skills gaps, for example in healthcare, ICT, engineering etc by positioning Northern Ireland as a friendly and attractive destination for migrant workers. Building the city's cultural infrastructure will contribute to raising the international profile of Belfast city, making it a more attractive destination for tourists, businesses, students and migrant workers alike.

¹⁶ Immigration in the UK, the Recession and Beyond, March 2009, Will Sommerville and Madeleine Sumption, Migration Policy Institute; Equality and Human Rights Commission

4. Developing Belfast's Local Action Plan

It is a requirement of the URBACT programme that cities produce Local Action Plans. These Local Action Plans seek to initiate pilot actions and projects and to promote the idea of co-responsibility where many actors work toward common goals and actions. That is why the membership of Belfast Local Support Group includes public authorities, private companies, government departments, community associations and agencies that work specifically with migrant communities across Belfast. The Local Action Plan provides an opportunity to map existing and new initiatives as well as propose solutions to challenges associated with managing migration.

I. Belfast Baseline

In the first six months of the OPENCities project URBACT required the completion of a city baseline¹⁷. This baseline provided an economic profile of the city, detailed the key challenges facing the migrant population, presented a score of 'openness' for the city, a SWOT analysis and described the key expectations for the OPENCities project. The baseline acted as a starting point for developing the Local Action Plan (LAP). The LAP was further added to from key research findings and from the 'knowledge and experience' of Local Support Group members within facilitated workshops. These workshops enabled an informed stock take on existing projects doing excellent work that were felt should continue as well as recognition of those problems still creating challenges for Belfast's migrant populations.

Belfast's public consultation (Dec 2010) on the draft Local Action Plan asked migrant workers and their representative organisations if the key problems identified in 2008 were still the same problems they faced now.

Findings from migrant workers indicated that the baseline is broadly accurate but there continues to be inadequate information for migrants on a host of issues and areas. If you cannot speak English (well enough) you cannot access services; linked to this translation services are essential.

NGOs commented that, there is even greater need for more information due to the economic downturn. There is more competition with local people for jobs with local companies. The context has changed a lot with the economic downturn. The question of what happens if a migrant worker becomes unemployed is now a key issue for many people. Linked to this are a whole range of factors which the recession impacts on in a particular way for migrants; these include domestic violence, mental health issues, unemployment and homelessness. In addition, migrant communities may not have family and other support networks to lean on. The impact of the personal loss of a job, of an income, of a way of life, can lead to mental health issues – and especially those related to a sense of rejection. Accessibility of information rather than lack of information continues to be an issue. NGOs stated that there is a lack of understanding among migrant communities – for example, thinking that others (within the indigenous population) 'get loads of benefits' etc. Such inaccurate information/perceptions can fuel a sense of grievance among some migrants.

¹⁷ <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/human-capital-entrepreneurship/open-cities/our-outputs/>

II. Openness Monitor

One of the most interesting aspects of the OPENCities project has been the EU wide research into whether it is possible to establish an Index of Openness for cities. This 'Openness Monitor or Family Index' is an element managed and funded by the British Council.

In order for cities to become more open we needed to know how to measure the Openness of a city. Openness¹⁸ has been categorised as a multi-dimensional phenomenon that cannot be observed or measured simply or directly. However, it is possible to identify indicators which measure certain aspects of openness. After extensive research a leading EU research company (Bak Basel) recommended creating a benchmarking system for Openness with sub-indices forming an 'index family'. Bak Basel checked a large number of official data sources and proposed a set of 68 indicators that could be grouped thematically in factors, representing the core elements that make a city open to international populations. Most data used to construct the indicators are available from official sources (such as Urban Audit or the European Labour Force Survey). Some of the OPENCities cities, however, were not included in these official statistics due to existing data gaps.

An index family has been created by taking a set of individual indicators, and weighting them according to the values of different stakeholders. Sub-indices were created not only for the key factors, but also for other aspects of openness such as openness versus attractiveness. Benchmarking based on an index family makes it possible to divide the sample into comparable sub-groups and thus compare how open a city is, compared to a pre-selected sample of cities. In addition, the term OPENCities is also being used as a kitemark that measures both commitment and progress towards openness.

Ultimately the OPENCities project has settled on a hybrid form of data presentation – which groups together all the strengths from each of the three options considered; (1) an index (2) a kitemark (3) and a benchmarking system. The Family Index of Openness therefore looks to cover a multidimensional concept of openness using a mixed system. This index family, complete with sub-indices, allows the sample to be divided into comparable sub-groups. Benchmarking will analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the individual cities, through individual peer review, and careful monitoring. Values above 100, for example, signal that the city is more open than its peer groups' average.¹⁹ A core element of benchmarking is the selection of cities compared. This facility enables cities to compare themselves against other cities, to a specific 'league' of regions, for example, ones that are of similar size, have a similar degree of internationalisation or are specialised in the same business sectors (such as knowledge centres, visitor destinations) and spatial economic functions.

City benchmarking and continuous comparison facilitates the development and ongoing review of a city's visions and actions to become more open. Over time, the benchmark results can help define the progress that a city should make in order to call itself an 'open city' as a kitemark. This tool can also have an important educational implication. Rankings can be used to promote investments. Progress in developing action plans, strategies or investment decisions of cities can be judged and benchmark reports can highlight problem areas or

¹⁸ Understanding OPENCities, Greg Clark, (2010) British Council

¹⁹ Understanding OPENCities, Greg Clark, (2010) British Council

underline particular successes. The clear commitment of the involved cities can be taken as a kitemark. In addition, the progress of cities in terms of openness can be benchmarked and also used as a kitemark.

The work of the Index will continue beyond the lifetime of this initial project and will continue to measure the 'openness' of Belfast and the majority of other OPENCities partners within this Index Family of Openness until 2012. The Index will continue to grow by adding different cities and city profiles. Data will be available on an interactive website and city profile results will link to good practice case studies, Local Action Plans and key learning points on each of the areas of city openness. For further information:

http://opencities.britishcouncil.org/web/index.php?indicators_en. http://opencities.britishcouncil.org/web/index.php?case_studies_en

III. Exchange of Learning

The exchange of learning within the project was supported by the production of thematic papers which stimulated and informed ideas for gathering good practice case studies from each of the cities. Transnational Thematic Meetings allowed partners to discuss findings and learn more about areas of shared interest or expertise. The resulting conference reports summarised the activities and highlighted the key points arising from the research and case studies and made links across themes. All this has fed into the production by each city of a Local Action Plan based on the needs of that cities migrant population. A lot of learning was gained for the city of Belfast from particular good practice case studies such as, Düsseldorf's 'China Goes Dus'; Vienna's 'Success Knows No Boundaries' and 'Start Wein' case studies; Dublin's 'Migrant Voters Project' and Bilbao's 'On-Line Multilingual Resource Guide.' (for further details see OPENCities case studies under outouts at www.urbact.eu/opencities)

When gathering examples of good practice within Belfast it became apparent that the city enjoys a growing number of representative organisations working with our existing and newly arrived migrant populations. There is excellent work being carried out by such agencies and many valuable projects addressing the particular needs of diverse populations currently exist, a selection of Belfast Good Practice Case Studies are further detailed in our publication 'The Best of Belfast'. This no doubt is a reflection of the fact that unlike some of our partners, Belfast is fortunate to have a range of funding sources available to support such work; from a variety of EU Programmes including Belfast City Council's Peace III programme, to the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister small grants programme, as well as various trusts and grant bodies. There is of course a continued need for such resourcing to continue.

A key realisation made within the OPENCities project is that skilled and non-skilled migrants are an essential enabler of the economic development of any growing and competitive city. It is however not possible for a diverse city to be truly competitive without real consideration, planning, policy and investment in the integration of new and existing communities. Access to information, services and knowledge of rights and entitlements are also essential to all members of our community, hence the recommendation for the multilingual online resource and support for advice giving projects. The importance of city leadership in creating a vision, in influencing and shaping positive public attitudes toward our new inhabitants cannot be over-emphasised, hence the acknowledgement of the need to build their capacity to do so. Local Support Group members recognised the importance of raising awareness amongst indigenous populations of the value of diversity; of the essential contribution migrants make to the overall NI economy, hence the recommendation for resourcing of local projects, festivals and antiracism training.

The entrepreneurial activity and potential for developing trade links through migrant communities, businesses and students has to date remained largely untapped, hence the recommendations to build on Belfast's international reputation as an increasingly attractive and open city which supports creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in and to encourage the formation, growth and internationalisation of migrant businesses.

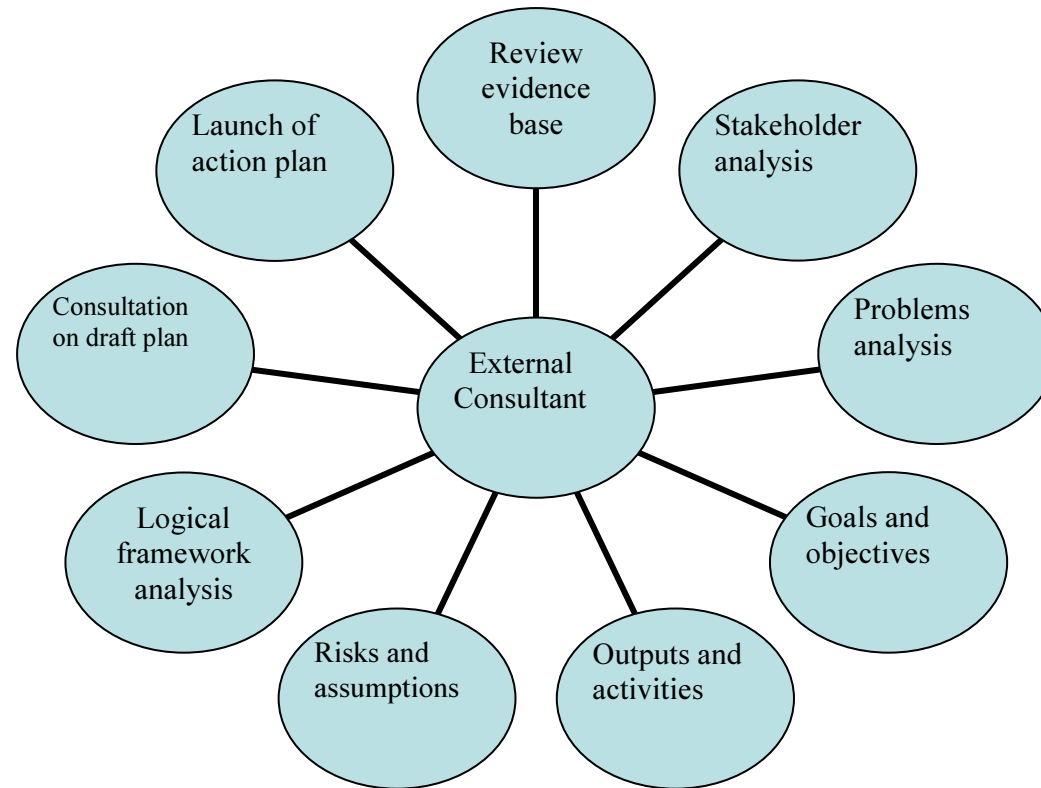
We would like to acknowledge and emphasise that many excellent projects already exist in advance of the development of Belfast's Local Action Plan. Our recommendations do not mean to suggest the creation of additional initiatives but would encourage partners or potential funders to support and resource many of those projects already doing great work. The success of our Local Action Plan is dependent on other 'actors' acknowledging the learning gained between transnational partners working for positive social change. These 'actors' need to step up to the mark to resource what international good practice and expert analysis has said is necessary to enable the city to position itself as a location for international business. Other agencies have been identified as having key responsibility for some of the proposals contained within the LAP and their support is essential in ensuring our city is able to capitalise on migration, in attracting valuable skills for leading economic sectors, in facilitating understanding between cultures, in supporting partners working for positive social change and essentially in helping improve city life for all.

IV. Local Support Group and Local Action Plan Development

Belfast's Local Support Group (LSG) included locally elected officials, representatives of various local administrative departments, Managing Authorities and representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations working with migrant communities and stakeholders across the city. The LSG worked to maximise the impact of the transnational exchange of practice between cities, ensuring that ideas emerging from the project were realistic and viable at a local level. Presentations on the draft Local Action Plan were made to representatives of all Managing Authorities and internally to Belfast City Councils Policy Officers Group.

The Local Support Group contributed to implementing transnational activities by attending thematic meetings and selecting the cities good practice case studies. The LSG members were able to take key messages generated from within the OPENCities project to a far wider audience. They mobilised stakeholders, defined needs and actions and co-produced the Local Action Plan (LAP). The draft LAP was presented for review to OPENCities partners at our fourth thematic meeting in Sofia. A public consultation was also held in Belfast with representatives of migrant groups and feedback from both events shaped the final plan. Members of Belfast LSG are the key to ensuring the project has a long-lasting legacy once the URBACT project is finished.

V. Local Action Plan Process & Methodology



In developing the Belfast LAP, the LSG employed an external consultant, Louise O’Meara, from the Interaction Institute for Social Change. The approach this Institute uses is fundamentally underpinned by the following belief:

“If you bring the appropriate people together in constructive ways and with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organisation or community.” David Chrislip in ‘The Collaborative Leadership Handbook’

The *Interaction Method* is a facilitated approach for building understanding, generating agreement and helping people take concerted action. This approach was used in supporting the LSG to develop this Plan. The components of the approach are as follows:

Shared Responsibility

The *principle* that everyone in a conversation can play an active and positive role in producing meaningful results.

Collaborative Attitude

The *mindset* that guides individuals to act in a cooperative and impactful manner.

Strategic Thinking

The *mental process* of selecting an appropriate course of action to achieve desired results.

Facilitative Behaviours

The *practical tools, techniques and actions* that help people build understanding and agreement.

The process of developing this Plan involved the design and facilitation of a number of interactive and participative events. The LSG collaborated over the course of a series of bespoke planning workshops between April and October 2010 at which they developed the Plan, using the broad URBRACK template and guidelines. Over the course of these workshops participants:

- reviewed and amended the Introduction Section of the Plan including the Problems, the Baseline, and Consultation;
- agreed a Vision to guide the Plan;
- worked under each of the three themes to agree goals, actions and activities.

Once a core draft plan was agreed a public consultation event was held in at which the views of migrant people and other stakeholders were solicited. These views were taken on board by the LSG when it met at a final workshop to revise and agree the Plan. For each workshop a set of desired outcomes was developed and a process facilitated whereby participants achieved the set outcomes and reached consensus on the core elements of the Plan as presented here. This focused and collaborative approach has ensured that the Plan finally agreed has the full buy-in of the participating organisations and will, we believe, ensure smooth and fulsome implementation.

BELFAST
City Council

LOCAL ACTION
PLAN

VISION
 Belfast is an open, inclusive and welcoming city which embraces the diversity of needs, aspirations and contributions of migrant and existing populations living, working and learning here.

THEME 1:
 INTERGRATION & INCLUSION

THEME 2:
 LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

THEME 3:
 INTERNATIONALISATION

GOAL: To encourage understanding and integration through provision of access to information/knowledge about living and working in NI. (available in their country of origin as well as locally.)

GOAL: To support the development of leadership which strengthens cohesion, sharing and integration.

GOAL: To build on Belfast's international reputation as an increasingly attractive and open city which supports creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Objective 1:
 Develop a multi-lingual on-line information hub, targeting migrant populations as well as the wider community.

Objective 2: Raise awareness of, and provide expert advice to migrants on their rights and entitlements.

Objective 3: Deliver a migrant support programme that promotes cohesion, sharing and integration.

Objective 4: Develop initiatives that build leadership capacity at all levels across the city.

Objective 5: Encourage the formation, growth and internationalisation of migrant businesses.

Objective 6: Promote Belfast internationally as an open city.

ACTIONS
1.1 Establish an expert group to manage the project.
1.2 Undertake a scoping exercise to identify best practice.
1.3 Establish and maintain an online multi-lingual information hub for migrant and existing populations.

ACTIONS
2.1. Continue research and consultation into needs and existing service provision for migrants.
2.2 Develop programmes to build the capacity of advice workers to address migrant needs.

ACTIONS
3.1 Deliver quality migrant awareness and anti-racism training programmes.
3.2 Support and initiate cultural and integration festivals and programmes throughout the city.
3.3 Build the capacity of migrant groups to identify, take action and advocate for their needs.
3.4 Develop programmes to increase migrants' awareness of Belfast's current and historical political, social and cultural context.
3.5 Liaise with language class providers to ensure provision meets the needs of migrants.

ACTIONS
4.1 Deliver quality migrant awareness and anti-racism training programmes to local leaders.
4.2 Promote and secure political support to sign and implement the Eurocities Inclusive Cities Charter.
4.3 Support greater engagement and collaboration within and between political, civic and community leaders, migrant organisations, business communities and relevant agencies.
4.4 Support leadership development within migrant organisations to enable them to take action and advocate for migrant needs,

ACTIONS
5.1 Identify factors in current provision that prevent migrant businesses from accessing support services.
5.2 Improve access to existing programmes and deliver to migrants to build their entrepreneurial capacity.
5.3 Research and establish specific programmes to build the capacity of migrant entrepreneurial activity locally and internationally.
5.4 Build greater links between existing business support services and migrants.
5.5 Maximise opportunities to build on and establish trade links with the migrant entrepreneurial community, locally and internationally.

ACTIONS
6.1 Explore and action a range of opportunities to promote Belfast.
6.2 Target people who have studied in Belfast to remain, start a business or work.
6.3 Attract and retain international talent including students, business people, entrepreneurs and innovators etc.
6.4. Support culture, arts and other events that promote creativity and raise the profile of Belfast as an open city.

Issue - Information gap on rights & entitlements, such as medical care, housing, education					
Goal	To encourage understanding and integration through the provision of access to information/knowledge about living and working in NI				
Objective	Develop a multi-lingual on-line information hub, targeting migrant populations as well as the wider community				
Actions	Activities	Risks and Assumptions	Potential Funding	Stakeholders & Partners	Timescales
1.1 Establish an expert group to manage and oversee the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop terms of reference - Identify funding opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficulty in sourcing funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peace III/BCC - Dept of Communities (UK Border Agency) 	Belfast Migrant Forum together with Belfast City Council (BCC), OPENCities Local Support Group, NI Local Government Agency (NILGA), UK Borders Agency	- 2010/11
1.2 Undertake a scoping exercise to identify best practice and develop the sites structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research existing information hub models - Develop website/hub structure based on local need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordability - Will it be fit for purpose? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peace III/BCC - Dept of Communities (UK Border Agency) 	Belfast Migrant Forum in collaboration with Local Support Group, NILGA, UKBA	- 2010/11
1.3 Establish and maintain an online multi-lingual information hub for migrant populations as well as the wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data gathered from statutory and voluntary groups - Produce a tender for the design and content provision - Develop a marketing and promotional campaign to raise awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information becomes old and inaccurate - Duplications - Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peace III/BCC (actioned) and/or - Dept of Communities (UK Border Agency) 	Belfast City Council, NILGA, UKBA	- 2011

Issue - Need for specialist knowledge and advice on rights such as employment issues.					
Goal	To ensure that migrant people have easy access to timely, usable information/knowledge about living and working in NI, available in their country of origin as well as locally.				
Objective	To support the capacity of advice workers to advise migrants on their rights and entitlements				
Actions	Activities	Risks and Assumptions	Potential Funding	Stakeholders & Partners	Timescales
2.1 Continue research and consultation into the needs of and existing advice service provision for migrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out an audit of existing provision - Carry out needs analysis for advice workers - Maintain ongoing consultation with migrants 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Structural Funds - Dept of Employment & Learning (DEL) 	Belfast City Council Migrant Forum	- 2010/11
2.2 Develop training programmes to build the capacity of advice workers to address migrant needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design programmes. - Deliver programmes targeting multi-lingual migrants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Costs of interpreters and translation - Legal requirements re provision of advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peace III/Belfast City Council (actioned) - Future European Social Funds - Leonardo Programme 	Belfast City Council, Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), Dept Employment & Learning, Law Centre NI, Citizens Advice, Trade Unions, Migrant Forum, UK Border agency	- 2010/11

Issue - Opportunities for integration, language support and actions to raise awareness amongst local communities on issues relating to migration					
Goal	To ensure that migrant people have easy access to timely, usable information/knowledge about living and working in NI, available in their country of origin as well as locally.				
Objective	Deliver a migrant support funding programme that supports good relations, diversity and integration.				
Actions	Activities	Risks and Assumptions	Potential Funding	Stakeholders & Partners	Timescales
3.1 Deliver quality migrant awareness and anti-racism training programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to deliver effective programme. - Develop and deliver <i>Training for Trainers</i> programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not meeting target audiences "preaching to the converted" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peace III/BCC (actioned) 	BCC Good Relations Unit, South Belfast Round Table	- 2010 onwards
3.2 Support and initiate cultural and integration festivals and programmes throughout the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage new ideas and programmes - Support partners and community groups in their activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural stereotyping - Difficulty engaging local people - Political and local tensions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peace III/BCC (actioned) 	BCC Good Relations Unit, OFMDFM, Community Relations Council, South Belfast Roundtable.	- 2010 onwards
3.3 Build the capacity of migrant groups to identify, take action and advocate for their needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide good practice guidance - Provide governance training - Support and increase the capacity of emerging group - Identify support needs through consultations. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future European Social Funds, - Peace III/Belfast City Council 	NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM), BCC, NI Council for Voluntary Action.	- 2010 onwards
3.4 Develop programmes to increase migrants' awareness of Belfast's current & historical political, social and cultural context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design and deliver a series of integration projects and events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biased information - Possibility of scaring migrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Structural Funds - EU Programmes - Peace III/BCC 	GEMS, Ulster Peoples College, Universities, Community Dialogue, Ulster Museum, Arts Council, BCC Tourism and Arts...	- 2010 onwards
3.5 Liaise with language class providers to ensure provision meets the needs of migrants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate language needs of migrant workers to language class providers. - Lobby for provision where necessary. - Encourage employers to provide classes in the workplace. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dept of Education & Learning 	Belfast Migrant Forum, Business in the Community (BIC), Belfast Metropolitan College (BCM), GEMS, DEL	- 2010 onwards

Issue - Need for programmes to build entrepreneurial capacity of migrant populations					
Goal	Support the development of accountable leadership which promotes cohesion, sharing and integration.				
Objective	Deliver effective leadership at all levels across the city.				
Actions	Activities	Risks and Assumptions	Potential Funding	Stakeholders & Partners	Timescales
4.1 Promote and secure political & civic support to sign and implement the Eurocities Inclusive Cities Charter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a wider Belfast charter for action and promote to local leaders. - Harness public support. - Develop a B-Inclusive promotional campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of credibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peace III/Belfast City Council 	Belfast City Council, Good Relations Unit & Good Relations Partnership	- 2010/11
4.2 Deliver quality migrant awareness and anti-racism training programmes to local leaders, linking with the <i>Shared City Programme</i> among others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a framework that captures the characteristics of good open city leaders. - Target champions to facilitate outreach and delivery. - Deliver the programme and build capacity of other trainers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not meeting target audiences "preaching to the converted" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peace III/Belfast City Council (actioned) 	BCC Good Relations Unit, South Belfast Round Table	- 2010 onwards
4.3 Support greater engagement and collaboration within and between political leaders, migrant organisations, and relevant agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased support for migrant initiatives and issues from political parties - Explore common purpose leadership - Establish a networking event for leaders - Create a leadership award to encourage active participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unwillingness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peace III/Belfast City Council (BCC) (actioned) 	Leaders from political, voluntary and business sectors	- 2010 onwards
4.4 Support existing and future leadership development within migrant organisations to enable them to take action and advocate for migrant needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope existing capacity. - Design and deliver Programme(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gatekeepers may block initiatives... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Structural Funds - Peace III/BCC 	Belfast Migrant Forum, BCC, NICEM, CRC, Community Foundation NI.	- 2011 onwards

Goal	To build on Belfast's International reputation as an increasingly attractive and open city which supports creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship				
Objective	Encourage the formation and growth of migrant business to grow and internationalise				
Actions	Activities	Risks and Assumptions	Potential Funding	Stakeholders & Partners	Timescales
5.1 Identify factors in current provision that are impeding migrant business uptake to inform future provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation with prospective users - Mapping of business support service provision for Belfast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited demand for such courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ERDF, - Interreg, - BCC - Collaboration between NI councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCC Economic Development Unit - Migrant Businesses 	- 2011
5.2 Improve access to existin programmes and deliver to migrants to build their entrepreneurial capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information on services available & why not used - Needs Analysis Paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited demand for such courses - Low risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ERDF, - Interreg, - BCC - Collaboration between NI councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCC EDU - Belfast Metropolitan College (BMET) - Local Enterprise Agencies, Community & Social Economy Agencies - DEL 'Steps to Work' 	- 2011
5.3 Research and establish specific programmes to build the capacity of migrant entrepreneurial activity locally and internationally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resources - budget availability & level of demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Structural Funding Programmes, - Interreg - Dept Enterprise Trade & Investment (DETI), - Invest NI, - BCC Economic Development Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local & Central government - BCC - Invest NI - Dept Employment & Learning (DEL) - Belfast Metropolitan College - Private sector delivery 	- 2012
5.4 Build greater links between existing business support services for migrants based on current needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold an annual networking and information event to improve co-ordination and increase uptake of business support services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council having resources to deliver this role - Assuring cultural barriers are addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Structural Funding Prog - Interreg, - DETI, - Invest NI, - BCC EDU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCC EDU - Business Enterprise Network - BCC as advocates for LAP present formally to Invest NI 	- 2011
5.5 Maximise opportunities to build on and establish trade links with the migrant entrepreneurial community, locally and internationally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore and identify potential trade opportunities by working with existing migrant communities, businesses to feed on to Invest NI - Run initial seminars to get started 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not easy to identify real market opportunities and may take lots of speculative work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DETI, - Invest NI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCC Economic Development Unit to work in partnership with Invest NI 	- 2012

Issue – Need to promote Belfast as an 'Open, welcoming and creative city' internationally to further develop its economic potential					
Goal	To build on Belfast's international reputation as an increasingly attractive and open city which supports creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.				
Objective	Promote Belfast internationally as an open city.				
Actions	Activities	Risks and Assumptions	Potential Funding	Stakeholders & Partners	Timescales
6.1 Explore and action a range of opportunities to promote Belfast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify key cultural activities, meet with & encourage agencies to promote Belfast as an OPEN & welcoming city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is this already happening with NITB? Co-ordinating actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCC, - Invest NI, - Belfast - Metropolitan College - Belfast City Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NI Tourist Board - BCC EDU - Arts Sector organisations. - Belfast Visitors Convention Bureau. 	- 2011
6.2 Target people who have studied in Belfast to remain, start a business or work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop materials for distribution in educational institutions - Deliver seminars - Encourage ongoing contact between universities & students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government policy on Immigration - In the current economic climate jobs may not be available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast City Council, - Invest NI, - Belfast Metropolitan College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universities & Alumni Organisations - Belfast Metropolitan College (BMET) - Invest NI - BCC EDU - DEL 	- 2010
6.3 Attract and retain international talent including students, business people, entrepreneurs and innovators etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop & distribute PR materials selling NI as a destination to live & work & do business in - Develop a Friends of Belfast "E-SHOT" to international organisations-Diaspora-friends and family. - Promote Business Friendly policies and supportive environment in Belfast-with other govt agencies(Invest NI-DEL) - Encourage ex-pats to return home and set up businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government policy on Immigration - Current economic climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast City Council, - Invest NI, - Belfast Metropolitan College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest NI - DEL - BMET - Universities 	- 2010
6.4 Support culture, arts and other events that promote creativity and raise the profile of Belfast as an open city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrate key cultural, educational & arts activities with business promotion initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued budget support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dept Culture Arts & Leisure (DCAL), - Migrants Forum - via their festivals, - Peace III 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NI Tourist Board - BCC EDU - Arts Sector organisations 	- 2010

Glossary

OPENCities - A British Council project funded by URBACT and led by Belfast City Council in collaboration with a network of European cities. The partner cities include Bilbao, Bucharest, Cardiff, Dublin, Dusseldorf, Nitra, Poznan, Sofia and Vienna. URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

URBACT - A European exchange and learning programme²⁰ promoting sustainable urban development. URBACT enables CITIES to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges.

Thematic Network - A type of URBACT II project focused on exchange and learning activities. Characteristics include a partnership of 8-12 cities, a duration of 36 months, and a city as Lead Partner.

Lead Partner (LP) - It refers to the public authority (local authorities, association of local authorities, universities, development agency...) that lead an URBACT project. All URBACT projects are led by a Lead Partner that is responsible for coordination, implementation and financial management.

Lead expert - A city professional (practitioner, researcher, academic, etc.) who uses his/her expertise to help an URBACT project. Every project has a 'Lead Expert' who helps the project for its entire duration by providing support in terms of both content and working methods. The Lead expert of the 'OPENCities' URBACT project was Ian Goldring and the Thematic Expert was Greg Clark:
<http://www.gregclark.net/> .

Local Action Plan (LAP) - URBACT partners develop a LAP in response to local issues. It aims at increasing the impact of URBACT exchanges on local policies and practices. It should provide pragmatic, precise solutions based on the results of the transnational exchanges. It should be jointly produced with the Local Support Group.

Local Support Group (LSG) - All URBACT project partners commit to establishing and leading an URBACT Local Support Group to make sure that exchanges have an impact on local practices and policies.

Baseline study - Compiling information about the starting point of any project or initiative against which improvement can be measured later. Each URBACT project baseline study includes a 'state of the art' on the issue at European level, a set of partner profiles and a profile of each partner city.

Managing authority of Operational Programmes - organisation responsible for managing European funds at national level.

Fast Track label - The European Commission may give this label (and specific support) to Thematic Networks that develop strong participation of Managing Authorities and whose theme falls under the priorities of the Commission's 'Regions for Economic Change' initiative.

Migrant worker - Someone who leaves their country with the intention of seeking work elsewhere. In practice the words are usually applied today to people who do not intend to remain permanently in the host country.

Economic migrant - Anyone who moves from their home country to improve their economic situation can be termed an 'economic migrant'. This term is sometimes used in a derogatory way, to throw suspicion on people's motives in seeking asylum. In fact, poverty and economic deprivation, as well as violence, are tools of those who persecute individuals and groups of people. Most economic migrants simply seek a better life for themselves and their families, as many people from Ireland have done for generations.

Immigrant - This term has been applied to all people coming into the country to work, but it is now often applied to people who intend to settle and integrate here, as opposed to being a more temporary 'migrant worker'. People who are part of long-established ethnic communities and populations are not 'immigrants'.

Asylum seeker - Someone who has a well-founded fear of persecution by reason of their race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion, in their own country, and seeks refuge in another country.

Refugee - Someone who applies for asylum, and is successful in being granted refugee status, under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to Refugees. 'Refugee' is also the general term for all people who have been displaced from their own countries by persecution, war and civil unrest.

A8 - The 'Accession Eight' eastern European countries joining the European Union on 1st May 2004 – Czech Republic, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and Estonia.

A8+A2 - The A8 plus Bulgaria and Romania - the two countries joining the European Union on 1st January 2007

GVA - Gross value added is the difference between output and intermediate consumption for any given sector/industry. That is the difference between the value of goods and services produced and the cost of raw materials and other inputs which are used up in production. It is a common measure of the value of economic output, which is primarily made up of wages and profits.

GDP – Gross Domestic Product is a measure of the total economic activity occurring in the UK. It can be measured in three ways:

- **Production**
Measures the *Gross Domestic Product* as the sum of all the *Value Added* by all activities which produce goods and services. (see *Gross Value Added*).
- **Income (GDP(I))**
Measures the *Gross Domestic Product* as the total of incomes earned from the production of goods and services.
- **Expenditure (GDP(E))**
Measures the *Gross Domestic Product* as the total of all expenditures made either in consuming finished goods and services or adding to wealth, less the cost of imports.

Net Migration - The excess (or deficit) of in-migrants over out-migrants

Points-based system - A new immigration system introduced in 2008 to ensure that only those with the right skills or the right contribution can come to the UK to work or study, where points are awarded according to workers' skills, age, experience etc.

Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) - Worker Registration Scheme, the compulsory registration mechanism through which the UK Border Agency records the arrival of migrants seeking employment from the A8 countries. The self-employed from A8 countries are not required to register on the scheme, which ends in May 2011.

Lisbon Treaty - The Treaty of Lisbon provides the Union with the legal framework and tools necessary to meet the challenges it faces and to respond to citizens' demands. The Treaty entered into force on 1 December 2009, in accordance with its Article 6, it is a legal and binding treaty that governs all aspects of the EU for a ten-year period.

Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth - Europe 2020 is the new 10-year vision of Europe's social market economy for the European Union. The Europe 2020 strategy put forward by the Commission sets out a vision of Europe's social market economy for the 21st century. It shows how the EU can come out stronger from the crisis and how it can be turned into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. To deliver rapid and lasting results, stronger economic governance will be required.

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TABLES

Figure 1 - Share of Immigrants in the UK Working-Age Population – Labour Force Survey 2009

Figure 2 - Number of Initial Work Applications from A8 Immigrants, 2004 to 2009 - Home Office et al., various years.

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Web: www.opencities.eu

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Annex: B – UK Immigration Policy Table 1971-2009

Annex B - UK Immigration Policy 1971-2007

Policy/Legislation	Type	Year	Overview
Immigration Act	Act of Parliament	1971	Focused on legislation and established strong control procedures, which included new legal distinctions between the rights of the UK born/UK passport-holders and people from former British colonies- who became subject to Immigration Laws
Race Relations Act	Act of Parliament	1976	Integration, inspired by US Civil Rights Movement
British Nationality Act	Act of Parliament	1981	Removed the automatic right of citizenship to all those born on British soil
Asylum & Immigration Appeals Act	Acts of Parliament	1993	Limits and control on Asylum Seeker movement
Immigration & Asylum Act	Acts of Parliament	1996	Increased limits on Asylum Seeker numbers and reduction in welfare provision
Fairer, Faster & Firmer: A Modern Approach to Immigration & Asylum	White Paper	1998	Instituted new controls but also a "covenant" with asylum seekers; emphasized "joined up" government and the need for administrative overhaul.
Human Rights Act	Parliamentary Act	1998	Incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law, giving human rights the status of "higher law."
Immigration & Asylum Act	Parliamentary Act	1999	Created a "covenant" with asylum seekers but generally restrictive; made provisions for a new welfare support system (the National Asylum Support Service).
Race Relations (Amendment) Act	Parliamentary Act	2000	Broadened antidiscrimination legislation to police and immigration service and created "positive duty" for race equality on public authorities.
Antiterrorism, Crime & Security Act	Parliamentary Act	2001	Part 4 of the act legislated that suspected terrorists who were immigrants could be interned (potentially on a permanent basis). The Special Immigration Appeals Commission (SIAC) reviews decisions, but the act does not permit judicial review of the SIAC.
Secure Borders, Safe Havens: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain	White Paper	2002	Set out comprehensive reform, including the goal of "managed migration"
The Nationality, Immigration & Asylum Act	Parliamentary Act	2002	Increased restrictions on asylum (breaking the previous "covenant") and new enforcement powers, but noted support of economic migration.



Highly Skilled Migrant Program (HSMP)	Change to regulations	2002	Created an immigration scheme based on points that aims to attract high-skilled migrants.
Asylum & Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act	Parliamentary Act	2004	Further reduced asylum appeal rights and other restrictive measures.
Controlling our Borders: Making Migration Work for Britain	Policy strategy	2005	A race-equality strategy designed to cut across government, complemented by a cross-cutting, race-equality target, and overseen by a board of senior public figures.
Integration Matters: The National Integration Strategy for Refugees	Policy Strategy	2005	Strategy meant to integrate refugees, including new "integration loans" and the piloting of a one-to-one caseworker model. Built on strategy formulated in 2000.
A Points-Based System: Making Migration Work for Britain	Policy Strategy	2006	Proposed a five-tier economic migration system. Tiers equate to categories: (1) high skilled, (2) skilled with job offer, (3) low skilled, (4) students, and (5) miscellaneous.
Immigration, Asylum, & Nationality (IAN) Act	Parliamentary Act	2006	Mainly focused on immigration (rather than asylum), it included restrictions on appeal rights, sanctions on employers of unauthorized labour, and a tightening of citizenship rules.
Fair, Effective, Transparent & Trusted: Rebuilding Confidence in Our Immigration System	Reform Strategy	2006	Created the arm's-length Border and Immigration Agency, which replaced the Immigration and Nationality Directorate on April 2, 2007.
Enforcing the Rules: A Strategy to Ensure & Enforce Compliance with Our Immigration Laws	Policy Strategy	2007	Called for secure border control built on biometric visas and greater checks.
UK Borders Bill	Parliamentary Bill	2007	Proposes police powers for immigration officers and a requirement that foreign nationals must have a Biometric Immigration Document (BID).
Borders, Citizenship & Immigration Act	Parliamentary Act	2009	Merges customs & immigration powers in a unified border force and provides extensive powers to immigration officers. Introduced new Pathway to Citizenship requirements due to come into force in 2011.

Source: International Passenger Survey¹



European Union
European Regional Development Fund

¹ http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ssd/surveys/international_passenger_survey.asp

Connecting cities
Building successes



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Belfast City Council
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Annex: C – OPENCities Thematic Learning



Annex C - OPENCities Thematic Learning

LEADERSHIP and GOVERNANCE: understanding the characteristics, motivations and building blocks required for effective city leadership in creating a more open city;

INTERNATIONALISATION: considering the key aspects required to develop a successful international city, open to international populations and the key ingredients required for city success;

INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION: understanding the advantages of having a diverse city; the need for a shared approach and ten key principles in successfully managing diversity, inclusion and integration.

10 Most Important Points in Facilitating OPENNESS

1. Recognise Different Agendas and Cases for Openness
2. Adopt an Integrated Approach to Openness
3. Develop an OPENCity Strategy
4. Partner with Governments and Voluntary and Private Sector
5. Facilitate the Openness Process and Institutionalise It
6. Adopt Approaches that Foster Openness
7. Strengthen the City's Openness By Appointing a Champion or Champions
8. Identify and Promote Local "International" Assets
9. Engage in International Knowledge Sharing Activities
10. Showcase Your OPENCity.

The characteristics of a successful leader of an open city

- Political will - Willingness to spend political capital and city funds on issues related to building open cities.
- Foresight - Ability to look beyond the pressing problems of the day to what lies ahead for the city community and how a successful future can be achieved.
- Perseverance - Staying the course and not being dissuaded by setbacks or opposition.
- Commitment - Making a personal commitment to inclusiveness and to challenging biased attitudes.
- Flexibility - Being open to new and different people, cultures, and approaches.
- Respect - Showing deference to all types of people, cultures, and approaches.
- Honesty - Being straightforward in approach and communication.
- Vulnerability - Being willing to misstep, to admit mistakes, to be open to criticism.
- Appreciation of history - Understanding and appreciating the history behind the feelings and actions of the various members of the community, and the local history related to immigration and discrimination.

Underlying motivations which help city leaders make the case for openness:

- Globalisation, Specialisation, Agglomeration, and Talent Attraction.
- Population and skills replacement.
- Managing diversity better.
- Advantage of diversity and cosmopolitanism.

Building Blocks for Effective Leadership and Governance for OPENCities

- Leaders need to promote integration, diversity and openness
- Adopt a long-term integrated approach to openness – integration and internationalisation
- Be cautious of the impact the media can have on perceptions
- Balance between indigenous and migrant populations
- Promote trust and good relations within neighbourhoods, to increase understanding and acceptance
- Policies, structures and resources to facilitate integration are mainstreamed
- Need to reconcile national policies and local approaches
- Value of family approaches to engagement and networks
- Need to have networks, partnerships and alliances across the public, private and voluntary sectors



- Develop comprehensive information tools, e.g. one stop shops, websites, knowledge management tools
- Encourage the use of common spaces
- Facilitate access to local democratic structures
- Engage in international knowledge sharing exercises

10 Most Important Points for Internationalisation

1. Base strategy on thorough, all-encompassing prior research
2. Identify and foster niche specialisations
3. Build a strong, stable business environment
4. Ensure the plan covers all themes - events, firms, institutions and populations
5. Engage local stakeholders and formalise relationships
6. Use mechanisms that ensure mutually beneficial interaction with international actors
7. Communicate - promote the benefits to the city's people and continue to up-skill domestically
8. Consolidate the city administration to avoid duplication and gain visibility
9. Plan for the long term - internationalisation takes decades
10. Monitor, evaluate and improve the plan at regular intervals as part of an iterative process

Ingredients of City Success

Shorter-term (one or two business cycles):

- Connectivity and accessibility.
- Economic breadth.
- Quality of life, place, and amenity.
- Skills of labour force.
- Innovation and creativity.
- Business environment, entrepreneurship and city cost-base.
- Image and identity.
- Leadership and implementation of strategy.

Longer-term (five to ten business cycles):

- Diversity and Openness to international populations.
- Power (and adaptability) of the city region identity and brand.
- Location and access to growing markets.
- Role in fostering/brokering international trade.
- Power and influence of language and regulatory/legal/financial systems.
- Depth of artistic, architectural and cultural endowment.
- City-regional leadership and effective investment advocacy.
- Adaptation to climate change.
- Success in adjusting to shocks, and luck/skill in being on the right side of conflicts.
- Investment in the city from all sources (including higher tiers of government).

The Business Advantage of Diversity

- Labour Pool Advantages
- Creation of new markets
- Connectivity advantages
- Creativity and entrepreneurship
- Talent attraction
- Attracting international firms

Advantages of having a diverse City

- Enhance quality of life and place by adding variety and difference to the existing cultural landscape of a city;
- Bring new skills, ideas and approaches to a city's working environment;
- Reinforce a city's reputation for tolerance, flexibility, adaptability and openness which could enhance its international identity;
- Contribute to the creative, artistic and entrepreneurial spirit of a city;
- Connect the city to international markets through global social networks.

A Shared Approach to Managing Diversity

The city is just one of many key actors in the urban ecosystem of diversity management. OPENCities has identified a total of five signification groups and the types of role that they have been observed to play:

- National Government. Sets legislation and policy frameworks as well as qualification rules and regulations
- City government. Translates national policy locally and sets appropriate strategies which link, promote and co-ordinates existing and future activities.
- Voluntary and civic sector. Less formal, culturally sensitive and grass-roots approach to diversity management.
- The private sector. A key player in assurance of equality in procurement and the labour market.
- The Media. Plays a key role in telling positive stories, recognising value and impacts even in the bad times such as recession conditions.

The approach to diversity management is a complex one which needs to be joined-up, co-ordinated, bottom up, top down, strategic and practical, local and global. There is a requirement to look at the entire system of diversity management and create a seamless approach to leverage the potential benefits of diversity more effectively.

Ten clear principles for managing Diversity, Integration and Inclusion

1. Focus on the positive contribution that international talent and migrants can make to city economies.
2. The City must take a leadership role in managing diversity and inclusion.
3. Innovation and flexibility is essential to effective service delivery.
4. Develop your approach with the human-scale at centre-stage.
5. Scale up your successful initiatives.
6. Most initiatives should work on both sides of the equation.
7. International populations require targeted differentiated approaches.
8. Focus on what will work for the duration of a business cycle.
9. Smart evaluation is needed to enhance effectiveness.
10. Diversity management can be addressed indirectly.

Sources: Understanding OPENCities, Greg Clark, British Council 2010:

http://opencities.britishcouncil.org/web/download/understanding_opencities.pdf

Leadership and Governance, Greg Clark, British Council 2010:

http://opencities.britishcouncil.org/web/download/leadership_and_governance.pdf

Internationalisation, Greg Clark, British Council 2010:

http://opencities.britishcouncil.org/web/index.php?internationalisation_en

Managing Diversity, Greg Clark, British Council 2010:

http://opencities.britishcouncil.org/web/index.php?managing_diversity_en

Belfast City Council
OPENCities Local Action Plan
2011

Annex: D - Belfast City Council Baseline 2008

1	Belfast	UK
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Brief Description of City

Belfast is the capital city of Northern Ireland and the second largest city on the island of Ireland with a population of 267,000. Over the past number of years, the importance of manufacturing to the city's economy has diminished, being replaced with an increasing service sector. The port of Belfast still handles over 60% of Northern Ireland's sea borne trade and almost 20% for the entire island of Ireland. The Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan was adopted in 2005 and shapes the development of the greater Belfast area including plans for homes, local facilities, factories, schools and supermarkets. Belfast is divided into nine smaller urban districts, themselves divided into wards. Each of the 51 wards has its own elected councillors. The city is part of a Larger Urban Zone (LUZ) of 647,000 inhabitants. Belfast's metropolitan area has nearly 40% of its population and its travel-to-work area includes nearly half of the entire population. The city is also home to two universities; and economically, it sustains a third of Northern Ireland's jobs.

Belfast has enjoyed over a decade of sustained investment and is one of the fastest growing regional economies in the UK. As well as this sustained economic growth in Belfast, the city is also going through a period of rapid physical regeneration and development. The city skyline is rapidly changing, with large scale developments taking place at an unprecedented rate. Meanwhile phase one of Europe's largest waterfront development, the £1 billion Titanic Quarter project is now underway. Work has also progressed on improving the transport infrastructure. As the civic leader of Northern Ireland's capital, Belfast City Council continues to work with our partners in government and elsewhere to realise the vision of Belfast as a progressive twenty first century capital with a vibrant innovation led economy where people are proud to live work and visit.

Belfast has experienced the pressures of industrial decline every bit as much as other cities in Great Britain and Europe. Since the last war manufacturing industries have steadily left Belfast. By 1971 Belfast City still had 65,000 people working in manufacturing, 33.6% of the workforce. By 2001 only a rump of 16,000 was left, with almost half of these employed by one aircraft manufacturer. The fastest growing large sectors for several decades have been the financial and business services. This is true of the UK and of most other advanced economies. In Belfast, financial and business services overtook manufacturing as a major employer in 1992 and this sector now employs well over twice as many people as manufacturing. Financial and business services have grown faster in Belfast than other UK cities over the same period, albeit from a relatively small base.

In reality of course, like other major European regional capital cities, Belfast is the nerve centre of the local economy. Its importance lies in its roles as a provider of specialised services and as a centre of government, higher education, transport, communications and cultural infrastructure. It is the source of a wide range of specialised and sophisticated professional and business services. These include corporate law, tax consultancy, international banking, investment banking, advertising, public relations, major architectural practices, engineering consultants, insurance brokers and many others.

GDP Per Head	€36,013 (2006)	Unemployment Rate	3.9%
GVA	£26,792 (2005)		
Migrants as Proportion of Local Population	2.1% (2005)		

Economic Indicators

Belfast has almost 30% of the total employment in Northern Ireland (this figure rises to 50% for the Belfast Metropolitan Area). The public sector accounts for almost 39% of total employment. 30,000 additional jobs were created over the last decade in Belfast and close to 23,000 more jobs are forecast between 2005 and 2015.

Labour costs are 15% lower than the UK average. Almost 35% of the working age population is economically inactive as Belfast has one of the lowest working age employment rates in the UK at 65.6%. However the actual unemployment rate is the lowest in many years at 3.9% (this compares to 9.3% in 1997).

The average gross weekly earnings of full time employees in Belfast has increased by 6.12% between 2005 and 2007. The average gross weekly earning of full time employees in Belfast is GBP511.20 in comparison to GBP675.20 for all of Northern Ireland and GBP537 for the rest of the UK. The increasing number of jobs in the city has had a positive effect on unemployment which has fallen dramatically in recent years (from 9.3% in 1997 to 3.9% in 2007).

Economic Migration Issues

Belfast has had for some years a diverse range of minority ethnic and religious communities resident in the city, the most widely recognised of these being the Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Traveller and Jewish communities. However within recent years there has been a change in the nature of inward migration caused mainly by a growing economy and a demand for workers which cannot be met by the local population and by the opening up of the European Union in 2004, which enabled workers from new EU Member states access to the labour market.

Prior to 2004, Belfast had witnessed an increasing number of migrants, mainly nursing staff from South Asia and the Philippines, who were directly recruited to fill vacancies in the health services.

Migrant workers, in Belfast, come from many parts of the world including Europe, the USA and China. According to research carried out by Belfast City Council in 2007, migrant workers in Belfast are mainly from Poland, Slovakia and the Philippines. It is impossible to document the precise number of migrant workers in Belfast as there is no systematic process whereby data is collected and analysed. Research commissioned by the Council, in 2007, illustrated that between April 2004 and March 2006 a minimum of 7,506 new migrants came to Belfast. Current estimates range between 7,000 and 15,000.

Data indicates that there were 4,310 people from a minority ethnic background resident in Belfast, with the largest number being members of the Chinese community, followed by people of 'mixed' ethnic background and people from Indian, Pakistan and Bangladesh (presented in the table as 'South Asian'). The Census data indicates that 30% of the total minority ethnic population lived in Belfast, with 57% of the minority ethnic population of Belfast living in South Belfast.

The Census also reveals that Belfast had a total of 1,409 residents from six non-Christian faith backgrounds. This included 727 Muslims (out of a total of 1,943 Muslims in Northern Ireland), 224 Hindus (of 825 in NI), 202 Buddhists (of 533), 156 Jews (of 365), 58 Sikhs (of 219), and 42 people of the Ba'hai faith (out of 254 across NI). Belfast thus had 34% of the NI population of the six faiths. This data has not been broken down by parliamentary constituency.

It is also worth noting that over half of the Belfast migrants (57%) were living in South Belfast, while 21% were living in East Belfast, 15% in North Belfast and 11% in West Belfast. Finally, South Belfast had far and away the largest number of foreign born residents of any parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland, with nearly twice as many as the next highest constituency (North Down with 2,120 people). But while East Belfast had the sixth highest foreign born population, West Belfast had the third fewest number of foreign born residents and only Mid-Ulster and West Tyrone had less (Bell et al 2004: 123). The migrant population was thus disproportionately dispersed across the city.

Thus the Census data indicates that in 2001 the four Belfast parliamentary constituencies contained:

- 21% of the Northern Ireland population;
- 30% of the minority ethnic population;
- 34% of the minority faith population; and
- 29% of the total migrant population of Northern Ireland.

The recent trends in inward migration to Belfast appear to be driven by a number of factors including:

- The changing political context in Belfast and the relative peace and stability
- EU enlargement in 2004 coincided with economic expansion here
- The lack of skilled labour in certain key areas of the public and private sectors
- The push factors from sending countries, including the new EU member states, where migrant labour is sourced
- The pull factor from existing migrants who are encouraging and assisting friends and relations to access employment in Belfast
- Accessible, affordable international transport
- Continental integration and the reduction of borders
- Over the last decade, around 30,800 new jobs have been created in Belfast. This growth has been met, to some extent, by the new migrant population.

Current immigration appears to be much more rapid than previously and migrant workers are coming from countries without a recent history of immigration to Belfast.

Key Challenges Linked to Migration

Public Sector Policy

- No completely accurate data available to track new immigrants
- Identifying and responding to the diverse needs of new communities
- Ensuring the diverse needs of new migrants are reflected in structures and policies and in the delivery of vital services
- The ability to gain information and communicate easily with migrant communities
- Shortcomings in accurate migration and population statistics which make it harder to predict and plan for change
- Responding to local tensions and negative perceptions around inward migration
- Building links between communities and supporting leadership at a community level to address tensions: The speed of many new communities arriving into a City with a marked history of division, to areas where space is contested and where there are anxieties around limited resources has created tensions
- Constraints on the housing market serve to direct new immigrants into some of the most disadvantaged areas characterised by poor quality housing, high levels of unemployment and stretched public services. The emerging clusters of migrants can often causes tensions.
- The need to foster strong leadership in pursuing an agenda of openness, and in articulating the benefits of diversity and creating a broad sense of belonging for all people.

Migrant Groups

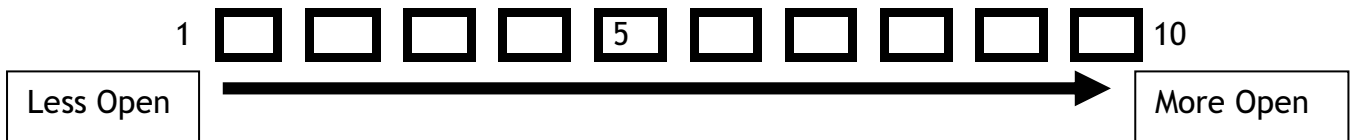
- Migrants have issues related to Equality of access to, and outcome from, service provision
- The lack of a specialised centre for recently arrived migrants to seek help and advice
- Information gap, migrants need good information and access to advice about the law and their rights, language classes, medical care, safe affordable housing etc.
- The combination of open borders and a limited entitlement to benefits means that migrants who fail to find jobs can become homeless and destitute
- Some migrant workers speak little or no English. Local arrangements for teaching English for speakers of other languages rarely meet local demand, access to a basic level of English is essential to achieving a level of participation in society
- More than half of the city's population now lives in wards that are either 90 per cent Protestant or 90 per cent Catholic. This presents challenges for migrants in terms of finding a safe niche within a city where space is contested and where territorialism is rife
- Job insecurity which can lead to pressure to work difficult shifts and long hours
- Poor quality living conditions, migrant workers often end up in multiple occupancy housing
- The difficulty of progressing in the labour market and using one's skills, some migrants are overqualified for their current jobs.
- The right of communities to participate in decisions that impact on their lives.
- Integration V Assimilation
- Risk of treating migrant workers as economic commodities

Promotion/Management of Migration

- Migrant workers are actively sought to fill skills gaps in the labour market in hospitality, tourism, health and construction industries
- Migrants have a good work ethos and are enthusiastic whereas some residents consider some jobs as unsuitable career paths and migrants gladly fill these positions
- Businesses employing migrant workers stress the overwhelming need for migrants to fill both low skilled positions and skilled positions such as engineering
- Many employers are actively undertaking recruitment campaigns in Eastern European countries to fill skills gaps in their workforce. A number expressed a desire to pursue this route to filling labour shortages
- There is a concern that the flow of migrant workers will dissipate, particularly as their home economies begin to grow
- Compared to migrant workers some residents do not share the same work ethic or mentality - they are not as pro-active
- Migrant communities and employers have indicated a need for a centre to accommodate incoming migrants and to help integrate them into NI society i.e. accommodation, culture, healthcare systems etc.
- Important for the city in terms of assisting in the economic development of the city
- Promoting creativity and innovation within the city
- Widening the skills pool within a city
- Promoting openness to wider markets & trade opportunities
- Encouraging entrepreneurship
- Helping the city compete in the international market
- Opening business networks and global contacts
- Making the city a more attractive visitor destination

- Achieving the Council’s aim of being an open, welcoming, shared and peaceful City, where people are connected in a common citizenship.
- If the Belfast economy is to continue to grow, it needs to attract and retain migrant workers. As the flow of migrants from Eastern European countries starts to ‘dry up’, employers need to consider alternative sources in the global marketplace.
- If Belfast is to maximise the potential of migrants who are already in Belfast, migrants need to be encouraged to stay and to integrate with the local community.
- Many migrants are over qualified for the positions that they are already in. Therefore to maximise their full potential employers need to be open minded as to how migrant workers can be integrated and progressed through their business.

On a scale of 1-10 (1 being less open/diverse/tolerant and 10 being extremely open/diverse/tolerant) where would you currently rate your city? This particular question should be answered following discussion with members of the Local Support Group:



Reasons for the OPENNESS Score

Assessing the level of ‘openness’ within Belfast is also difficult as the city is only beginning to emerge from 30 years of conflict and division. Minority ethnic communities are moving into a city still suffering from the legacy of the conflict. Some years ago Belfast was labelled the ‘Race Hate Capital of Europe’. This label was attributed to the city following a series of racist attacks. Certainly during that period it would have been hard to speak of an ‘open city’. However within recent years there have been major initiatives undertaken by various partners and community organisations across the City to create greater ‘openness’ within Belfast.

Belfast City Council organised a consultation exercise with members of the OPENCities Local Support Group to discuss current perceptions to openness. The consensus of opinion was that whereas the City was taking the lead in relation to integration of economic migrants and there was a lot of work ongoing a lot more work needed to be done.

Integration is a problem for migrants within Belfast and the city council and other public bodies have to date allocated insufficient resources to support social and economic integration activities.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The changing political context in Belfast and the relative peace and stability ▪ Economic growth in Belfast ▪ EU enlargement in 2004 coincided with economic expansion here ▪ Accessible, affordable international transport ▪ Continental integration and the reduction of borders ▪ Belfast City Council has various Council initiatives in place for migrant workers. The Council has appointed a good relations officer dedicated to migrant workers, there is a Good Relations Policy in place as well as the Equality Policy. ▪ A Migrants Forum has been set up by Belfast City Council ▪ Welcome packs have been devised in a number of languages available to migrants. ▪ Over the last decade, around 30,800 new jobs have been created in Belfast. ▪ Migrant workers are actively sought to fill skills gaps in the labour market in hospitality, tourism, health and construction industries ▪ Migrants have a good work ethos and are enthusiastic whereas some residents consider some jobs as unsuitable career paths and migrants gladly fill these positions ▪ Many employers are actively undertaking recruitment campaigns in Eastern European countries to fill skills gaps in their workforce. A number expressed a desire to pursue this route to filling labour shortages ▪ Compared to migrant workers some residents do not share the same work ethic or mentality - they are not as pro-active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No completely accurate data available to track new immigrants ▪ The ability to gain information and communicate easily with migrant communities ▪ Shortcomings in accurate migration and population statistics which make it harder to predict and plan for change ▪ Constraints on the housing market serve to direct new immigrants into some of the most disadvantaged areas characterised by poor quality housing, high levels of unemployment and stretched public services. The emerging clusters of migrants can often cause tensions. ▪ Migrants have issues related to Equality of access to, and outcome from, service provision ▪ The lack of a specialised centre for recently arrived migrants to seek help and advice ▪ Information gap, migrants need good information and access to advice about the law and their rights, language classes, medical care, safe affordable housing etc. ▪ Some migrant workers speak little or no English. Local arrangements for teaching English for speakers of other languages rarely meet local demand, access to a basic level of English is essential to achieving a level of participation in society ▪ More than half of the city's population now lives in wards that are either 90 per cent Protestant or 90 per cent Catholic. This presents challenges for migrants in terms of finding a safe niche within a city where space is contested and where territorialism is rife ▪ Job insecurity which can lead to pressure to work difficult shifts and long hours ▪ Poor quality living conditions, migrant workers often end up in multiple occupancy housing ▪ The difficulty of progressing in the labour market and using one's skills, some migrants are overqualified for their current jobs. ▪ The right of communities to participate in decisions that impact on their lives. ▪ Integration V Assimilation
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The lack of skilled labour in certain key areas of the public and private sectors ▪ The pull factor from existing migrants who are encouraging and assisting friends and relations to access employment in Belfast ▪ Identifying and responding to the diverse needs of new communities ▪ Ensuring the diverse needs of new migrants are reflected in structures and policies and in the delivery of vital services ▪ Building links between communities and supporting leadership at a community level to address tensions: The speed of many new communities arriving into a City with a marked history of division, to areas where space is contested and where there are anxieties around limited resources has created tensions ▪ The need to foster strong leadership in pursuing an agenda of openness, and in articulating the benefits of diversity and creating a broad sense of belonging for all people. ▪ Businesses employing migrant workers stress the overwhelming need for migrants to fill both low skilled positions and skilled positions such as engineering ▪ Migrant communities and employers have indicated a need for a centre to accommodate incoming migrants and to help integrate them into NI society i.e. accommodation, culture, healthcare systems etc. ▪ Important for the city in terms of assisting in the economic development of the city ▪ Promoting creativity and innovation within the city ▪ Widening the skills pool within a city ▪ Promoting openness to wider markets & trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responding to local tensions and negative perceptions around inward migration ▪ Risk of treating migrant workers as economic commodities ▪ There is a concern that the flow of migrant workers will dissipate, particularly as their home economies begin to grow

<p>opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encouraging entrepreneurship ▪ Helping the city compete in the international market ▪ Opening business networks and global contacts ▪ Making the city a more attractive visitor destination ▪ Achieving the Council's aim of being an open, welcoming, shared and peaceful City, where people are connected in a common citizenship. ▪ If the Belfast economy is to continue to grow, it needs to attract and retain migrant workers. As the flow of migrants from Eastern European countries starts to 'dry up', employers need to consider alternative sources in the global marketplace. ▪ If Belfast is to maximise the potential of migrants who are already in Belfast, migrants need to be encouraged to stay and to integrate with the local community. ▪ Many migrants are over qualified for the positions that they are already in. Therefore to maximise their full potential employers need to be open minded as to how migrant workers can be integrated and progressed through their business. 	
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Key Expectations for OPENCities Project

- Advice on how to build a solid knowledge/evidence base on migrants in Belfast from the perspective of migrants, employers, service providers etc
- Better understanding of the reasons for the flows of migrants i.e. what are the issues and benefits that they bring, what jobs they are filling, what skills shortages are they addressing, what are the flows i.e. do they come and go, do they stay -what makes them stay and what attracts them, what sectors are they employed in - does this match the future growth sectors of the Belfast economy, what skills are they bringing, where are the migrant communities located in the city - what impact is this having on other communities, what demands are being placed on service providers, what is the impact on population growth/stability
- A practical Local Action Plan prepared in consultation with Local Support Group of things that can be done to make sure there is social and economic integration, exploitation of social and cultural diversity, social, health and economic equality
- Recommendations on how to minimise or maximise the impact on service provision, e.g. education, health etc and provision of sufficient advisory services
- Practical recommendations on how to attract and retain migrant workers - is it necessary to be selective or be open to all? - again linked to economic objective or population growth. Use proactive marketing campaigns or recruitment policies?
- Recommendations on a review and evaluation framework that will evaluate the impact of anything that is implemented - what difference has it made in reality to all the stakeholders
- Learning around the ingredients that create openness, the importance of strong leadership and the need for partnership work will provide an important benchmark for the future work of the Good Relations Unit in addressing issues relating to migrant workers and in working towards promoting Good Relations across the city.

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Belfast City Council

OPENCities Local Action Plan

2011

Annex: D - 'The Best of Belfast' – Best Practice Case Studies

**The Best of Belfast
OPENCities
Belfast City Council
Good Practice Case Studies**

1. Belfast Migrant forum, Belfast City Council – Good Relations Unit
2. A Shared Workplace, A Shared Future – Irish Congress of Trade Unions & Belfast City Council
3. Talk-IT, Allstate NI
4. Bilingual Community Safety Advocacy, Chinese Welfare Association & Polish Association for Northern Ireland
5. South Belfast Integration Project, South Belfast Integration Project
6. Migration Awareness Training, Belfast City Council – Good Relations Unit
7. Meet the Neighbours/War Years Remembered, North Belfast Partnership Board
8. Northern Ireland Housing Executive Race Relations Policy, Northern Ireland Housing Executive
9. Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Difference Programme, Early Years
10. Learning Language for Work, Gems NI Ltd
11. Intensive ESOL with Information Technology and Citizenship, Belfast Metropolitan College
12. Minority Ethnic Employment Support Project, Gems NI Ltd

1. Belfast City Council

Title of Project: Belfast Migrant Forum



Jenny McKeown, Peruvian Community - "I met my husband who was travelling for six months in Peru. He told me about the good weather and the lovely people in Belfast - about the people he was right!"

Website: <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/goodrelations/peaceIIIfunding.asp>

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Contact Person: Leish Dolan – DolanL@BelfastCity.gov.uk

Background and description of the Project:

Since the accession of the A8 countries to the EU in 2004 there has been a dramatic increase in the level of migrant workers arriving in Northern Ireland and to Belfast City in particular. While there has been general acceptance that migrant workers were making a positive contribution to the economy and society, there were some indications that the public profile of migrant workers was an issue. This is indicated by the incidence of racially-motivated attacks, some of which involved migrant workers.

Belfast City Council commissioned some external research to provide information on the number and make up of the new migrant communities in Belfast. The purpose of the research was to help the council meet its responsibilities in challenging racism and inequality and in developing positive and inclusive responses to the changing face of the city.

Through this research, a number of recommendations were made including that Belfast City Council should explore how they could better support the work being carried out by community and voluntary groups in relationships between the established population and the new minority communities. In response to these recommendations, in 2008 Belfast City Council took the lead in establishing a Migrant Forum to develop effective partnership working in the City on issues relating to migration.

Objectives:

- Establish mechanisms to explore how the council can take the lead in helping to establish links with representatives and members of the various new minority communities across the city;
- Improve interagency cooperation within Belfast when addressing issues facing migrant and minority ethnic communities;
- Improve awareness of migrant worker and minority ethnic issues within the council;
- Support the development of community led initiatives that generate understanding and collaboration between new and host communities;
- Support migrant communities but also support settled communities to adapt to change in their community;
- To develop and deliver training programmes both within the council and externally with the aim of promoting better understanding around issues relating to diversity/inward migration.





Maciej Bator, Polish Community

Bilingual Migrant Worker Organiser, Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM), Volunteer and Secretary for the Polish Association of Northern Ireland - "I came here as a migrant worker in December 2004 to work in one of the food factories. After 12 different jobs, we decided to set up a Polish Association in Northern Ireland."

Main themes:

- 1) Networking with Migrant Groups
- 2) Improved integration across Government agencies
- 3) Leadership and Good Governance from City Leaders
- 4) Building Good Community Relations
- 5) Shared Culture

Needs, Issues and Problems:

The presence of a wider migrant population in Northern Ireland has come to be recognised and acknowledged within the past four years. This is primarily due to the publicity around relatively high levels of immigration associated with the recent enlargement of the European Union.

The recent patterns of migration were distinctive in terms of speed, the numbers of people and the countries they were coming from. This posed challenges in relation to the processes of integration, community cohesion, racism and xenophobia. It also generates problems in meeting the needs and providing appropriate services to the different members of the new communities. Having a key role in community development and local service provision, the council needed to consider the rapid changes taking place and the impact on the city and the indigenous population.

There is great deal of ethnic and national diversity among the new migrant population and their reasons for moving vary. Individuals move to learn a new language, to work for a short time to earn money or to progress in their careers. Some regard the move as long-term or permanent.

Attempts were made to engage with nationals from other eastern European countries who are residing in Belfast, but this has proved difficult. Statistics indicate that there are a growing number of Czech, Latvian, Lithuanian and Slovakian people living in the city, but it appears that they have not yet established community associations and networks in the same way as the Polish community.

As a result of research undertaken by the Institute for Conflict Research, Queen's University Belfast, many respondents believed that Belfast City Council should take a more active role in engaging with the issue of migration and the emergence of new minority communities. This might include developing a local strategy for the delivery of programmes and initiatives in relation to the new migrant communities, support for a migrant rights centre, and taking a more proactive role in assisting the new communities integrate into the wider community. Despite the fact that there were over twenty organisations involved in various aspects of working with minority migrant groups, there was no clear focal point for their efforts. On the basis of the feedback from local groups and the recommendations in the research, Belfast City Council took the initiative to establish the Belfast Migrant Forum which included representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors.



Activities of the Project:

The Migrant Forum was established in February in 2008. There are over 25 members of the forum, drawn from partner statutory and voluntary organisations, working with or providing services to migrant / minority ethnic communities. The Forum meets five times per year and is involved in a number of activities including:

- Research good practice models and develop local area framework for migrant worker issues in Belfast by December 2009
- Co-ordinate a civic programme to promote a sense of belonging amongst newcomers with over 400 participants by December 2010
- Producing more accessible information on practical issues e.g. language, accommodation for migrant workers by June 2009
- Establish a cross border accredited programme to support the employment related needs of migrant workers
- Develop and deliver a migration awareness training aimed at providing factual information on migration issues and challenging current myths and misinformation.

The Forum has received an allocation of funds from the PEACE III programme of €300,000 to support the activities mentioned above and hope that some of the pilot actions may be taken into mainstream EU funding programmes.

Key Results and Impact:

Belfast is an over-governed city with a complex mix of organisations with different remits working on various projects, initiatives and strategies that impact on the city. As the democratically elected body within the city, we are committed to demonstrating civic leadership and working in partnership for the well-being of its citizens. In our role as a civic leader in the city, we regularly scan the policy environment to ensure complementarity and added value of our work and in this case it was clear that the City Council was well placed to take the lead in supporting the integration of new migrants in the City.

Working with diverse groups across the City, the council is taking the lead in establishing a vision of one city – an open city for all, based on equality and opportunity that requires a common vision and strategic framework for its effective development. The council has also agreed to embed partnership working, alongside key agencies within the city, which requires collaborative leadership.

Belfast City Council, like many other city councils in Europe, is taking the lead in bringing together the Migrant Forum. We are also working on a number of initiatives related to Shared Cultural Space including Inter-Faith Work, Culture and Arts Outreach and City of Festivals. The key outcomes and impact of the Migrant Forum will be:

- Citywide vision and coordinated approach to issues relating to migration and the integration of migrant workers
- Increased awareness of activities and communication between forum members with regard to migrant worker issues
- Increased sharing of local information and best practice
- Improved awareness and understanding of migrant worker issues within the council and among partner organisations
- Improved services for migrant workers
- Increased sense of belonging within the migrant and minority ethnic community.
- Development of a local action plan for the delivery of programmes and initiatives in relation to new migrant communities
- Delivery of training programmes within the council and externally aimed at promoting better understanding around issues relating to diversity / inward migration
- Delivery of a training for trainers programme to equip other people to deliver the migrant awareness training
- The establishment of an information point on Belfast City Council website for migrant information
- Translation of the A-Z of council services

Belfast City Council's good relations policy states that we "will encourage and support good relations between all citizens, promoting fair treatment, understanding and respect for people of all cultures". The principle of equality of opportunity underpins the council's approach to all community relations issues; there cannot be good community relations without equality.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: Sept 2008 – Aug 2010
- 2) €300,000
- 3) 70% EU Commission PEACE III
30% Department for Social Development

Project Partners:

- Initiators: Good Relations Unit, Belfast City Council

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

2) Decision- Making Actors and Process: Chairperson: Belfast City Council, 20 members from public, private and voluntary sectors constitute Migrants Forum. All participating organisations are responsible for implementation of their parts of the approach. Coordination is by the Good Relations Unit in Belfast City Council.

- Process – Meetings every two months
- Decision- Making: Based on partnership and consensus

Lessons Learned:

3) Ongoing Support and Co-ordination:

The Good Relations Unit is responsible for providing ongoing support for the planning and co-ordination of the Migrant Forum. The rest of the members represent the remaining partners. The group meets every two months with regular contact between the Unit and member organisations between meetings.

- Working to educate civic leaders on the particular challenges faced by new migrants taking their attention away from traditional divisions and tensions
- Making links with newly arrived migrant groups who were not well organised
- Access to accurate information on the number of migrants arriving in Belfast and their location
- Some migrant groups not well organised locally to represent their needs and council did not have language skills internally to reach out to new groups
- Working to get the interest of Central Government Ministries and agencies in co-operation and partnership at local levels
- Bringing together 20 partners from public, private and voluntary sector to reach agreement and develop vision of the role of Migrant Forum
- Questions over future sustainability of Forum when funding is spent
- Ensuring appropriate organisations are engaged
- Ensuring the continued participation of organisations given current funding shortages
- Ensuring the forum is kept relevant and does not become a talking shop
- In absence of co-ordinated response from Central Government City Councils are well placed to take the lead in bring together interest groups
- City Councils must dedicate time and resources or plan and organise events and action planning process

- The collaboration must be on the basis of desire to collaborate on a voluntary basis and decision making processes are by consensus
- The forums success is down to the level of expertise of the different agencies represented on it
- Sometimes difficult to tune into the key areas of action given the wide range of problems and different perspectives of the stakeholders and limited funding
- Good communication strategy is a basic requirement for the success of the project
- OPENCity concept can help to bring together different interest groups because it offers a very broad vision – something for everyone

Stella Tsang, Chinese Community Volunteer, Chinese Welfare Association

“I got married in 1974 and then came to Belfast. When I came here, I remember when you went down the town, or shopping, they needed to search your pockets and search your handbag. I remember the houses all broken down and boarded up with wood. Now it's all modern, all the new houses, it's quite different. Belfast is a beautiful city now”

2. Irish Congress of Trade Unions & Belfast City Council

Title of Project: A Shared Workplace, A Shared Future

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Website: <http://www.ictu.ie/projects/> <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/migrants/index.asp>

Contact person: Leish Dolan, BCC - DolanL@BelfastCity.gov.uk
Kevin Doherty, ICTU – kevin.doherty@ictuni.org

Background and description of Project: 'A Shared Workplace, A Shared Future' is a programme developed by Belfast City Council in partnership with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. It is designed as a unique and innovative response to the challenges laid down by the movement of people across and into the European Union countries. Given that most of the experience of migrant workers living in Belfast will be shaped by their experience within the workplace, the project aims to build positive relations and to move towards a more inclusive and stable society by addressing the exploitation and vulnerability experienced by many migrant workers in their place of employment.

The project assists migrant workers in identifying and asserting their rights, ensuring migrant workers have the same access to employment protections and redress as other workers. The programme provides a comprehensive approach for developing and disseminating new ways of delivering integrated, inclusive and representative mechanisms for migrant workers and their families rooted in the principles of equality and social justice. Through the development of strategic partnerships, accredited training, outreach programmes and research it aims to combat discrimination and inequality experienced by migrant workers.

Objectives:

- Provision of employment advice and support for migrant workers
- Working to develop shared workplace and relationships
- Develop and delivery of accredited training programmes tackling racism and sectarianism
- Increased involvement of trade union in promoting migrant rights

Main Themes:

1. Building shared workplace and relationships
2. Challenging racist and sectarian attitudes and perceptions,
3. Promoting shared culture.

Needs, Issues and Problems:

Given the recent significant changes in labour migration there is an increased need to focus on demands for the protection of migrant workers. It is because of the identification of migrants with 'migrant workers' that trade unions have a particular concern and responsibility for addressing these issues directly. Unions are often the first 'welfare agency' that migrant workers come into contact with in new countries and unions are often central in the defence of their social and economic rights in the workplace and at a political level.

Women workers are increasingly making up the majority of migrant workers and are often the chief sources of income for families and therefore those most at risk of exploitation in the workplace. Experience shows that in countries where the violation of migrant worker rights occurs, the rights of citizens are also further constrained and under threat. A modern European city cannot ignore entire populations of people and still fulfill its role in serving all the public and making effective policy decisions.

Further to research undertaken by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions aimed at providing advice and guidance to migrant workers, it became clear that there was a need to enhance the rights and representation of migrant workers in the workplace. ICTU research also provided evidence that without adequate representation migrant workers found it difficult to assert their rights in the workplace. The project is also focused on encouraging migrant workers to join trade unions for increased protection in their employment and to build positive relations with other workers which will also impact on attitudes and behaviours beyond the workplace.

The project has also worked through training interventions with trade union activists to combat discrimination and inequality experienced by migrant workers by building the capacity of the trade union movement to make informed decisions that ensure the inclusion and participation of migrant workers.

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- A permanent Migrant Workers Support Clinic providing employment rights advice and representation services has been established. Floating clinics provided at locations and events identified by partner organisations for ethnic minority groups.
- Trade union officials accompany and represent migrant workers in their workplace at industrial relations meetings.
- Training for trade union activists, which seeks to create a greater understanding of employment and welfare rights of migrant workers.
- Trade union leadership training for trade union members from a migrant worker background.
- Production of a publication exposing the myths which fuel racism.

Key Results and Impacts:

- Reduce exploitation of migrant workers through ensuring access to their statutory employment rights;
- Facilitate good relationships between migrant and indigenous workers by directly addressing issues of trust, prejudice and intolerance;
- Highlight the interdependent relationship between migrant and indigenous workers helping to create more welcoming and diverse workplaces;
- Encourage the participation of migrant workers in the trade union structures;
- Dispel the myths that foster racist attitudes and better equip trade union activists and others to challenge racism wherever they encounter it;
- Make Belfast a more open, tolerant, shared, peaceful, stable, equitable and prosperous city.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: October 2009 –December 2010.
- 2) €86,000
- 3) EU Commission Peace III Programme (ERDF)

Project Partners:

Initiators: Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Good Relations Unit, Belfast City Council.

Decision Making/Delivery Actors: Project Board, Project Manager, Senior Supplier

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Ensuring that all migrant workers are aware of the service that the project provides.
- Dealing with cases that require representation can take considerable time and resources.
- Difficulties in helping migrant workers take disputes to Employment Tribunal.
- Securing long-term funding to continue this type of support service for migrant workers.



Lessons Learned:

- Seek additional funding to pursue cases through Employment Tribunals.
- Make the training available to more participants.
- Seek funding for a longer duration for the project because there is a core need for such public services.

3. Allstate Northern Ireland

Title of project: Talk-IT Diversity and Equality Programme

Website: <http://www.allstate.com/about/Northern-Ireland/diversity.aspx>

Contact person: Joy Chambers Allstate NI - jch26@allstate.com

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Background and brief Description:

Allstate Northern Ireland was established in Belfast in 1998 and provides high quality software development services and business process outsourcing solutions in support of its U.S parent's global operations. Currently, the company employs more than 1500 people in Northern Ireland. Allstate NI plays a strategic role in developing, transforming and maintaining the various technology platforms used within Allstate, to support it in its day to day business, looking after the different systems that you might expect one of the world's largest insurance giants to run. A significant factor in the success of Allstate NI's unprecedented growth in Northern Ireland has been the company's ability to attract, retain and develop a diverse workforce.

This case study provides an insight into the tools and techniques which Allstate NI has put in place to support this diverse working environment, which not only meets the needs of migrant workers, but also encourages gender diversity and positive policies to enhance employment opportunities for disabled workers. Allstate NI's Diversity and Equality Programme has successfully integrated diversity into the organisational culture. It is not a singular programme but an ongoing, integrated corporate initiative that enhances the company's ability to attract, motivate and retain a diverse pool of high performing employees necessary for a successful business. Allstate NI has developed a comprehensive programme to support the integration of migrant workers and their families into the company and into Northern Ireland society.

Objectives:

- Design a “Work-IT” programme which supports migrant workers to acquire the English language skills they need in the workplace
- Successful integration of overseas staff into the organisation
- Augment the cultural life at ANI
- Enhance the ANI & NI workforce by improving the employability skills of those who do not have English as their first language

Main Themes:

- Promoting Equality and Diversity in the Workplace,
- Welcoming Corporate Culture,

Needs, Issues and Problems:

ANI recruited a significant number of overseas workers whose first language was not English and who they wanted to integrate successfully into the Allstate work culture and into NI society. Working in a large organisation with 1,500 staff across two different work sites, overseas workers appeared to be finding it difficult to integrate effectively in their work teams and there was a tendency for them to group together in their native language groups during work breaks and social events. This meant that their business communication was not sufficiently developed to enable them to participate in US team selection interviews, thereby limiting their career options. Without the successful integration of these workers ANI was also at risk of losing high value opportunities to other off-shore companies due to the skills shortage within the NI & UK IT sectors.

Activities of Programme:

- Allstate NI has developed a comprehensive programme to support the integration of migrant workers and their families into the company and into Northern Ireland society. Allstate NI's initial welcome pack for newly recruited migrant workers includes flight assistance, airport pick up, Allstate NI meet & greet, sourced rental accommodation with 1 month's free rent provision, assistance with setting up a local bank account and a 1 day accompanied tour of Belfast providing directions to the office, local shops and amenities, emergency services etc.
- 'Allstate NI Welcome to Northern Ireland' booklet, which reiterates much of this information and provides local maps, details of restaurants, reliable taxi firm numbers etc.
- Allstate NI engaged a local training organisation GEMS NI to support the development and delivery of "Language for Work" classes for all overseas workers

Key Results and Impacts:

- Increased confidence and improved communication skills for new workers feeling more valued and able to contribute more effectively to organisational goals
- Better integration into the corporate and social networks within the company
- Enhanced corporate profile and competence for Allstate NI within Allstate group as a result of commitment to Equality and Diversity
- Improved career prospects and opportunities for participants in the training programmes commensurate with their skills
- Higher levels of representation of migrant workers on internal committees and working groups
- Improved language skills through better grammar and more vocabulary specifically related to business environment

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: 4 times per year since 2005
- 2) €3,000 per programme which is 40 hour programme over 10 weeks
- 3) Allstate NI funding

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: Allstate NI

Delivery Actors: GEMS Northern Ireland Programme Development and Training Provider

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- The programme needed to be flexible to hold the training at the employer's premises over lunch period to be least disruptive to the workplace. The employer gave the staff one hour and they gave their lunch hour.
- Level testing was used to gauge individual strengths and weaknesses and make sure participants were not out of their depth and could get benefit from the programme. There was a lot of emphasis put on the wishes of the participants regarding times of classes, eating times to ensure full commitment and motivation for the class and avoid drop out.
- The training was tailored to meet the needs of each group and the individual needs including work to match the business need with the individual needs.
- Each group had mixed abilities which created its own challenges and the need for the Tutor to prepare additional material for different participants.
- The participant's actual ability did not always reflect their own perception of their ability.

Lessons Learned:

- Learning has been applied to everyday lives – dealing with personal affairs and promoting relationships at neighbourhood and community level.
- Value to the company from investing in the integration process – leading to increased billable days for staff and enhanced reputation within the Allstate group in terms of performance.

4. Chinese Welfare Association & Polish Association for NI

Title of project: Bilingual Community Safety Advocacy (Chinese and Polish)

Website: www.cwa-ni.org

Contact person: Eileen Chan-Hu - Chinese Welfare Association
Maciek Bator – Polish Association for Northern Ireland

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Brief description: This project is a bi-lingual advocate scheme which works towards developing trust and confidence in the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) principally within the Chinese and Polish Communities, but also with wider ethnic minority communities. The advocates facilitate information flows to local Police on any problems or perceived difficulties or criminal activities / behaviour within the communities and also encourage reporting of anti-social behaviour that may be occurring in the areas where various ethnic communities have settled. The channels of communication also help to provide an early insight into any perceived build up of tension in and between the communities. The Polish Advocate will support EU nationals and the Chinese Advocate will work with Non EU nationals of which over 60 countries are represented in UK.

Objectives:

- Develop role of community advocates to support improved linkages between migrant communities and policing and justice systems
- Participate through schools programmes in Citizenship and Safety Education Programme
- Work to develop information materials for ethnic communities to inform them of their role in promoting community safety
- Mapping exercise of minority ethnic communities in relation to Hate-Crime

Main Themes:

- Community Cohesion - building relationships between communities
- Good Relations
- Racial Reporting
- Support to victims of racial harassment/ incidents

Needs, Issues and Problems:

In 2003/2004 the Police Service of Northern Ireland reported 453 racial incidents, but in 2009 more than 1,000 incidents of racial hate crime were recorded. The importance of the scheme arose from the fact that in particular Chinese and Polish communities in Belfast felt that they were not fully engaged with the police service in relation to the reporting of crime, anti-social behaviour and the providing of information on issues associated with community safety. Community representatives believed that crime statistics did not represent the current facts on the ground where many people in ethnic communities did not feel they had the confidence to report anything to the police. This scheme was set up to build trust within these communities, and to give a sense of equality with other communities throughout Northern Ireland.

Activities of Project:

- Two Community Advocates working to enhance relationships between target ethnic communities and police and community safety representatives
- A dedicated 'Welcome Pack' developed with particular reference to access to police services and community safety
- Information materials to raise awareness of racism and hate crimes
- Schools Citizenship and Safety Education Programme.



Key Results and Impacts:

- Project has helped the police deliver on their objectives to ensure equality, promote diversity contribute to bettering relations, between different groups in society and contributed to building trust between communities.
- There is much evidence that delivering public services in consultation and conjunction with the service receivers has a much better outcome for all parties.
- The Project benefits the minority ethnic communities by: preventing and reducing crime effectively and providing responsive local policing in partnership with the community.
- Reducing incidence of Anti Social Behaviour - Improved information flows will also enable the police to target their response in relation to anti – social behaviour as well as hate crimes thus giving these communities vital visible reassurance as well as reducing the level of these incidents in these communities.
- Improved Community Cohesion and increasing trust in PSNI is apparent in Chinese and Polish Communities is apparent within the focus area. A long term aim is to encourage all communities to see the police as their police service and to consider policing as a viable career option. A more diverse and reflective workforce in PSNI will improve service delivery and community confidence.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: April 2010 – March 2011.
- 2) £55,000 for 4 days x 2 bilingual advocates delivering services to EU and non-EU nationals.
- 3) Belfast City Council, Police Service Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: Chinese Welfare Association and Polish Association for Northern Ireland

Partners: Police Service of Northern Ireland, Housing Executive, Community Safety Partnership, Good Relations Unit - Belfast City Council, South Belfast Roundtable, Northern Ireland Policing Board Minority Ethnic Group.

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Channels of gaining commitment for innovative inter-agency work.
- Challenges in developing improved channels of communication with key public agencies.
- Development of improved practices in service delivery by statutory agencies.
- Policy-making processes in the absence of Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy which will pave commitment from political leadership towards the issue of racism.
- Service delivery in demand from users and from statutory agencies; resulting in the need to expand the Project.

Lessons Learned:

- There is a need for Bilingual Advocacy as a main link to minority ethnic communities and to work in partnership with statutory agencies for effective communication and this is vital to the issues of racism.
- Advocates received training in housing and policing such as critical incidents, conflict management and community safety and how these factors impact communities affected by racial harassment. The Advocates are trained to ensure a flow of communication between their users and the service providers.
- Project helps develops trust, goodwill and confidence for all sectors and this in turn is important in effective service delivery.

5. South Belfast Integration Project

Title of project: South Belfast Integration Project

Website: www.southbelfast.org

Contact person: Denise Wright – Race Relations Coordinator denise.wright@sbrtr.org.uk

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Background and brief description:

The South Belfast Integration Project is designed to develop a positive and inclusive response to the changing face of the city of Belfast. It recognizes the range of new migrant communities and individuals who, along with the indigenous communities and established minority ethnic communities, make up the population of South Belfast. The project involves interventions across 3 target groups - Level one – Individual level, Level two - Community Group Level – Community and Level three – Corporate.

Objectives:

- To run a “Belfast Friendship Club” which will provide a safe shared cultural space for a range of individuals from diverse backgrounds to meet others, socialise and build strong positive relationships.
- To hold a South Belfast Inclusion Festival which will bring together local communities, minority ethnic communities and local businesses to work in partnership to promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion.
- To recruit a team of South Belfast volunteers from the corporate sector to undertake Habitat for Humanity builds in NI and overseas.
- To introduce and embed both a local and global sense of interdependence to engender a sense of belonging and common purpose.
- To challenge and reduce sectarian and racist attitudes and behaviour in South Belfast at a range of levels, individual, community and corporate.
- To promote volunteering and provide opportunities for those who may feel excluded to participate and engage with wider society and to come into contact with those from other communities.

Main Themes:

- Building Good Community Relations
- Integration
- Community Cohesion
- Global Perspective

Needs, Issues and Problems:

South Belfast Roundtable, formed in 2004, is a partnership of over 80 community, voluntary, minority ethnic, statutory, political and faith groups who work to promote diversity and tackle racism. The group recognised the need for sustained good relations work within South Belfast in order to build a cohesive community and that this need increases as society becomes more diverse. Racism and the racist harassment of minority ethnic communities became publicly acknowledged as a problem in Northern Ireland in the mid 1990s.

There is also a need to challenge and reduce racist attitudes and behaviour through a strategic educational process. The partnership approach helps to deliver on the above and to share good practice within and between organisations in South Belfast. South Belfast Roundtable members identified the need to move beyond merely engaging with other communities to developing meaningful ongoing relationships, between such communities and to begin to set a global context for the change in demographics in order to promote greater respect and understanding and thus improve relationships at local level.

Activities of Programme:

- Level one – Individual level - Belfast Friendship Club meets informally one evening each week at Common Grounds Café and, while open to individuals from all communities, aims to have a particular welcome for newcomers.
- Level two - Community Group Level – Annual Inclusion Festival with a global dimension involving minority ethnic communities and local businesses work in partnership and a range of activities are planned to promote trust and mutual understanding and to develop and or strengthen relationships.
- Level three – Corporate - Individuals from a range of backgrounds working in private sector take part in Habitat for Humanity builds both within Belfast and overseas to alleviate poverty housing. Team building initiatives will be undertaken prior to the trip where participants will explore the theme of good relations and community cohesion.

Key Results and Impacts:

- Reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation.
- Helping to enable all communities, both those established and newly arrived, to work, integrate and better understand one another.
- This project offers participants safe forums to address conflict in the context of identity and affiliation alongside issues of belonging, trust, majority and minority relationships and dealing with difference.
- Helps newcomers to discover their rich contribution to civic society, to listen to experiences of being a minority and overcoming racism to make a life in a new land, and to discover customs of dress, food and religious practice.
- The Inclusion Community Festival and its link with Belfast Carnival help to further develop both shared cultural space and shared city space.
- The project provides the opportunity to engage at a range of levels in order to mainstream good relations and can be further built upon within participating groups to build shared organisational space.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: April 2009 – Dec 2010.
- 2) €29,000
- 3) Belfast City Council, Peace III Programme (ERDF)

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: South Belfast Roundtable

Partners: Common Grounds Café Belfast Friendship Club, Corrymeela Community, Northern Ireland Community of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (NICRAS), Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland, Centre for Global Education

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Concerns about lack of buy in from individuals and groups, this risk was minimised by using our existing good relationships across groups in South Belfast.
- Difficulty in recruiting from the private sector for the overseas Habitat for Humanity Build due to the required commitment for individuals to fund raise costs of the trip at a time of economic down turn.

Lessons Learned:

- Need for a dedicated project officer to co-ordinate the various integration activities. The project officer provides a continuous link, is known to everyone and is thus able to make introductions, welcome new members, provide signposting to services as necessary and carry out the background organisation needed for events.
- The informal nature of the Belfast Friendship Club helps to welcome newcomers and to make first steps in engagement process.
- Local communities are willing to engage when a safe vehicle for engagement is provided. There are many “indigenous to Belfast” attending to get to know those who are new to the city.
- Equality is a key component for integration

- Social contact can facilitate people in being signposted to other services not only by the project officer but by other members who support and take an interest in each other.
- Coordination and making involvement easy is key to groups engaging. Groups were able to identify local needs and hold events that were appropriate to their constituencies. The coordinator was able to facilitate contact between local and minority ethnic groups.

6. Belfast City Council

Title of Project: Migration Awareness Training

Website: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/migrants/index.asp

Contact Person: Leish Dolan dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk

Location: Belfast City

Brief description of Project:

Migrant Awareness Training is a half-day workshop designed by South Belfast Roundtable and Belfast City Council. It is an interactive session which explores inward and outward migration and the rights of migrant workers in Northern Ireland. It aims to dispel myths and provide practical information on issues relating to migration.

Objectives:

To challenge myths and misinformation around inward migration by encouraging discussion in a safe environment

Main themes:

- To look at current myths, misinformation and facts around inward migration
- To raise awareness of the global context of migration
- To understand the history of migration in Northern Ireland
- To look at the impact and challenges of migration at a local level

Needs, Issues and Problems:

The issue of migration is one of increasing importance in Belfast. There has been a significant increase in the number, background and diversity of migrant communities moving to Northern Ireland over recent years. This trend came to prominence with the arrival of substantial numbers of migrants to work in the food processing industries and the health sector, and the subsequent arrival of migrant workers from the European Countries that joined the European Union in 2004.

The changing demographics brought about by inward migration have presented opportunities and challenges for everyone involved. For migrant workers and minority ethnic communities who are creating new lives for themselves in a very different homeland and culture than previously experienced there are certainly challenges. There are also challenges for the community and voluntary sectors responding with limited resources to the needs and in many instances, the social exclusion of minority ethnic communities. For the council and other service providers there are challenges in responding to growing diversity within a challenging political environment and developing collaborative working.

The speed and scale of recent inward migration to Belfast took many by surprise and there is still considerable misunderstandings surrounding migration. This migration awareness training aims to encourage discussion around issues of inward migration in a safe environment. It aims to dispel some of the myths which can often give rise to suspicion and misunderstanding. It aims to contribute to good relations between communities by providing participants with factual information.

Activities of the Programme:

Interactive workshop



Key Results and Impact:

Developing the capacity of others to challenge myths and misinformation around inward migration with factual information

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: Sept 2008 – Aug 2010
- 2) This project is supported by the European Regional Development Fund under the PEACE III Programme

Project Partners/Implementation:

The training was developed by the Good Relations Unit of Belfast City Council and South Belfast Roundtable. Both organisations deliver it on a monthly basis.

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Constantly revising the training to ensure that it is up to date and fit for purpose
- Adapting the training to suit different needs / learning styles
- Questions over future sustainability of training when funding is spent
- Ensuring appropriate organisations are engaged

Lessons Learned:

- To sustain the training by developing training for trainers programme so that the training can be delivered to wider audiences.
- To extend the duration of the training from a half day workshop to a full day, to encourage a greater analysis of the subject.
- To constantly revise the training material to reflect changing trends, current issues and policy developments.

7. North Belfast Partnership Board

Title: Meet the Neighbours/War Years Remembered

Website: www.nbhbp.org www.waryearsremembered.co.uk

Contact Person: john.read@nthbp.org john.read@nihe.gov.uk

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Brief description of Project:

Meet The Neighbours/War Years Remembered is a practical, real time constantly adapting and user friendly hands on approach to encourage community engagement at community level. War Years remembered is an interactive mobile museum that travels the UK, ROI, and province and can be erected at any venue over a one-day period. It includes memorabilia and information on the Home Front, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, European, Polish, Indian and other Commonwealth forces in World War One and Two. The exhibition can be adapted and built to suit location, venue. It also includes the War Of Independence, 1912 and 1916 is sensitive to local needs but giving a broad perspective of communities local and new alike.

The inclusion of wartime information around Poland and the Polish brigade has had an impact on youth from all geographic areas and has given them a greater understanding of the contribution made by Poland and other commonwealth forces during World War Two thus reducing attacks on the Polish Community. Secondly the intergenerational aspect of the exhibition and the attendance of local schools create a secure and safe space for different individuals to meet and share ideas and have discussions on the futility of war and its impact on society as a whole. The Museum experience has been combined with meet the neighbours to provide ethnic dance, music and food thus encouraging participation from a wider range of individuals who may pick and choose between the areas on offer.

Objectives:

- Irish input into the services during the Great War and World War Two to educate the communities on the shared history of WW1 and WW2.
- Culture Swap element to educate a younger generation and create a intergenerational cross community project that actually works
- To combat sectarianism racism and anti-semitism in a realistic and quantifiable manner. Vehicle and restoration of exhibits project and specialist restoration works to combat skills loss and combat worklessness in North Belfast.
- Connect with Indian, Polish and Jewish Community to reflect section 75 groups and reflect wartime experiences to wider community to educate and decrease racism in a positive manner within North Belfast.
- Creation of permanent museum at identified venues.

Main themes:

- Education
- Good Relations
- Anti-Sectarianism
- Community Networking
- Intercommunity and Intercultural Shared History

Needs, Issues and Problems:

The concept grew from a lack of community cohesion and wider community acceptance of the migrant population in Newtownabbey and North Belfast in early 2005 and 2006 and an increase in attacks on the Polish community in the North Belfast and Newtownabbey areas.

Activities of the Project:

Workshops are provided on site at events with a focus on the Polish wartime contribution and the equivalent wartime contribution of the Irish soldier in real time translated into Polish for school groups, schools and youth attending from both communities. Fact sheets on the contribution of the Polish Air Force, Army and Resistance and connections with Northern Ireland such as Polish 303 squadron flying out of Ballyhalbert; Polish Air Crew Buried in Milltown; The Warsaw Rising. Fact sheets on Indian Army and contribution during WW2. Exhibits and talks on the War of Independence, The Irish Citizen Volunteers, Home rule, The Ulster Volunteer Force, Discussions around Identity, Perceptions of young people and Interface Issues.

Key Results and Impact:

The project produced a 100% reduction of attacks on the Polish community in Newtownabbey in specific geographic areas and led to the creation of a Polish youth group based in a perceived loyalist estate which in itself is a mixed youth group both culturally and on a co-religious basis with youth attending from North Belfast and Newtownabbey areas.

Integration of the Polish community in the area is complete with the Polish community actively participating in community events and the local population reciprocating.

At key events in Crumlin Road Gaol and Ballysillian the project was supported by All Political parties which in itself was a significant achievement. Community cohesion has been achieved in real time with long term relationships achieved between younger people, older people and across community, statutory and voluntary sectors. The intergenerational element of the project in which veterans, mill workers and combatants during WW2 interact with youth, on site at venues, has and is working with a hands on approach to history and shared experiences.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

1995-present

UniTd £5,000, Good Relations BCC £2,000, North Belfast Partnership £3,000, NIHE Good Relations Unit £4,000, Project funding sought for Continuation 2010 Onwards

Project Partners/ Implementation:

North Belfast Partnership, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, War Years Remembered
Meet The Neighbours

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

Difficulties in funding the project on a long term basis have been encountered with the proven success of the concept engaging with statutory agencies and encouraging the agencies of the need for the project to run on a city wide basis. Over 10,000 individuals attended events over 2008/09 ranging from school visits to community events in Crumlin Road Gaol, The Grove Healthy Living Centre, Ballysillian and over 30 schools across Northern Ireland. Support for the project has come from the President of Ireland, MLAs, MPs and councillors from ALL political parties which in itself is a recommendation. Funding to enlarge and develop the project has been sought from a wide range of agencies and government departments.

Lessons Learned:

- Project is continually reviewing its aims and objectives to meet the needs of communities and target groups, as an ongoing process.



8. Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)

Title of Policy: NIHE Race Relations Policy

Website: www.nihe.gov.uk

Contact Person: Linda Hutchinson, Linda.hutchinson@nihe.gov.uk

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Background and brief description of Policy:

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is a non-departmental public body, established by the Housing Executive Act (Northern Ireland) 1971. Under this act, we took over the housing responsibilities of 65 separate authorities and became Northern Ireland's overall housing authority. We are also one of the province's largest public sector organisations. With a budget of over £600m and a staff of over 3,000 we make a substantial contribution to better health, education and wellbeing through housing. In Belfast City we are Landlord to over 22,000 properties and this equates to approximately 18% of all housing in the city (124,600 in 2006). We also have responsibilities in the Private Rented Sector of over 16,000 properties or 13% of properties. Our work with communities on housing services and the issues that affect local neighbourhoods adds real value to decision-making, service development and higher standards.

The Housing Executive is aware of our changing role in providing quality housing services to an increasingly diverse community. The Policy we are highlighting in this Case Study is our overall Race Relations Policy which brings together our key responsibilities and how they promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different ethnic backgrounds in Northern Ireland. We have based this policy around a broad aim, key objectives and five themes. The aim is to ensure that all black and minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland can get full and fair access to housing services and employment opportunities within the Housing Executive. We aim to support the promotion of good relations between and within ethnic groups and communities. This contributes towards the overall themes of the Open Cities Project of Integration and Inclusion

Objectives:

- The prevention of discrimination and the promotion of the right to live peacefully without being harassed on racial grounds.
- The mainstreaming of black, minority ethnic and Traveller issues in housing policy and planning.
- The integration of race equality into housing services in line with "fairness and equality" as incorporated in the Targeting Social Need and Promoting Social Inclusion initiatives.
- The provision of culturally sensitive services which reflect the needs of black and minority ethnic communities, including the Traveller Community.
- To ensure compliance with legislation, and the promotion of best practice, in respect of delivering our services to a diverse customer base.
- To set the standards of good business practice in areas such as developing partnerships and consultation processes with black, minority ethnic and Traveller community organisations.
- To continue developing the Housing Executive's ethnic monitoring system and to carry out research to inform future policies and practices with regard to housing and community needs.
- To promote a diverse workforce, and provide positive action initiatives where appropriate.
- To raise the capacity of staff to deal with diversity, through awareness and skills training.
- To provide support for new arrivals to Northern Ireland, e.g. migrant workers, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Main themes,

The Race Relations Policy themes can be summarised as follows;

- 1) Mainstreaming black and minority ethnic issues in policy development
- 2) Racial harassment and intimidation
- 3) Promoting black and minority ethnic social inclusion
- 4) Community participation and development
- 5) Migrant worker issues

Needs, Issues and Problems:

The Belfast City Baseline Study has identified key challenges linked to migration including the fact that minority ethnic communities are moving into a City still suffering from the legacy of the conflict and with a marked history of division. These challenges identified under Public Sector Policy are similar to those which the Housing Executive's Race Relations Policy was developed to address, such as the need for accurate data on migration, identifying and responding to the diverse needs of new communities, improving communication, responding with local communities to local tensions and negative perceptions around inward migration particularly in areas where space is contested and where anxieties around limited resources has created tensions. Constraints on the housing market serve to direct new immigrants into some of the most disadvantaged areas characterised by high levels of unemployment and stretched public services. The response to the emerging clusters of migrants can often cause tensions.

More than half of the city's population now lives in wards that are either 90 per cent Protestant or 90 per cent Catholic. This presents challenges for migrants in terms of finding a safe niche within a city where space is contested and where territorialism is rife. The Housing Executive is aware of our changing role in providing quality housing services to this increasingly diverse community. Our duty is to ensure housing is provided on the basis of need and that all black and minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland can get full and fair access to housing services.

There is no doubt that community division and segregation exerts a high price which, in housing terms, prevents the best use being made of existing housing and land. Those who need housing in the social and affordable sectors must have greater choice. If we are to meet housing need in all its forms we must work to make progress. In this context the promotion of good relations is a key Housing Executive objective. Successful promotion of good relations calls for joined up thinking and working between communities, agencies and individuals.

Community cohesion and good Race Relations depends ultimately on trust and safety. While the delivery of this is beyond the remit of a single agency, the Housing Executive aims to make its contribution through its policies, partnerships, investment and resource allocation to speed up the pace of change.

Cultural Sensitivity

Housing services and how they are delivered must reflect the growing diversity of our customer base. Understanding the needs of minority ethnic communities is vital and can to some extent be achieved through consultation, research and community participation in the planning process. In the delivery of housing services consideration must be given to accountability, the targeting of marginalised or excluded communities, addressing community problems, and the utilisation of existing services, materials and resources, including community groups, to ensure that equal access is promoted. Working with existing community groups can short-circuit the link between service provision and use. This is being developed further with the Community and Voluntary sector.



Activities of the Policy:

Over the years the Housing Executive has made a substantial contribution to community relations through its mainstream policies and initiatives. Examples include our local presence in communities and our long-standing relationship with community groups through the Housing Community Network. We have also been to the forefront in dealing with community conflict, responding to intimidation and property damage, and implementing the SPED (Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings) and the POPPI (Protection of Private Properties at Interfaces) schemes. In relation to the Race Relations Policy a detailed Action Plan was developed which outlines a range of projects and programmes and identified specific issues which needed to be addressed.

Key Results and Impact:

Some examples of activities and key results include

- NIHE Community Cohesion Portal launched and available to all District Offices and staff with a section on Race Relations and Black and Minority Ethnic support organisations and Good practice.
- Hate Incidents Practical Actions Scheme (HIPA Scheme) implemented in partnership with NIO, PSNI and BCC Community Safety Unit to support victims of Hate incidents in Belfast. The Scheme was awarded 2nd runner up at the 2008 Criminal Justice Conference and Awards 2008.
- Hate Harassment Support Pack developed through consultation with the BME Housing Forum and launched April 2008.
- The Shared Race Relations Charter was launched by the Minister for Social Development – Margaret Ritchie in April 2008 to promote good race relations and help BME and Migrant Worker families settle into their new communities. All 35 District Housing Community Networks have signed up to the charter with over 349 community signatories. This unique Charter and Minimum Standards were developed by the Intercommunity Network, and include representatives from Black and Minority Communities. Belfast Districts are currently implementing this Charter with a small grant available to District Networks for the implementation of this programme.
- As part of the BME Forum 08/09 Action Plan, 24 participants attended the study visit on 27th May 2008 (International Neighbours Day). The tour included visiting several Housing Executive estates including Interface Areas to explore cultural issues between and within existing communities and visits to two Belfast Hostels for Homeless people. Excellent reviews received. Several other such Tours have also happened.
- The Community Cohesion Unit has contributed funding to the development of a 'Tension Monitoring system' in Belfast in Partnership with Belfast City Community Safety partnership and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The tension monitoring system would provide 'upstream' information of community dynamics and areas of potential conflict.
- The Community Cohesion Unit is working with the Belfast Community Safety Partnership's Thematic Group.
- The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Police Service of Northern Ireland in partnership with the Chinese Welfare Association, Polish Association N.I, Community Safety Partnership and Belfast City Council Good Relations Unit are launching a bi-lingual community safety Advocacy' Scheme in 09/10 to enhance good relations work and give support to our South and East Belfast Districts tackling race relations issues.
- The Housing Executive contributed to the DEL Migrant Worker Sub-Group's Strategy which was formulated in March 2008. The Community Cohesion Unit continues to provide ongoing information and training on the rights of Migrant Workers and people from abroad as they appear in legislation.
- The Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Forum was re-convened in December 2009 in order to directly engage with BME support groups and promote involvement of the BME sector in the Housing Community Network.
- A Welcome Pack template for community groups has been developed in partnership with the Intercommunity Network. This will be uploaded and made available on the portal by March 2010.
- As part of the "Improving Communication for All" initiative the Housing Executive has issued slips promoting the availability of interpreters and translators to all service outlets.



- The Intercultural Awareness Training programme is being reviewed and will be rolled out to front line staff in key Districts over the next year. This training has been included in the Chartered Institute of Housing Level 3 Certificate in Housing.
- The Housing Executive supported cultural exchange visits including attendance from the Chinese Welfare Association, PSNI, Polish Association, Belfast Islamic Women's Group and the Orange Order.
- The Housing Executive hosted Northern Ireland's first Human Library for staff development during the Anti-Racist Workplace Week Nov 2009 in partnership with NICEM and including members of the BME Forum. Excellent evaluation.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds

The Race Relations Action Plan was launched in 2005 and includes timescales. This plan is still in place and will be reviewed in line with developments in Government Policy such as Cohesion, Sharing and Integration.

Project Partners/ Implementation

The list in Section 9 included names and details of several of our partners. The Housing Executive appreciates the value of working in partnership and on an inter-agency basis.

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

Some of the following issues presented challenges and difficulties:

- The speed of change and the wide range of new issues which needed to be dealt with
- Making links with newly arrived migrants who were not well organised to see what services they required and to let them know what we could provide
- Developing mapping on the number of migrants arriving in Belfast and their location and housing needs
- Providing support to local community networks to help them deal with the changes in their neighbourhoods.
- Providing training and support to staff to deal with the increasing diversity
- The lack of space to exchange ideas and share initiatives in the early years after 2004.
- Keeping up to date with developments such as new support groups, new communities and new needs
- Keeping a focus on both the needs of the new migrants and the needs of the more established BME communities.
- Dealing with the language difficulties.
- Dealing with these changes within a restricted budgetary setting
- Dealing with racism whether it is demonstrated through physical violence or unhelpful attitudes
- Ensuring all people are aware of their rights in relation to housing and providing support so that they can exercise these rights.
- Information overload is a problem.

Lessons Learned

- The Race Relations Policy and Action Plan were developed following a wide ranging consultation with various interested parties and their input and expertise at the initial stage helped avoid many problems.
- At the earliest possible stage there should be one central co-ordinated response from Central Government to support organisations, provide a clear lead and prevent duplication and wasted resources. The DEL Migrant Forum and the BCC Migrant Forum were invaluable in helping with this.
- Good practice should be promoted and time set aside to learn from others
- Feedback from the actual service users is vital. Migrant Workers views must be involved in all stages of planning and delivery.
- There are many people living within the community who have the willingness and ability to make a real difference within their neighbourhoods if they are supported and provided with resources. Partnership working is not just about the statutory organisations and large groups it is also about working in partnership with local communities.

9. Early Years

Title of Project: Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Difference Programme (MIFC)

Website: www.early-years.org/mifc/

Contact Person: Eleanor Mearns – eleanorm@early-years.org

Location:

The programme is currently being delivered in pre-school and primary settings throughout Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Background and brief description of Project:

The Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Difference Programme (MIFC) was developed by Early Years - the organisation for young children in Northern Ireland and Pii - the Peace Initiatives Institution in the USA. It is an intervention programme aimed at improving long term outcomes so that children, practitioners, parents and communities become more aware of diversity and difference issues and positively change attitudes and behaviours to those people who are different. It aims to make a "respecting difference" approach an integrated experience for young children within the pre-school curriculum and is based on a meaningful partnership with parents.

It combines cartoon media messages around diversity with an early years programme. Together they aim to promote positive attitudes to cultural, social and physical differences amongst young children, practitioners and parents. The messages also address bullying behaviour and the sectarian problems prevalent throughout Northern Ireland.

The MIFC programme links into the pre-school and foundation stage curricula by addressing equal opportunities through a range of resources and activities. Children need opportunities to discuss and acknowledge the similarities and differences between themselves and others. They also need to be able to express more effectively feelings associated with similarities and differences, including those of exclusion and inclusion. The Initiative also links with the Revised Curriculum (personal development and mutual understanding) and the Community Relations School Programmes. The MIFC programme also provides children with opportunities to explore similarities and differences in a developmentally appropriate way, using age appropriate resources such as puppets, jigsaws, games, photographs and a variety of other activities.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Difference Programme are:

- To increase awareness of diversity and difference issues in Northern Ireland and Ireland among children aged 3-6, their parents, teachers and management committees
- To help young children to understand what it feels like to be excluded and encourage them to be more willing to include children who are different from themselves
- To encourage young children to demonstrate respect and the active inclusion of others who are different, rather than ridiculing, fighting or rejecting them
- To make "respecting difference" a very real experience for young children and something that can be shared with their families

The expected outcomes for the project are: A positive change in children's, teachers and parents attitudes in relation to race and disability and other cultures and traditions. A general willingness to be inclusive of others, of the importance of doing diversity work and a resulting reduction in prejudices re: race, disability and religion.

Main themes

The Initiative works around five main themes:

- 1) Race
- 2) Ethnicity
- 3) Sectarianism
- 4) Disability
- 5) Bullying

This is done through the use of five media messages:

Kim Joins In – Aims to foster acceptance and respect for and encourage the inclusion of children who live in minority ethnic communities.

Kathleen Makes New Friends – Aims to support the inclusion of Traveller children.

Playing the Same Game - Aims to foster acceptance and respect for those from different traditions that have often been associated with sectarianism.

Tom Helps Out - Aims to foster acceptance and respect and encourage the inclusion of children who have a disability/physical difference.

We Can Stop the Bullying - Aims to help young children understand what bullying behaviours are and to ask for and give help when they need to.

Needs, Issues and Problems:

As Early Years was looking at ways to develop their anti-sectarian and diversity work, others in Northern Ireland were also developing theory and knowledge on ethnic differences and prejudice in young children. The development of the Media Initiative was greatly influenced by research entitled "Too Young to Notice?" carried out by Paul Connelly et al, from Queen's University Belfast. This research showed that children in Northern Ireland become aware of differences from about the age of two and three and are also beginning to develop preferences for the political symbols and events associated with their own community. By the age of six, the research estimates that a third of children in Northern Ireland are aware of the ethnic divide that exists and which group they belong to. The research also showed that by the age of six, a significant proportion of children (1 in 6) in Northern Ireland are making sectarian and racial remarks.

Activities of the Programme:

A range of methods are used by the initiative to engage with children, parents and practitioners:

- Media messages. Five one minute cartoon messages are shown on national television three times per year for a three week period. The aim is to give community support for the programme and create recognition of the approach before it is implemented in pre-school and primary classrooms.
- A pre-school programme and accompanying resources including a DVD of the media messages to provide opportunities for practitioners/ teachers to introduce issues of diversity and difference through activities in a developmentally appropriate way.
- A comprehensive programme of training for practitioners/teachers which enables them to reflect on their own attitudes and prejudices as well as providing opportunities for them to explore the MIFC Respecting Difference resources and become skilled and confident in using them.
- The support of an Early Years specialist (an external support person) to give an outside perspective in the process of development and evaluation.
- Engaging meaningfully with parents through information sessions, home-links exercises and interactive workshops which enable parents to reflect on their attitudes and prejudices as well as providing opportunities for them to discuss their role in implementing the programme at home.

- Community development training and support for management committees and Boards of Governors which enables them to create inclusive policies and practices within the pre-school centres and link with other services and activities within their communities.
- The cartoons are placed on children's television and within some adult programming. The use of television raises awareness about the programme with parents and children and creates a supportive environment within early years settings to implement the Respecting Difference programme. The use of the media also fosters wider community awareness about the programme.
- The five media messages are designed to support dialogue and understanding about a range of differences. However, they are only an example of some of the differences children may experience and are used to promote discussion about a range of differences that are relevant for children within their setting and their local context.
- The cartoons are set in a play park and feature characters that young children can easily identify with. The messages in the cartoons are reinforced in the early years setting through the use of resources and interactive activities that prompt children to talk about their feelings and attitudes to the issues explored in the cartoons.
- Engaging meaningfully with parents and the development of a community outreach approach is another key component of the programme. Home play activities have been incorporated into the programme and parents' workshops have been developed. A management committee workshop is also available.

Key Results and Impact:

The programme has been supported by rigorous academic research and a pilot programme of the initial three media messages was evaluated by Queen's University Belfast. After just three weeks the pilot programme was found to increase children's:

1. Willingness to play with others, including some of those who are different to themselves.
2. Ability to understand how being excluded makes someone feel
3. Ability to recognize instances of exclusion without prompting

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

The Media Initiative for Children started with a pilot in 2004 and the project was initially funded by Pii who funded the development of the first three media messages and the broadcasting in the early stages of the initiative.

Further funding was then received from:

- 1)The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- 2)The Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- 3)The Department of Foreign Affairs in Ireland
- 4)The EU PEACE II and PEACE III programmes
- 5)The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY)

The current main funders of the Media Initiative are: Atlantic Philanthropies and the International Fund for Ireland (IFI)

Project Partners/ Implementation:

Early Years and Pii established a formal partnership and were supported by an expert group of advisers from a range of backgrounds.

Partner organisations include: The Community Relations Council, The Department of Education in Northern Ireland, Queen's University Belfast, University of Ulster, St Patrick's College, LyleBaillie International, The Border Counties Childcare Network, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Irish Pre-school Play Association (IPPA), Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment



Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- The amount of training required by practitioners in order to deliver the programme was greater than originally estimated
- There has been some resistance from groups in certain areas about taking part in the initiative
- There has been a lot of anxiety and a lack of confidence among some early years practitioners concerning their work with parents
- Convincing people of the need for the training - certain parts of Northern Ireland think "they do not need it" or "we don't have a problem here"
- There has been a capacity issue in some groups which hinders their ability to participate e.g. finding the money to pay sub cover while practitioners are taking part in training
- Initial difficulty for the researchers to develop the appropriate tools to evaluate the programme

Lessons Learned:

- The importance of training early year's practitioners in how to use the resource pack.
- The importance of encouraging early years practitioners to reflect upon their own attitudes and experiences.
- The need to provide early years practitioners with ongoing support.
- The importance of research and evaluation.
- One of the most significant lessons learned is how transferable the programme is. The Media Initiative is playing a central role in the development of a programmatic toolkit which Early Years is developing through its International Working Group on Peace Building for Young Children. Members of the group come from: Iraq, Serbia, South Africa, Colombia, Chad, Nepal, Lebanon, El Salvador. Many of these countries have approached Early Years with a view to customising the initiative for their own countries.

10. GEMS Northern Ireland Limited

Title: Project Profile Learning Language for Work (LLFW)

Contact Person: Susan Russam, Chief Executive Gems NI Ltd

Website: www.gemsni.org.uk **Email:** Susan.russam@gemsni.org.uk

Background and brief description of the project:

Learning Language for Work (LLFW) is an innovative learning for work programme which blends English language learning with employability skills. The programme covers all areas from sourcing jobs, to CV development, interview techniques and basic workplace information, in order to ensure the candidates can obtain and maintain worthwhile employment in Northern Ireland. In addition it introduces specific language needed for the recruitment process and increases knowledge of how the local recruitment process works.

Speaking about the LLFW project Shane Smith who manages the programme, noted:

"It is obvious that the vast majority of the LLFW target group have the motivation and work ethic to be an asset to our workforce. However they lack certain skills and knowledge around English language and how our recruitment process works. The Northern Ireland system tends to be more formal than a lot of other European and other overseas countries."

LLFW has been designed for black and minority ethnic groups and migrant workers who are non-native speakers of English. The aim of LLFW is to enable them to engage in the local recruitment process, empowering them with the language required in order to enhance their employability and assist them to gain meaningful employment. In addition to the general barriers to employment experienced by long-term unemployed and economically inactive people, minority ethnic groups face further barriers:

Language - While the level of English can vary widely between clients, many have a low standard of English. This barrier impacts upon job search, interviews, willingness of employers to hire and isolation in the workplace

Transferability of skills - The skills and qualifications of minority ethnic clients are often not recognised/viewed equal or easily transferable to the local labour market

Work Experience - Their work experience is often viewed as being less relevant

Cultural Issues - Different cultural attitudes, particularly in relation to women in the workplace.

Exploitation - The above barriers can result in minority ethnic employees being treated less favourably than others in the workplace.

LLFW helps to overcome both the generic employability barriers and the specific employment barriers experienced by minority ethnic groups by providing English language training which integrates ESOL with employability and adds value by linking participants to other GEMS employment supports such as vocational guidance and counselling and access to jobs available in the local labour market through our jobs matching service.

Objectives:

The aim LLFW is to deliver vocationally-orientated language learning supported by vocational guidance counselling and access to local labour market opportunities for minority ethnic groups, providing them with vocational training and qualifications to improve their employability.

Main themes:

- 1) Unemployment/Economic Inactivity
- 2) Language Barriers
- 3) Social Exclusion
- 4) Skills development
- 5) Capacity building of migrant groups

Needs, issues and Problems:

LLFW supports economically inactive people from minority ethnic groups targeting in particular those who have no or low qualifications, women, people with disabilities, lone parents / other disadvantaged parents to improve their employability, aiming to increase employment and reduce economic inactivity and worklessness of those with multiple barriers to employment and social exclusion, compounded by the language barrier

Activities of the Programme:

- LLFW will help 72 people per year (216 in total) who are the most disadvantaged in the labour market, to improve their employability and increase their potential to become employed and economically self-sufficient;
- LLFW will also help to address wider social exclusion through improving their ability to communicate and if necessary, self-advocate in English both in the workplace and their communities and neighbourhoods.
- LLFW will be delivered by six (12 participant) 72 hour training programmes per year consolidated by individual mentoring and vocational guidance including direct access to employment opportunities through GEMS jobs matching service, access to a range of sector specific pre-employment programmes and our extensive employer links across the sector skills range.

Key Results and Impact:

LLFW compliments and adds value to a range of DEL programmes such as LEMIS, Pathways to Work, Steps to Work and the New Deal Programme all of which work to increase employment and reduce economic inactivity and worklessness through the provision of employment services linked to labour market realities and employers skills requirements. It also compliments current ESOL provision available to learners within the FE Sector. It is aligned to national programmes such as Jobcentre Plus which since April 2007, people with very poor language skills are supported to tackle the problem as part of the Jobseekers Agreement with the emphasis on work focused language courses for the most disadvantaged minority ethnic unemployed and economically inactive.

A key output of this transnational element is to enable partners to explore and identify areas of common interest and to determine how LLFW project deliverables could be developed through further transnational co-operation and provide opportunities to discuss and exchange best practice, methodologies and how LLFW could be modified to meet the needs of those minority ethnic groups that are furthest from the labour market in other European Countries

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

LLFW was developed by GEMS NI in 2003/04 and initially funded by Belfast Local Strategy Partnership and Laganside Corporation. Subsequently from 2008, it has been supported by the European Social Fund with GEMS NI self-matching the required 35% to enable the programme to continue to support Vocationally Orientated Language Learning (VOLL)

Project Partners/Implementation:

We have worked with the following European partners to enable them to develop **LLFW** in their own countries via a Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation Project:
Euregio Qualifizierungs-und Technologieforum (EQT) Germany
Supra Vita Nyelvstúdió Hungary
Ballymun Job Centre Ireland
Politehnica University of Bucharest, CTANM Center for Advanced Technologies





Pictured above: participants in the Learning Language for work class taken 31st March 2009

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

There have been very few challenges with the programme in terms of its content or participant attendance and outcomes. One difficulty has been scheduling classes to suit participants who are dependent on part-time/casual work. We have added additional conversation classes to support our learners and help those who have missed classes to catch up on specific modules/tasks.

Lessons learned:

We are integrating LLFW into another programme we have developed “Living in Belfast” to add value and enhance the experiences of participants in their living and working in Belfast with language acquisition for work and knowledge on living and working to support their integration and inclusion.

11. Belfast Metropolitan College

Title: Intensive ESOL with Information Technology (IT) and Citizenship

Website: www.belfastmet.ac.uk, ADaSilva@belfastmetropolitancollege.ac.uk

Contact Person: Andrea Da Silva, Belfast Metropolitan College

Brief description of Project:

Until 2004 only part-time classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) were offered in the college. However, according to research carried out by Philida Shellekens in *Breaking the Language Barriers*, it would take 10 years for a complete beginner attending two hours of English per week to reach a level of proficiency. As the number of migrants began to rise in Northern Ireland, so did the demand for more intensive ESOL classes with 15 hours of study per week over 1 semester. This way, learners could reach a standard of English which would allow them to access employment and/or further education more quickly, thereby enabling them to be more autonomous and facilitating integration into society. As many of our learners were lacking skills in the use of IT this was made an important component of the course. Initially one course was offered at intermediate level. By 2007 demand had grown so much that the college was offering one basic class, two at elementary level, three at pre-intermediate, three at intermediate, two at upper-intermediate and one at advanced.

As the profile of our learners became more varied due to the influx of migrant workers from the Accession EU states, it was decided to introduce Citizenship into the curriculum. This, along with the Skills for Life Speaking and Listening exam, gives successful learners below level 1 who progress by one level in the Speaking and Listening mode the possibility of applying for British citizenship.

Objectives:

- To enable learners to reach a standard of English within a shorter timeframe which would facilitate integration into the workplace, further or higher education, and society in general.
- To provide tuition and practice in IT skills.
- To provide learners with knowledge of living in our society through the Citizenship component.
- To provide learners with the opportunity to apply for British citizenship.

Main themes:

- 1) ESOL
- 2) IT skills (word processing, email, internet, PowerPoint)
- 3) Citizenship (rights and responsibilities, Northern Irish culture and society, health and education, politics)

Needs/ Issues and Problems:

To secure accommodation, to secure initial funding and to market the course.

Activities of the Programme:

15 hours of ESOL per week over 5 days – 3 hours per day

1 day was dedicated to IT and Citizenship

As the number of international students began to rise in the college, they were integrated into the intensive ESOL classes and were offered an additional 90 minutes tutorial per week.

In week 7 of the 17 week course, the learners are required to carry out a survey outside the classroom. This consists of researching amenities within Belfast, e.g. Leisure centres, parks, museums etc and delivering a presentation on the findings to the rest of the class. This is followed up by a written report and combines ESOL, IT and Citizenship skills.

Key Results and Impact:

Demand for more intensive courses increased dramatically and in order to offer progression more courses were gradually offered at a range of levels.

Learners were able to progress to other vocational courses within the college.

More employment opportunities for ESOL tutors as the number of courses increased

To ensure top-quality teaching the need for teacher training arose. The college was able to meet this demand by offering the Certificate for English Language Teaching to Adults.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

One year, initial funding obtained by winning a project run by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) on integrating IT into the curriculum. In the 2nd year the course was mainstreamed at the cost of £20,000.

Project Partners/ Implementation:

Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) NI

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered

Shortage of accommodation in college

Finding experienced tutors

Dealing with students who were already IT proficient

Accommodating students with literacy problems

Some tutors became hung up with the IT component thinking it was an IT class rather than an ESOL through IT class. An IT and citizenship co-ordinator was appointed to help tutors in relation to this.

Lessons Learned:

By providing intensive language training, learners will progress more quickly and will be able to access further/higher education and/or employment sooner.

Learners are more motivated to learn if they can access intensive language classes.

It is important to present the IT component as ESOL through IT rather than as an IT class as learners are at different stages in IT competency.

Intensive classes should be team taught so that learners are exposed to different styles of teaching and the responsibility of teaching a class is shared.

12. GEMS Northern Ireland Limited**Title:** Minority Ethnic Employment Support Project (MEESP)**Contact Person:** Susan Russam, Chief Executive Gems NI Ltd**Website:** www.gemsni.org.uk **Email:** Susan.russam@gemsni.org.uk**Title:** Project Profile Minority Ethnic Employment Support Project (MEESP)**Background and brief description of Project:**

The MEESP project is a proactive employability service which addresses the barriers to employment experienced by long-term unemployed and economically inactive Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and Migrant Worker groups within the Priority 1 target group. It aims to increase employment and reduce economic inactivity and worklessness of those with multiple barriers to employment and social exclusion, compounded by the language barrier. The project will deliver a one-to-one personal advice guidance counselling and mentoring service which improve their ability to access employment in the local labour market. The MEESP project provides a comprehensive employability support service consolidated by extensive knowledge of the additional barriers to employment experienced by the minority ethnic target group and proven expertise in addressing these barriers.

Objectives

Address the barriers to employment experienced by long-term unemployed and economically inactive minority ethnic groups. Individual MEESP beneficiaries will be encouraged to avail of the full range of supports available, including:

- Comprehensive employability assessment with individuals using methods appropriate to the individual's linguistic needs and ethnicity and culture.
- Individual employability action planning and job search skills
- Personal mentoring to build confidence in communicating in English in the recruitment and selection process
- Personal mentoring to build confidence in communicating in English with supervisors, colleagues and customers in the workplace
- Support to access training and development opportunities
- Access to personal development programmes to improve confidence and reduce isolation
- Language for Work classes and other training programmes
- Direct links to employers through GEMS Jobs Matching service
- Better of calculations and other benefits advice
- Work Sampling and workplace orientation
- In-work support

Main Themes:

- Social and economic exclusion
- Access to employment
- Employability & mentoring support

Needs, Issues and Problems:

'Helping People into Work', is a key strategic objective for Department for Employment & Learning. The focus is on identifying and supporting people who are economically inactive, including those on incapacity benefit, to address their personal barriers to employment helping them to make the transition from welfare to work. The MEESP project compliments and adds value to current provision targeted at addressing economic inactivity and worklessness in the greater Belfast area including the LEMIS service, Pathways to Work, Steps to Work and Training for success and New Deal programmes, providing the cultural competence required to support minority ethnic groups to benefit from these mainstream Government programmes and increasing uptake rates to these programmes from minority ethnic communities.

Activities of the Project:

The MEESP project provides one to one guidance and support to up to 600 beneficiaries aimed at maximising their potential to gain sustainable employment, including access to GEMS NI job clubs, pre-employment programmes and job matching service as additional support. All participants with low or no English language Skill are encouraged to attend English for Speakers of Other Languages, either through GEMS own Language for Work programme or signposting to other providers. Language for Work Participants' are given the option of gaining ESOL Skills for Life level 1 or 2; Level 2 is considered by CCEA to be equivalent to a GCSE grade (a-c) Participants are provided with information of a wide range of courses and qualification depending on their vocational interest and experience and discrete needs. GEMS will also assist MEESP participants to access a range of learning and development opportunities currently available within statutory, voluntary and community provision.

Key Results and Impact:

Helena's experience of the MEESP Service: "I have been using the GEMS service since 2006 when I first came to Belfast and a friend told me to go to GEMS to get help with my CV and job search as things here were very different to Spain. From the start I found Maeve helpful and easy going and willing to help people with little English explaining how things are done here. We developed a CV and started to do application forms. Soon I got invited to interview and worked through a practice interview with Maeve. The practice and feedback really helped me prepare and I knew what to expect for the real thing. I was more alert for the different types of questions they asked and I got the first job. I have moved a few times since and always know I can ask Maeve for help if I need it again. I have recommended GEMS to loads of friends, particularly new arrivals so they can get the same help I did. Anything you need, Maeve can help you very cheerfully. If she doesn't know about a course or something she always knows someone who does."

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

Match funding provided for 2009/2011 by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

Project Partners: MEESP works in partnership with a multi-stakeholder collaborative network to share information, knowledge and best practice and also in joint work to support individual clients and client referrals to the project and referrals to other services from the project

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

The resources available to MEESP are very limited and demand for support from the project is very high with many clients presenting complex problems and issues including homelessness and destitution. The economic recession has resulted in many clients losing their jobs and problems with welfare benefit eligibility.

Lessons Learned:

We have learned that we should consider integrating our vocationally orientated language learning and Living and Belfast training programmes directly into the MEESP project increasing the resources for the project and enabling a more co-ordinated approach to addressing Careers Information Advice and Guidance, VOLL and integration and inclusion for BME/migrant workers.



Maeve McKeag MEESP Co-ordinator (left) pictured with Helena, MEESP Client

The MEESP Project provides a culturally competent information advice and guidance service which supports Black and Minority Ethnic unemployed people and migrant workers to increase their employability and access to employment opportunities through one to one guidance and advice on available training and development opportunities linked to their personal employment plan.

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Development Department

Your reference: Higher Education Strategy

Our reference: #115296

Being dealt with by: David Purchase

Date: 2 March 2010

Tel: 02890 320202 ext 3792

Higher Education Policy & Strategic
Development
Department for Employment and Learning
Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8FD
hepolicy.branch@delni.gov.uk

Dear Sir or Madam,

RE: Consultation: Development of a Higher Education Strategy

Please find attached our provisional response to this consultation document. Please note that this is still subject to final ratification by full council.

Provisional Response

1.1. Overall comments

- 1.1.1. The Council is broadly supportive of the draft strategy and looks forward to seeing a more detailed proposal in due course. While not directly affected by the proposal the council sees this strategy as impacting on its work to help local businesses, grow the economy, increase employability and create jobs. The Council is already involved in several partnership programmes with the higher education sector. These include, support for students who may wish to become entrepreneurs, yearly work placements for students, and research/product development programmes.
- 1.1.2. The strategy also has implications for the Council's work with children and young people and its efforts to reduce poverty. From that perspective, the most substantive issue is that of the disincentive, particularly to those from disadvantaged areas or low income families, posed by higher student fees. Having successfully encouraged uptake of HE by those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, over a period of several decades, the unintended consequence of any reduction in funding is likely to be a reversal of that success story.
- 1.1.3. Our European experience suggests that DEL's strategy should consider the EU2020 and the 7 flagships, particularly those focused on skills and innovation. All future regional and national strategies should reflect EU2020 as funding will flow from this, including the ESF that DEL manages. We also encourage reference to the opportunities for students to be internationally mobile through the EU lifelong learning programme and Framework Programme 7.

1.2. Responses to the specific questions

- 1.2.1. We have used the template you provided for specific responses. Please see the following pages.

Thank you for asking us to respond to the proposals.



Yours sincerely

David

Dr David Purchase
Policy & Business Development
Development Dept.
Belfast City Council
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CONSULTATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND QUESTIONNAIRE

A Vision for Higher Education: 2010-2020

PROPOSAL

- The Department's vision for higher education is one of a sector which is vibrant, of international calibre, which pursues excellence in teaching and research and which plays a pivotal role in the development of a modern, sustainable knowledge-based economy which supports a confident inclusive society which recognises and values diversity.

QUESTIONS

Question One

- What are your views on the vision outlined above for the development of the higher education sector up to 2020?

It seems appropriate.

A Learning Society

PROPOSALS

- Teaching and learning needs to be flexible, accessible and of the highest quality. More flexible pathways to qualifications need to be developed, with funding arrangements incentivising this change.



- The sector should seek to develop “Distinctive Northern Ireland Graduates”; graduates who possess additional skills that will place them at an advantage globally.
- A greater emphasis on part-time participation in higher education and on postgraduate research and training is required involving closer collaboration with industry and continuing Government commitment to research and development activities.
- The roles of the FECs in the provision and delivery of higher education should be further developed and fostered in partnership with the Universities and University Colleges.
- There is a need to incentivise choices for STEM areas beyond the traditional higher education courses
- There is a need for a greater emphasis on sub-degree qualifications which better meet the needs of local industry and brings Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK and Europe.
- It is imperative that we build on the success to date of widening participation to ensure access for all those who can benefit from higher education, addressing inequalities of gender and socio-economic grouping at a time of constrained resource availability.

What are your views on the above proposals?

The document makes reference to NI using its size to its advantage but does not appear to say how this can be done or what this might actually mean. It would be useful if the document elaborated on this idea to help understand how DEL intends to develop the uniqueness of our HEIs.

The document suggests that STEM courses need to be incentivised particularly as NI lags behind the UK in non-medical related STEM students. The percentage figures provided show this is not the case. They show that 27.36 NI students are studying non-medical STEM courses as opposed to 25.6% in the UK. We do not underestimate the importance of STEM subjects, we just hope your decisions have not been made on incorrect interpretation of the figures.

We also question the need to incentives STEM students on the grounds that your report already states that HE courses are provided



on the basis of demand. It seems more sensible to focus on making STEM related subjects more appealing at the school age (so that students want to continue to study them into HE) and to educate potential students as to the opportunities and higher earning potential of STEM graduates.

One of the major barriers to high quality research in UK institutions is the unpredictability of funding streams. This particularly affects full-time researchers who are often not treated equally to teaching staff in terms of pay, job security, contract conditions, etc. A practical negative impact of this is a high turnover of researchers and subsequent loss of knowledge. DEL has the opportunity to use its funding approach to address some of these problems e.g. through the use of longer-term research grants.

QUESTIONS

Question Two

- How should higher education in Northern Ireland be delivered to best support the needs of current and future learners, including those in the workforce?

The first proposal states that learning needs to be “flexible, accessible and of the highest quality.” While we agree that these are commendable aspirations, we have concerns that they may actually limit some opportunities. For example, there is potential to use associated or even third party providers of education who may be extremely flexible and accessible but ‘only’ of very good quality rather than ‘the highest quality.’

Question Three

- How can learning at higher education institutions in Northern Ireland be made distinctive from the rest of the UK, the Republic of Ireland and Europe, leading to graduates with greater employability potential?

Higher Education and the Economy



PROPOSALS

- **Research should continue to be funded at an appropriate level to enable our Universities to fulfil their central role to develop and sustain a world-class research base in Northern Ireland.**
- **Increased employer engagement with higher education and the continual development of knowledge exchange activity with businesses, the public sector and with the third sector is required.**
- **The promotion of entrepreneurship in the local economy through the higher education sector, including the development of graduates with the right set of skills necessary to compete in a global economy.**
- **Working more closely with local industry, particularly SMEs and potential investors to ensure that skills gaps are identified and addressed, putting in place flexible client-focused approaches to do so.**
- **Northern Ireland must play to its strengths, ensuring the development of a high quality skills base and a willingness to respond to investors.**
- **Cross-departmental co-operation to promote interest in, and the study of, priority subjects from an early age, achieving the right balance between these and other subject areas, whilst respecting academic freedom.**

What are your views on the above proposals?



The Council is already involved in programmes to encourage graduates to consider entrepreneurship. We also have partnerships with the HE sector to help SME's develop new products and prepare them for market. Hence we welcome the proposals and would be willing to share our experiences.

QUESTIONS

Question Four:

- How can the higher education sector maximise its contribution to Northern Ireland's economy, particularly in relation to research and development?

Our previous comments about research also apply here. The DEL is in a position, through its approach to funding research, to create a more stable environment for those interested in pursuing a career in research.

QUESTION FIVE:

- How can higher education, government and business work more effectively to identify research and development needs and improve the knowledge and skills of the current, and future, workforce?

There is a tendency for HE to think of knowledge skills, and workforce development in traditional terms of degrees, masters, etc. It should be noted that employers need staff to have new skills not necessarily new certificates and as such, short, focused programmes can be more relevant than a part-time qualification based course.

Equally students can acquire useful experience and a greater understanding of the relevance of their studies through work placement opportunities. The Council offers several placements each year and is convinced of the benefits to organisation and student. We suggest the department may be able to do more to raise awareness about placement arrangements among the private sector.



Internationally Connected

PROPOSALS

Expansion of Northern Ireland's market share within the UK in respect of

- **international activity and overseas student enrolments through the development of a unique Northern Ireland higher education selling point.**
- **Encouraging, incentivising and supporting Northern Ireland students to avail of the opportunities for international mobility.**
- **Institutions should seek to further develop their portfolio of well managed overseas institutional partnerships that benefit not only their students and institutions but Northern Ireland as a whole.**
- **Healthy and substantial international research links should continue to be fostered, for overseas trade and inward investment. In particular, HEIs should continue to work with SMEs to ensure they are well placed to reap the benefits of internationalisation.**

What are your views on the above proposals?

QUESTIONS

Question Six:

- **As higher education becomes increasingly globalised, how can Northern Ireland's institutions further expand their international portfolios, to assist not only the higher education sector, but Northern Ireland as a whole?**



The Council is involved in a number of events to promote the area internationally (EU events, MIPIM, Nashville, etc) and would welcome input from the HE sector.

Question Seven:

- How can Northern Ireland's students be encouraged, incentivised and supported to become more internationally mobile?

As in the introduction, we refer to the opportunities for students to be internationally mobile through the EU lifelong learning programme and Framework Programme 7. We try to promote these through programmes such as 'Opportunity Europe' and "Leonardo students".

Higher Education and Civil Society

PROPOSALS

- Increasing opportunities for learners to enter higher education and assist in the development of initiatives and programmes at the HEIs to ensure the establishment of an open and diverse society.
- Promoting the creation of sustainable outreach links between the HEIs and the local voluntary, community and local Government sectors, supported by external engagement committees in which all stakeholders are represented.
- HEIs working in partnership with FECs to encourage and promote the provision of higher education in enabling those from geographical 'coldspots' to benefit from a higher education experience.

What are your views on the above proposals?

QUESTIONS

Question Eight:

- How should the already established relationships and interfaces with local communities and civic society be developed further to maximise their effectiveness?



The Council already enjoys a good relationship with HEIs as referenced in the consultation document (Holylands, etc) and as previously mentioned in this consultation response. We welcome any efforts to further develop these relationships.

- Question Nine:
- If new relationships and interfaces need to be established, what should they look like?

Higher Education Finance and Governance

PROPOSALS

- Changing the funding model for higher education to a simplified system that better reflects the need for part-time, modular study to ensure flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness in higher education.
- Assessing the extent to which MaSN, as a means of controlling expenditure, is still fit for purpose.
- Considering whether the Financial Memorandum between the Department and the Universities and University Colleges takes account of the UK-wide
- HEI Financial Memoranda and also reflects the appropriate degree of assurance.
- Striking a clear balance between HEI autonomy and the role of the Department through a renewed funding and governance framework to ensure clarity in roles and responsibilities.

What are your views on the above proposals?



QUESTIONS

Question Ten:

- **How can we ensure that government funding is being used effectively to support learners and respond to economic priorities?**

While we agree that the tax payer needs to be assured that funding is being used appropriately, we would be concerned about introducing another layer of reporting. The consultation document says that Universities and Colleges are now generating “significant income from private and voluntary (trust) sources and are accountable for the use of such monies to the funder.” (p56) It seems sensible for the same accountability mechanisms to be used to satisfy the needs of DEL. Developing and implementing a system that creates duplications of reporting work will only divert resources away from teaching and research.

Question Eleven:

- **What are your views on the higher education funding model in Northern Ireland?**

We agree with the proposal that efforts should be made to create a new simplified system that better reflects the aims of this strategy and the changing climate for the education sector. However, we expect that reaching agreement on a new approach will be very difficult. Consequently we suggest that a range of basic options is considered, with reference to approaches taken elsewhere, and a review of the pros and cons of each is produced for consultation.

Question Twelve:

- **How could government funding, including student support, be revised to support modular and flexible study?**

As mentioned in the introduction, our main concern is the potential for disincentive, particularly to those from disadvantaged areas or low income families, posed by higher student fees. Having successfully encouraged uptake of HE by those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, over a period of several decades, the unintended consequence of any reduction in funding is likely to be a reversal of that success story.

Question Thirteen:

- **What are your views on the cap on student numbers (MaSN)?**



The Consultation paper seems to suggest that the MaSN approach is no longer appropriate. We would prefer to see details about alternative approaches (the removed completely option on page 51) before making comment.

Implementing the Strategy

QUESTION

Question Fourteen:

- **What are your views on the establishment of a strategic implementation body to oversee implementation of the strategy when it is finalised?**

We support the proposal but would add that the implementation body also has to have the appropriate “blend of experience and expertise” *and authority*, if it is to be successful.

We welcome any additional thoughts or comments on the consultation?

Name: Dr David Purchase **Organisation:** Belfast City Council
Contact Number: 02890 320202 **E-mail:** purchased@belfastcity.gov.uk



Development Department

Your reference: Higher Education Strategy

Our reference: #115296

Being dealt with by: David Purchase

Date: 2 March 2010

Tel: 02890 320202 ext 3792

Higher Education Policy & Strategic
Development
Department for Employment and Learning
Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8FD
hepolicy.branch@delni.gov.uk

Dear Sir or Madam,

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Please find attached our provisional response to this consultation document. Please note that this is still subject to final ratification by full council.

Provisional Response

1.1. Overall comments

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Thank you for asking us to respond to the proposals.



Yours sincerely

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Higher Education and the Economy



PROPOSALS

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PROPOSALS

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Higher Education Finance and Governance

PROPOSALS

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QUESTION

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- **What are your views on the establishment of a strategic implementation body to oversee implementation of the strategy when it is finalised?**

We support the proposal but would add that the implementation body also has to have the appropriate “blend of experience and expertise” *and authority*, if it is to be successful.

We welcome any additional thoughts or comments on the consultation?

Name: Dr David Purchase **Organisation:** Belfast City Council
Contact Number: 02890 320202 **E-mail:** purchased@belfastcity.gov.uk

people:skills:jobs:



Department for
**Employment
and Learning**
www.delni.gov.uk

Consultation document on the development of a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland

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Ministerial foreword



Higher education should inspire, encourage and transform. It should inspire individuals, encourage local communities and seek to transform our civic society.

I believe that higher education enriches our lives in a variety of ways. It raises the aspirations of our people, equips them for the world of work, enhances the skills base of Northern Ireland and contributes to an inclusive, diverse and dynamic society.

Our higher education institutions make a significant contribution to our local economy through employment, international partnerships, research and associated activities. In broader terms, the cultural and social value that they deliver is apparent in our everyday lives. Through sport, social amenities, the arts, community engagement and lifelong learning they offer a wealth of benefits to our society.

I commend Northern Ireland's higher education institutions: the two universities, two university colleges, the Open University and the six further education colleges which all cater to Northern Ireland's diverse higher education student population. I acknowledge the important role that they play in enriching the lives of our people, our economy, our community and our society as a whole. I am in no doubt that they will continue to play an important role as we look towards the future. However, times are changing, and just as other sectors in Northern Ireland have to meet the ever increasing challenges emerging, so too does the higher education sector. The economy has changed, expectations have increased, demand has risen and the world has become more globalised with continual advances in technology.

I therefore believe that now is an opportune time to establish a new vision for the higher education sector in Northern Ireland; one which will aid us in developing a strong, collective, strategic approach to higher education in Northern Ireland; an approach where all beneficiaries of higher education have key roles to play. It is imperative that our vision for the future of the higher education sector in Northern Ireland should seek to establish a clear pathway for development and facilitate the opportunity to create a distinctive, strong and internationally renowned sector. A sector that is responsive, flexible and accessible to all.

Therefore, I welcome your views on the questions within this consultation document on the development of a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland. I hope to hear from as many of our stakeholders as possible during the consultation process.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danny Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a short horizontal line.

DANNY KENNEDY MLA
Minister for Employment and Learning

Introduction by Sir Graeme Davies, Chair of the Steering Group



It is now widely recognised that higher education is a key driver in providing economic and social benefits to society and has a pivotal role to play in the development of a modern, knowledge-based economy that supports the creation of confidence and inclusivity. In that context, the higher education institutions in Northern Ireland play a vibrant role in the local economy, generating significant additional investment and offering access to higher skills for a substantial proportion of Northern Ireland's young people and for those in work. The development of a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland provides the opportunity to influence and shape the future of the higher education sector in Northern Ireland up to 2020.

This consultation document sets out proposals for your consideration and asks some fundamental questions about the future role of Northern Ireland's higher education institutions, about their contribution to wider society and, particularly, the economy, and about the nature of their relationship with Government, the taxpayer and their stakeholders.

The responses received to this consultation will inform the development of the Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland and pave the way for the establishment of a distinctive higher education sector: a sector that benefits not only its participants but society as a whole. I am grateful for the hard work and advice of my colleagues on the Steering Group and the Chairs and members of the Expert Groups in helping to shape this consultation document. I urge you to use this opportunity to help shape the future of the higher education sector in Northern Ireland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Graeme Davies'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Sir Graeme Davies
January 2011

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Northern Ireland can be justifiably proud of its higher education sector and institutions; the Queen's University of Belfast, the University of Ulster, Stranmillis University College, St. Mary's University College, the Open University and the six further education colleges. The Queen's University of Belfast and the University of Ulster are recognised for the quality of their teaching across the UK and further afield, and are also respected as sources of leading edge and world class research. Between them they have trained most of the professionals who work in Northern Ireland – in science and engineering, business and legal services, health, education and many other sectors. Graduates of Stranmillis University College and St. Mary's University College are sought after to fill the demanding roles of educating and preparing children for adult life. The Open University, and increasingly, our further education colleges offer alternative routes to higher level qualifications and lifelong learning, providing a wide range of opportunities for individuals to maximise their potential. In their own way, all of our higher education institutions (HEIs) have made, and continue to make, vital contributions to our cultural life, our civil society and our economic and intellectual prosperity.

However, the world is changing and, just as other sectors of our society and economy have to respond to these changes, so does our higher education sector. The 'traditional' 18-21 year old student cohort, the funding for whom accounts for a substantial (but reducing) proportion of the higher education sector's income, is contracting. Our economy is demanding a higher level of skills and more graduates. Students, both full-time and part-time, have greater expectations regarding teaching quality and the "student experience". The population is also becoming more mobile, the higher education sector more competitive, and the funding environment distinctly more difficult.

As we move into the second decade of the 21st Century, this document asks some fundamental questions about the future role of our HEIs, about their contribution to society and the economy, and about the nature of their relationship with Government and their stakeholders. The objective, following this consultation, is to establish a framework for the HEIs' strategic development over the next decade: one which acknowledges and respects their values and traditions, and the contribution they have made to our society, but also one which appropriately recognises the interests of the taxpayer as a significant funder of their activities. The overriding aim is to establish an environment in which our institutions can continue to flourish, making a distinctive contribution to the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of Northern Ireland.

1.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

In late summer 2009, the then Minister for Employment and Learning, Sir Reg Empey MLA, appointed Sir Graeme Davies, the former Vice Chancellor of the University of London, to oversee the development of a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Subsequently, a Steering Group, a Project Group and five Expert Groups were established to support the development of the Strategy. These groups comprised a wide

SECTION 1:

INTRODUCTION cont.

range of stakeholders from higher education, the community/voluntary sector, further education, schools, business and student representatives. Membership of the Groups is outlined at **Annex C**.

To ensure that the Steering Group was kept informed of the work of the Groups, Sir Graeme Davies held regular meetings with the Chairs of the Expert Groups. Two stakeholder engagement events were held in Belfast and Londonderry to give stakeholders the opportunity to express their views on higher education in Northern Ireland.

The Expert Groups considered and made recommendations on five key themes:

- the contribution of the higher education sector to civil society, and the cultural development of our local communities [Society/People];
- how to ensure fairer access to higher education irrespective of background and experience and how we might promote and sustain excellence in teaching and student experience [Learning];
- how to maximise the contribution of higher education to local economic development [Economy];
- how the higher education sector might contribute to the strengthening of Northern Ireland's position as an outward-looking innovative local economy operating in an increasingly competitive world [International]; and
- given the significant level of taxpayer support, how we can ensure an appropriate and effective system of funding and of governance for the sector. [Finance/Governance].

The Expert Group Chairs presented their findings and recommendations in the summer of 2010 to the Steering Group. Their reports have informed the development of this consultation document.

1.3 THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

This document reflects the findings and conclusions of the Expert Groups and their recommendations have been attached at **Annex B**.

Section 2 provides an overview of higher education in Northern Ireland today. It provides high level information on the funding and activities of the sector. It highlights some of the key challenges the sector will face over the next decade. The themes identified are further developed in the subsequent sections.

Section 3 offers a future vision for higher education in Northern Ireland. Proposals are outlined in subsequent sections (4-8) which address how, in a rapidly changing environment, we might give effect to that vision by ensuring fair access to higher education for all those who have the capacity to benefit, promoting excellence in learning, maximising the contribution of the sector to economic development, ensuring that higher education funding is fit for purpose, promoting a more outward looking

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION cont.

society and adding value to the cultural life of Northern Ireland. We would welcome your views on these proposals.

The responses received to this consultation will inform the development of a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland and pave the way for the establishment of a distinctive higher education sector: a sector that benefits not only its participants but society as a whole.

1.4 AVAILABILITY AND RESPONSES

This consultation is available online on the Department for Employment and Learning's website: www.delni.gov.uk/hestrategy

It runs for 12 weeks from Thursday 20 January 2011 to Friday 15 April 2011 and applies to Northern Ireland. Information on how to respond can also be found on the Department's website. Correspondents are asked to submit their views as early as possible during this period to allow as much time as possible for consideration.

A number of proposals have been identified in relation to this consultation. These proposals are contained in Annex A and also separately in a supplementary questionnaire. The questionnaire can be downloaded in Word format from the Department's website or answered online.

If a printed copy of the consultation document or the questionnaire is required, they can be requested from the contact details provided in this section. Requests for this paper in different formats and languages will also be considered.

The Expert Group reports can also be requested from the contact details provided in this section. All responses not submitted electronically must be made in writing and attributable so that there is an objective record of the view expressed. Your name, address and organisation name, if applicable, should be clearly stated. Responses should be submitted before the closing date.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION cont.

Responses should be sent to:

Laura Carroll
Higher Education Policy Branch
Department for Employment and Learning
Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8FD

Tel: (028) 9025 7512
Fax: (028) 9025 7747
Email: HEPolicy.Branch@delni.gov.uk
Website: www.delni.gov.uk/hestrategy

While we cannot accept responses by telephone, general enquiry calls may be made to the above number.

1.5 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Confidentiality

The Department will publish a summary of response following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Any automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will be taken to apply only to the information in your response for which confidentiality has been specifically requested. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraph below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will provide you with guidance on the legal position regarding any information give by you in response to this consultation. The Department will handle any personal data you provide appropriately in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. The right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential, any information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, the Department does have the responsibility to decide whether any information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential.

SECTION 2: HIGHER EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND TODAY: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides an overview of higher education in Northern Ireland today. It describes the role and activities of our HEIs over the last few years, and the challenges that the sector will face in the future.

2.2 HIGHER EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

2.2.1 Participants in higher education

Higher education embraces a range of qualifications from Certificates of Higher Education through to degrees and PhDs (levels 4-8)¹. The Northern Ireland higher education sector, therefore, comprises all providers which deliver courses leading to these qualifications.

Higher education in Northern Ireland is delivered principally through two universities, Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and the University of Ulster (Ulster), and two university colleges, St. Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College. In academic year (AY) 2008/09, 48,240 students were enrolled at these institutions.

The Open University in Ireland also makes a significant contribution to the Northern Ireland higher education sector with 4,220 students from Northern Ireland enrolled in AY 2008/09. In addition, Northern Ireland's six further education colleges (FECs) deliver a broad range of higher education courses, with 10,281 students enrolled in AY 2008/09. This represents around 7% of all professional and technical enrolments in FECs.

As with other regions of the UK, a relatively large proportion of Northern Ireland domiciled participants in higher education also attend institutions outside their home region. In 2008/09, 16,345 (26.3%) of Northern Ireland domiciled students chose to study elsewhere in the UK². This has decreased over recent years with a large majority of students being 'determined leavers' who want to leave Northern Ireland to study elsewhere³.

Welsh domiciled students follow a pattern similar to Northern Ireland; 31.7% chose to study elsewhere. In England, only four regions make provision for more than 50% of their students, these being Yorkshire and The Humber, the North East, the North West and London. Other English regions show an outflow of more than half of their students to other regions, and this outflow is particularly marked from the South East and the East of England. Finally, only 5.5% of Scottish domiciled students chose to study elsewhere, which may be attributed to the absence of tuition fees for Scottish students at Scottish institutions. It should be noted, however, that student finance arrangements in Scotland are currently under review.

1. <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/fheq/ewni/default.asp>

2. This figure does not include Northern Ireland domiciled students who study via the Open University (which is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England).

3. 'Higher Education in Northern Ireland: A Report on Factors Associated with Participation and Migration' – Bob Osborne and Alayne Smith and Amanda Hayes

SECTION 2: HIGHER EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND TODAY: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES cont.

Student mobility within the UK does not necessarily lead to a 'brain drain', however. Universities UK reports that there is a strong relationship between the region of domicile and the region of employment. Many students are inclined to return to their home region after completing their studies⁴.

The numbers attending higher education have increased significantly in recent years with almost 50% of the 'traditional' core cohort of 18 year-olds entering higher education in recent years compared to 15% in 1980. Participation rates for young people are also higher in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the UK⁵.

2.2.2 Role and activities of higher education institutions

Northern Ireland's HEIs are not solely seats of learning. In addition to teaching, they are the major source of research and development (R&D) activity in Northern Ireland. As such, they are critical to Northern Ireland's development as a knowledge-based economy, capable of attracting foreign investment in high quality jobs. Activities in this area include the development of strategic external partnerships with industry and HEIs in Great Britain (GB), the Republic of Ireland (ROI), Europe and further afield. They also play a key role in meeting the skills needs of the local economy. The HEIs have also developed a number of highly successful spin-off companies. It is estimated that, through their research and development work, over £600m of economic activity was generated throughout the UK, two-thirds of which accrued in Northern Ireland, making an important contribution to the local economy.

2.2.3 Status and funding

Northern Ireland's universities are not public sector bodies. They are charitable institutions established by Royal Charter and are, therefore, autonomous bodies. HEIs receive a substantial level of public funding which is supplemented with income from other sources. Individual users also contribute in a significant way to the costs of their education and training. In 2008/09 the combined income of the universities and university colleges was £500 million. Of this, government investment accounted for 38% and 46% of Queen's University's and the University of Ulster's income respectively, and 63% and 64% for Stranmillis University College's and St. Mary's University College's income respectively.

In addition to the funding provided to the universities and university colleges, the Department also funds the provision of higher education in the FECs (HE in FE). In 2009/10, £25.7 million was made available to HE in FE through this mechanism.

2.2.4 Student support

The Department also provides a range of financial support measures for full-time undergraduate higher education students. These include: tuition fee loans; maintenance

4. UUK Tenth Report – Patterns of higher education institutions in the UK
<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Documents/PatternsOfHigherEducationInstitutionsInTheUK.pdf>
 5. Learning Expert Group report, pg 38

SECTION 2: HIGHER EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND TODAY: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES cont.

loans; maintenance grants; parents' learning allowance; disabled students allowance and childcare grants. Part-time undergraduate students, who are studying at least 50% of an equivalent full-time course, can also apply for student support in the form of a fee and course grant. In 2009/10, £286 million of student support was paid to undergraduate students by the Department, an increase of £128 million since 2005/06.

2.3 ACHIEVEMENTS OF NORTHERN IRELAND'S HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

The higher education sector in Northern Ireland can point to a number of significant achievements over the last decade.

The sector has had a positive impact on the local economy leveraging significant additional investment from external sources. Internationally, Northern Ireland's universities have an excellent profile in regard to research. In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), of the research submitted by both Queen's University and the University of Ulster, 50% was judged to be either world-leading or internationally excellent. Northern Ireland's universities and university colleges also have high levels of student satisfaction with 83% of students satisfied with their course in comparison to the UK average of 82% as reflected by the results of the 2010 National Student Survey.

Northern Ireland's higher education participation rates are also the highest in the UK. In 2008/09 (AY) Northern Ireland's higher education age participation index was 48.2%, almost double the participation index of 1989/90⁶. Representation from students from lower socio-economic groups is the highest in the UK, with 41.7% of young full-time first degree entrants to Northern Ireland HEIs in 2008/09 coming from age adjusted Socio-Economic Classification Groups 4-7. This is well above the UK average of 32.3%⁷. Northern Ireland's HEIs also have well established links with academic and business partnerships throughout the world.

2.4 CHALLENGES FACING THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

The higher education sector has clearly made a positive contribution to cultural and economic life in Northern Ireland. This represents a strong platform on which to build for the future. However there are a number of distinct and difficult challenges which need to be faced.

2.4.1 Demographic challenges

Northern Ireland faces demographic changes, such as the forecast reduction in the 18 year old population. It is estimated that their numbers will decrease by approximately 15% over the next ten years⁸. With fewer 'traditional' entrants, higher education in Northern Ireland will need to adapt. Existing evidence also suggests that almost 80% of the 2020 workforce have already completed their compulsory school education⁹. Higher

6. http://www.delni.gov.uk/higher_education_age_participation_index_for_northern_ireland_1989-90_to_2008-09.pdf

7. HESA Performance Indicators

8. <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp20.htm>

9. 'Success Through Skills 2' – Department for Employment and Learning Analytical Services using Northern Ireland population estimates from Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

SECTION 2: HIGHER EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND TODAY: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES cont.

education provision will, therefore, need to become more flexible to accommodate the diverse learning needs not only of those leaving school, but also those in work.

2.4.2 Increasing competition

As a consequence of the demographic trends, the sector will become increasingly competitive as institutions throughout the UK (and indeed further afield) seek to fill their places from a shrinking catchment population. Competition for research funds is also likely to increase.

2.4.3 International challenges

The advent of globalisation has brought increased competition from overseas. The rapid growth of economies such as Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC economies) has created many global challenges, including competition for students, jobs and capital. The quality of skills, R&D and education will determine future prosperity¹⁰. As highlighted by the 2008 MATRIX Report, if Northern Ireland is to rise to the challenges of the 21st century it is essential that it does more to look and work outward, in terms of both its international market share and international mobility¹¹. The higher education sector has a key contribution to make in these areas.

2.4.4 Employment challenges

Any reduction in expenditure throughout the public sector in the UK will have a significant effect on Northern Ireland, as public sector employment here is significantly higher than in the rest of the UK. In Northern Ireland, a greater proportion of establishments in the public administration and education sectors take on graduates than in any other sector. As these opportunities diminish, there is a real risk of students going elsewhere unless other opportunities are generated. The higher education sector has a key role to play in leveraging the necessary investment.

2.4.5 Skills challenges

Although skill levels in the NI workforce have been improving steadily in recent years, evidence shows that Northern Ireland needs a more highly skilled population now and in the future. A recent report by Oxford Economics, entitled *Forecasting Future Skills Needs in Northern Ireland*¹², states that the Northern Ireland economy has an increasing need for people with higher level skills (level 4-8). The report also states that higher skills are associated with higher productivity, higher wage levels and higher employment rates, each of which is included in the published economic goals of the Executive. It also highlights that the degree subject requirement will become more skewed towards physical sciences, mathematical and computer sciences, engineering and technology, law and creative art and design. Northern Ireland currently has an above average (within the UK) concentration of graduates in subjects such as medicine and dentistry, subjects

10. www.matrix-ni.org/downloads/matrix_vol1_report.pdf.

11. www.matrix-ni.org/downloads/matrix_vol1_report.pdf.

12. http://www.delni.gov.uk/es/del_future_skill_needs_final_report_june_09_v4_no_links.pdf

SECTION 2: HIGHER EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND TODAY: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES cont.

allied to medicine, veterinary science, agriculture and related subjects, architecture, business and administration, mass communication, history and philosophical studies. The Department's Skills Strategy, 'Success through Skills 2'¹³, aims to address this sectoral imbalance.

The Skills Strategy has also identified the need to improve management and leadership skills, stating that "as management skills have an important influence on how firms react to competition and new innovations, and on how physical investments and human capital are employed, their importance, at all levels, to the future development of the Northern Ireland economy cannot be overstated."

According to the Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey¹⁴, in 2008 14% of employers considered that there was a skill gap in their workforce (which refers to existing employees), with technical/practical skills gaps cited by half of those employers.

Skills are the bedrock of an innovation-based knowledge economy, right through from the schools system, to further and higher education and for lifelong learning. Creating a highly developed skills base will be a key source of competitive advantage in the global economy¹⁵. Linking higher education priorities to the MATRIX priorities will need to be considered in this context.

2.4.6 Financial challenges

The financial position over the medium term will be a much more challenging one for the HEIs as a result of demographic changes (which will potentially lead to fewer full-time students) and other potential changes in the funding base of the sector. Consequently, the income base of the higher education sector will potentially become less secure, especially as a high proportion of higher education income comes from the Government.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Northern Ireland's HEIs have delivered substantial benefits to the Northern Ireland economy and its people. Opportunities to participate in, and benefit from, access to higher education have been significantly expanded over the last decade; the quality of teaching and the student experience has been not only maintained, but improved, and our HEIs have established a strong research base which is internationally recognised.

Much of this has been achieved, however, in a relatively benign fiscal environment which has seen substantial growth in public investment and fee income in the sector. That is about to change. The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) outcomes provides for an 8% reduction in real terms in the revenue available for Northern Ireland, and a 40% reduction in capital funding. The Executive has not yet agreed a budget which would set out how its resources are to be deployed across Departments. Given the scale of reductions for the Northern Ireland Block, it is likely that the budget for higher education

13. http://www.delni.gov.uk/success_through_skills_2_-_the_skills_strategy_for_northern_ireland-consultation_document.pdf

14. http://www.delni.gov.uk/nisms08_final_main_report.pdf

15. www.matrix-ni.org/downloads/matrix_vol1_report.pdf

SECTION 2: HIGHER EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND TODAY: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES cont.

will be reduced. The key question therefore, is how to sustain and improve on what has been achieved so far within a much more competitive and financially constrained environment in the future.

We set out in the next section a vision for the higher education sector over the next decade in the period up to 2020.

SECTION 3: A VISION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: 2010–2020

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In this section a vision for higher education over the next decade is presented. It takes account of the Executive's goals for the Northern Ireland economy and its society and the challenges the sector will face beyond 2010. This vision guides the subsequent sections of the document and is reflected in the proposals detailed at the end of each section.

3.2 THE EXECUTIVE'S GOAL

The Executive is committed to building a prosperous, fair and inclusive society, supported by a vibrant and dynamic economy and a rich and sustainable environmental heritage.

It is recognised that the higher education sector has a key contribution to make to the achievement of these twin goals of social justice and economic prosperity by providing: a supply of highly qualified graduates across a range of disciplines with the skills and attributes sought by employers; fostering a spirit of enterprise and innovation to create growth in the private sector; generating wealth within the economy and; enriching the social and cultural landscape of Northern Ireland.

In making these contributions, the sector works at different levels:

- At the individual level; by helping people to maximise their potential through a commitment to excellent teaching, fair access and the creation of a supportive environment which encourages participation from all who can benefit and which provides individuals with the skills and attributes needed to make their way in an increasingly competitive world.
- At the community level; through outreach activities and the forging of links with local communities and the development of flexible pathways for progression through to qualification, building community confidence and aspiration.
- At the regional economy level; in meeting local labour market skills needs, transferring cutting edge knowledge from research into marketable products, acting as a catalyst for innovation driven growth and helping to attract investment and sustain growth.
- At the wider society level; contributing to the development of a more socially inclusive society through the sharing of knowledge, promoting the freedom of thought and expression, diversity and cultural development of a society with a commitment to life long learning.

It is, therefore, important that a vision for the future development of higher education in Northern Ireland must address all of these interests. They are not, however, mutually exclusive. Underpinning all four levels is the concept that education is life enhancing and contributes to the development of the people, economy and society

SECTION 3: A VISION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: 2010–2020 cont.

of Northern Ireland. As highlighted in Lord Browne’s Review of Higher Education and Student Finance:

“Higher education matters. It helps to create the knowledge, skills and values that underpin a civilized society. Higher education institutions generate and diffuse ideas, safeguard knowledge, catalyse innovation, inspire creativity, enliven culture, stimulate regional economies and strengthen civil society. They bridge the past and the future; the local and the global.”

3.3 OUR VISION

Taking account of these factors, and the challenges the sector faces, a potential vision for higher education is set out below:

The Department’s vision for higher education is one of a sector which is vibrant, of international calibre, which pursues excellence in teaching and research and which plays a pivotal role in the development of a modern, sustainable knowledge-based economy which supports a confident inclusive society which recognises and values diversity.

In particular, a sector which is recognised for:

- its ability to equip individuals with the distinctive range and quality of skills and attributes needed for an ever increasingly competitive world;
- its fairness in maximising opportunities for all who can benefit;
- its rigor in teaching and research standards and its own governance;
- its flexibility in responding to the needs of its stakeholders, including business;
- its engagement with local communities contributing to their regeneration, diversity and sustainability;
- its willingness to forge effective strategic partnerships with existing and potential new investors and employers in exploiting intellectual property and knowledge to secure competitive advantage for Northern Ireland and its people; and
- its willingness to engage globally.

Northern Ireland must use its size to its advantage as an opportunity to embrace and implement new concepts in the higher education sector, in order to benefit not only individuals but society as a whole. The contribution of the higher education institutions, both individually and collectively, to life in Northern Ireland is set out in section 1.1 and the development of a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland presents an opportunity to build and develop this distinctiveness over the coming years.

3.4 CONCLUSION

Achieving this vision will be challenging. Much has been achieved already, but much more can be done. The subsequent sections provide an assessment of where we are now and set out some pointers to the future strategic development of the sector as we look towards 2020.

SECTION 3: A VISION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: 2010–2020 cont.

3.5 QUESTION

Question one:

- What are your views on the vision outlined above at paragraph 3.3 for the development of the higher education sector up to 2020?

SECTION 4: A LEARNING SOCIETY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Education is life enhancing, contributing to the development of the people, economy and society of Northern Ireland. In this section we examine who is learning in higher education (and who is not), what is being taught and how. We also provide an assessment of the nature of change that is likely to be necessary to maximise the personal economic benefits that could accrue from higher education in Northern Ireland.

Higher education in Northern Ireland is diverse in its provision with a reputation for excellence in teaching, learning and research throughout the UK and beyond. For this success to continue, it is important that higher education is central to the development of a learning society in Northern Ireland, with lifelong learning a central tenet of the regional approach.

Northern Ireland must use its size to its advantage as an opportunity to embrace and implement new concepts and modes of learning, concepts that need to equip individuals with a distinctive range of high quality skills and attributes. Teaching and learning must be 'future proofed' to enable HEIs to keep up with technological advances, changing demographics and the demands of staff and students. Above all, it needs to be flexible, accessible and of the highest quality.

For this to succeed, higher education must not be viewed in isolation. Rather, it should be regarded as part of an educational continuum with primary, post-primary and lifelong education policies linked in coordination and approach, with all stakeholders understanding the contribution they can make to the success of higher education in Northern Ireland.

4.2 WHO IS LEARNING?

Learning in higher education is distinctive. Higher education is not simply about 'getting a degree'; it is fundamentally a transformative experience. It must enhance students' capacity to develop their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they study, to develop transferable skills and to apply the knowledge and skills gained in society and the workplace. The purpose of higher education is, therefore, not only to gain knowledge but also to 'learn how to think'. It should enable learners to realise their full potential, enhance their personal life skills, realise their ambitions and be equipped to fulfil their social and economic potential. Furthermore, the transformative nature of learning in higher education provides the opportunity for individuals to develop their sense of citizenship within Northern Ireland and to contribute to society, culture and the economy. Consequently, Government has an obligation to ensure that all those who can benefit have the opportunity to access higher education.

Student numbers from those domiciled in Northern Ireland, have risen by 44% in the past fifteen years. In 2008/09, almost 74,000 people of Northern Ireland domicile participated in higher education¹⁶. Of these around:

16. Both within and outside Northern Ireland HEIs

SECTION 4: A LEARNING SOCIETY cont.

- 49,000 were full-time students;
- 24,000 were part-time;
- 39,000 attended Queen's University and the University of Ulster;
- 4,000 were enrolled in the Open University;
- 2,000 attended Stranmillis or St Mary's University Colleges;
- 10,000 participated in HE in FE; and
- 17,000 undertook a higher education course in GB, ROI and elsewhere.

Northern Ireland currently has the highest overall young person higher education participation rate in the UK, with an Age Participation Index (API) of 48.2% in 2008/09, a doubling since 1989/90¹⁷.

Students who enrol at Northern Ireland HEIs tend to be younger than their counterparts in the rest of the UK. There are 66% more under 25 year olds than over 25 year olds in Northern Ireland compared to 57% more in the UK. In addition, 60% of enrolments at Northern Ireland institutions are female, with 29,000 female students compared to 19,000 male. This is slightly higher than the UK average of 57%.

The number of part-time student enrolments has fallen over the last five years. In 2008/09, 28% of students were studying on a part-time basis compared to 33% in 1998/99. In comparison, 37% of students in England were attending higher education on a part-time basis in 2008/09.

There is also a higher proportion of students undertaking undergraduate first degrees (level 6) at Northern Ireland HEIs compared to the rest of the UK, with 67% of total enrolments compared to 56%. Conversely, there is a much lower proportion studying at the 'other undergraduate' level (levels 4-5) with only 11% of total enrolments compared to 18% at the UK level.

The number of students engaged in postgraduate qualifications has also increased by 17% from 8,820 in 1998/99 to 10,280 in 2008/09. However, by contrast, the numbers of postgraduate students in Wales, Scotland and England increased 43%, 33% and 33% respectively over the same period.

Northern Ireland continues to perform well against the rest of the UK in increasing access to higher education among students from lower socio-economic classification groups (SEC groups)¹⁸. In academic year 2008/09, 41.7% of young full-time first degree entrants were from SEC groups 4 to 7, well above the UK average of 32.3%¹⁹.

Although Northern Ireland is already performing well in regard to widening participation, there remain pockets of the population where participation in higher education is lower than it should be. Socio-economic groups 5-7 account for 45% of Northern Ireland's

17. http://www.delni.gov.uk/higher_education_age_participation_index_for_northern_ireland__1989-90_to_2008-09.pdf The NI API is higher than the Scotland API (43.0% in 2008/09), and also the more-wide ranging HEIPR used in England (45.5% in 2008/09).

18. It should be noted that these figures represent the number of NI domiciled students who have entered higher education within and outside the UK.

19. Data from Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) – Performance Indicators

SECTION 4: A LEARNING SOCIETY cont.

population²⁰; however, participation from socio-economic groups 5-7 in higher education accounts for around only 25.8% of the 18-21 year old population²¹.

In addition, despite the Department's and the sector's efforts to provide a high quality student learning experience, around 10.2% of full-time first degree students at Northern Ireland HEIs are no longer in higher education following their year of entry. This compares adversely with the rest of the UK where the average 'drop-out' rate is 8.6%²². In light of this, HEIs in Northern Ireland are making significant efforts to address the issue of student retention, but more needs to be done. These issues will be further addressed within the Department's Widening Participation in Higher Education Strategy which is currently being developed.

4.3 WHO WILL BE LEARNING IN THE FUTURE?

It is possible to distinguish between four different types of 'learner':

- the 'traditional' 18-21 year old student progressing from secondary school/further education into higher education;
- postgraduate learners;
- employers and employees accessing higher education from work; and
- lifelong learners who, whether for professional or personal reasons, want to update their skills and knowledge.

Demographic trends and the other challenges identified earlier, however, suggest that the student profile will change significantly over the coming decade. The 18-21 year old population is contracting, reducing the natural catchment population for higher education recruitment and the retired population is increasing the higher education market demand for learning for 'leisure and pleasure'.

The Northern Ireland workforce will require opportunities for upskilling. In addition, new funding arrangements may lead to changes in the student profile, how students access their higher education, over what timeframe and may require a more flexible approach to meet their needs. This suggests a greater emphasis on part-time participation in higher education, while economic analysis points towards a requirement for more postgraduate expertise.

4.4 WHAT WILL LEARNERS LEARN?

The provision of higher education courses in Northern Ireland is ultimately demand driven, with HEIs providing courses based on what learners want. However, if the Northern Ireland economy is to grow and remain economically competitive in a global economy STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics)²³ and economically relevant subjects have a key role to play.

20. 2001 Census

21. 2007/08 UCAS accepted applicants

22. 2008/09 HESA Performance Indicators - table 3a (http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1695&Itemid=141)

23. STEM subjects include: Pharmacology, toxicology & pharmacy; Clinical veterinary medicine & dentistry; Agriculture; Zoology; Artificial intelligence and Maritime technology. A full list of STEM subjects can be found at Annex A, http://www.deni.gov.uk/report_of_the_stem_2009_review.pdf

SECTION 4: A LEARNING SOCIETY cont.

Northern Ireland already performs relatively well in the number of students studying STEM subjects when compared with the rest of the UK, with 48% of Northern Ireland enrolments in STEM related disciplines in comparison to the UK average of 40%. However, medicine, dentistry and subjects allied to medicine account for 43% of these enrolments in Northern Ireland, compared to 36% in the UK as a whole. As a result, other science, technology and engineering disciplines are lagging behind. In addition, the Department's Skills Strategy has identified a need for more graduates, not just in STEM subjects, but in other economically relevant subjects such as law and creative arts and design.

Language enrolments in Northern Ireland are also lower than the rest of the UK, with 4.1% of students studying a language related discipline in comparison to the national average of 5.5%. In contrast, 11.4% of Northern Ireland students study courses related to education in comparison to the UK average of 9.1%. A key issue for the future will, therefore, be to determine whether the current profile of the student offering best reflects the future needs of users, the wider economy and society. The Department welcomes the development of a Northern Ireland Language Strategy developed by the Queen's University and the University of Ulster's Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, led by the Department of Education.

In order to grow a dynamic, prosperous economy, Northern Ireland needs a highly skilled workforce with the right balance of skills at the right levels. As highlighted in *Forecasting Future Skills Needs in Northern Ireland*²⁴, there will be an increasing need for people with higher level skills. As almost 80% of the 2020 workforce have already completed their compulsory school education, the skills gap must be addressed in order to fulfil the needs of employers up to 2020 and beyond²⁵. The Northern Ireland higher education sector must, therefore, ensure flexibility of provision to cater for the changing needs of the learner and the economy.

In addition to subject based knowledge, it is expected that undergraduate learners will need to acquire a range of additional skills and attributes whilst completing their higher education qualification, such as: study skills, transferable skills, entrepreneurial skills, language skills, and 'soft skills' such as perseverance, the ability to take initiative, time management, team-working and critical thinking. However, it will become increasingly important to demonstrate that the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes acquired prepare students for the global marketplace. It may be necessary to rethink the purpose of learning in higher education, developing a set of specific cognitive abilities that will be sought and cultivated by leaders in the years ahead. Pragmatically, this suggests an increasing demand for well-developed employability skills, as mentioned above, if we are to compete with the best in the world.

4.5 HOW WILL LEARNERS LEARN?

Over the next decade, the delivery of higher education is likely to be 'multi-modal', where elements of contact tuition are combined with elements of technology-based learning.

24. http://www.delni.gov.uk/es/del_future_skill_needs_final_report_june_09_v4_no_links.pdf

25. The current consultation on "Success through Skills 2", the Departmental Skills Strategy, sets out these challenges in more detail.

SECTION 4: A LEARNING SOCIETY cont.

Here, ICT plays an important role in the integration of contact and distance education, enabling HEIs to create flexible learning environments.

Already, the traditional distinction between contact and distance learning is starting to disappear as a range of teaching practices become integrated. Known as blended learning, conventional contact tuition, although still the dominant mode of education, is being supported by new information and communication technologies aimed at enhancing teaching and learning.

Technological advances in the next decade, some of which cannot yet be imagined, will continue to shape the higher education learning experience further. Such advances will provide many learners, particularly mature and adult learners, with freedom from the limits of time, place and pace of learning. Distance and online learning is likely to expand further in the future as students seek flexible lifelong learning opportunities. There is already evidence of this with the number of students enrolled in distance learning courses at Northern Ireland HEIs has almost tripled over the past decade, rising from 380 in 1999/00 to 1,105 in 2008/09.

Of the 62,265 Northern Ireland-domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs in 2008/09, 7% were enrolled on courses through the Open University. The Open University, which has been at the forefront of distance learning since 1971, now offers all of its courses on an online basis. Online learning has also been embraced by Northern Ireland's other HEIs, including the University of Ulster through Campus One, and Queen's University's Queen's Online (QOL) Virtual Learning Environment.

The greater reach of open learning combined with an increasing demand for level 4-5 qualifications in the workforce and bespoke interventions to address skill gaps in our local industry, will necessitate increasingly flexible responses by the higher education sector if the needs of the economy are to be met.

Higher education courses have also been delivered through FECs in Northern Ireland since the 1980s. The six FECs now deliver the majority of intermediate level higher education provision, including Higher National Diplomas and Foundation Degrees²⁶.

Northern Ireland's FECs are geographically well placed to provide higher education opportunities for learners from disadvantaged groups and local businesses. Many offer flexible local facilities which make higher education accessible to people who might otherwise face barriers to participation, especially in relation to geographical 'cold-spots'.

Collaboration between the higher and further education sectors is likely to become more important as the sector responds to the needs of all learners able to benefit from higher education provision.

26. <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/fhec/ewni/default.asp>

SECTION 4: A LEARNING SOCIETY cont.

4.6 POINTERS TO THE FUTURE: LOOKING TOWARDS 2020

The above analysis raises some fundamental challenges which will need to be addressed over the next decade. The following paragraphs outline how we propose to meet these challenges.

There is no doubt that more will need to be done to address issues surrounding participation levels. With a current level of 50% participation from full-time undergraduate learners, it could be argued that we are at our limit of participation. Ideas to encourage other types of learner also need to be devised, especially given the trend towards more flexible part-time study. With a funding model that focuses on full-time undergraduate students, more flexible approaches will be required if the needs of stakeholders are to be adequately met.

For Northern Ireland to have a competitive advantage internationally, more needs to be done to ensure that the quality of our graduates and the learning opportunities offered to them are recognised internationally. There is scope to develop the concept of “distinctive graduates”; graduates who possess additional skills that will place them at an advantage globally. This will not only require the rigorous application of teaching standards but also the establishment of an internationally recognised commitment to world-class research and development. These skills will need to be internationally recognised and institutionally verified to ensure our graduates can prove their skills and abilities.

A greater emphasis on postgraduate research and training is also required to build up Northern Ireland’s skills base, in order to ensure that it can keep pace with the demands of an ever evolving world. This will involve closer collaboration with industry and continuing Government commitment to research and development activities.

More flexible part-time pathways to qualifications need to be developed, with funding arrangements incentivising this change. Indeed, whilst still respecting individual choice and academic freedom, there is a need to ensure that higher education provision better reflects the emerging needs of individual students, industry and society. There is also a need to incentivise choices for STEM areas beyond the traditional higher education courses. This has been highlighted in the Department’s ‘Success through Skills 2’ Strategy and the cross-departmental STEM Review.

In addition, there needs to be a greater emphasis on foundation degrees and sub-degree qualifications which better meet the needs of local industry and brings Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK and Europe. This should open up new and wider pathways for those who might, ultimately, aspire to third level qualifications.

It is, therefore, important to build on the success to date of widening participation to ensure access for all those who can benefit from higher education, addressing inequalities of gender and socio-economic grouping at a time of constrained resource availability. Geographical ‘cold-spots’ can be greatly aided by the provision of HE in FE, as FECs are geographically well placed throughout Northern Ireland to ensure access to higher education for all who are able to benefit.

SECTION 4: A LEARNING SOCIETY cont.

As highlighted in the Department's 'FE Means Business' Strategy, 'further education should be at the heart of lifelong learning in order to strengthen economic development, enhance social cohesion, and advance the individual's skills and learning.' Higher education provision within the further education sector is of vital economic significance, since it provides higher level technician and associate professional skills and, in addition, through offering alternative progression routes, it plays an essential role in widening social access to higher education. The strategy, therefore, will confirm strong support for partnership between HEIs and the college system.

Greater flexibility of provision can ensure that higher education is more responsive to the future needs of the Northern Ireland economy and wider society.

4.7 PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION

Based on the analysis and evidence in this section, we propose the following for consideration within a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland:

- Teaching and learning needs to be flexible, accessible and of the highest quality. More flexible pathways to qualifications need to be developed, with funding arrangements incentivising this change.
- The sector should seek to develop "Distinctive Northern Ireland Graduates"; graduates who possess additional skills that will place them at an advantage globally.
- A greater emphasis on part-time participation in higher education and on postgraduate research and training is required involving closer collaboration with industry and continuing Government commitment to research and development activities.
- The roles of the FECs in the provision and delivery of higher education should be further developed and fostered in partnership with the universities and university colleges.
- There is a need to incentivise choices for STEM areas beyond the traditional higher education courses.
- There is a need for a greater emphasis on sub-degree qualifications which better meet the needs of local industry and brings Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK and Europe.
- It is imperative that we build on the success to date of widening participation to ensure access for all those who can benefit from higher education, addressing inequalities of gender and socio-economic grouping at a time of constrained resource availability.

SECTION 4: A LEARNING SOCIETY cont.

4.8 QUESTIONS

With these proposals in mind, we would welcome your response to the following questions:

Question two:

- How should higher education in Northern Ireland be delivered to best support the needs of current and future learners, including those in the workforce?

Question three:

- How can learning at higher education institutions in Northern Ireland be made distinctive from the rest of the UK, the Republic of Ireland and Europe, leading to graduates with greater employability potential?

SECTION 5: HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Growing a dynamic and innovative economy is the central theme of the *Programme for Government 2008-11* and the first priority of the Executive. A strong higher education sector is essential to achieving this aim, not least in the promotion of ‘higher value-added activity through innovation and the commercial exploitation of R&D’²⁷, an approach which has also been strongly endorsed by the work of MATRIX – the Northern Ireland Science Industry Panel²⁸.

In this section we set out how the higher education sector contributes to that goal and consider how that contribution might be maximised in future.

5.2 HIGHER EDUCATION’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMY

The higher education sector in Northern Ireland makes a positive contribution to the local economy in a variety of ways. It is a significant sector in its own right, attracting substantial investment and providing quality employment opportunities for staff across a full range of occupations and skill levels. It acts as a hub for research and innovation, actively engaging in knowledge transfer activities and in promoting entrepreneurship within the local economy.

Northern Ireland’s HEIs are a major source of export earnings through the attraction of international students and internationally funded research and consultancy. They also act as a catalyst for new foreign direct investment and, through their global connections, open up new gateways to future strategic development partnerships.

The sector supplies high quality graduates who increase the Northern Ireland skills base, meeting the needs of local industry, shaping the leaders of tomorrow and contributing to the economic and social infrastructure of Northern Ireland through their wider participation in community and economic initiatives.

Northern Ireland’s HEIs also have an economic value in the broadest sense, which encompasses social, cultural and environmental value, as well as a direct financial return or a commercial application. The HEIs act as civic players and provide a space, both physically and metaphorically, for discussion and debate about key issues.

Northern Ireland’s HEIs also enable and encourage knowledge exchange between other institutions, business, the public sector voluntary and charitable organisations. Recent research²⁹ has shown that Northern Ireland academics are extensively engaged with the community, business, public sector and third sector. This engagement extends across all disciplines, including arts and humanities and social sciences as well as engineering and science. All of this activity is part of the HEIs’ contribution to building a dynamic, innovative and confident Northern Ireland economy.

27. <http://www.pfgbudgetni.gov.uk/finalpfg.pdf> page 28

28. www.matrix-ni.org/downloads/matrix_vol1_report.pdf

29. Work emerging from the Impact of HEIs on regional economies initiative (Kitson et al - www.impact-hei.ac.uk)

SECTION 5: HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY cont.

5.2.1 A significant sector in its own right

In 2008/09, the published accounts for the universities and university colleges in Northern Ireland showed a combined income of more than £500 million. Government investment from the Department accounted for 38% and 46% of the total income of Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and the University of Ulster (Ulster) respectively. For the university colleges, the equivalent figures were 63% for Stranmillis and 64% for St Mary's. Our HEIs, therefore, attract significant additional discretionary investment to the local economy beyond that directly provided through the Northern Ireland block grant.

In addition, in 2007/08, Northern Ireland's universities and university colleges attracted over 5,000 students from outside the UK, who spent an estimated additional £34 million off-campus. Along with the HEIs' international revenue of £32 million, this represents an estimated total of £66 million in export earnings³⁰.

Northern Ireland's four HEIs also generated an additional £610 million in other industries throughout the UK, with the majority share (£397 million) accruing in Northern Ireland industries as a result of 'knock-on' effects. This gave a UK-wide output multiplier of 2.31 (with a regional output multiplier of 1.85). In other words, for every £1 million of HEI output, a further £1.31 million was generated in other UK industries, of which £0.85 million is in industries located in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland universities and university colleges are major employer in their own right, with approximately 6,856 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. The majority are academic staff, but there is also a significant number of staff working across a wide range of essential functions, including administration, estate management, catering and library services.

In addition to providing jobs directly, Northern Ireland's institutional expenditure generates additional jobs in other parts of the economy. A further 6,788 full-time equivalent jobs were generated outside the universities and university colleges in 2007/08. The majority of these were in Northern Ireland, with an overall UK employment multiplier of 1.99 (1.76 within Northern Ireland). In other words, for every 100 jobs created within these institutions, a further 99 jobs were generated in other industries in the UK, of which 76 were in industries located in Northern Ireland.

5.2.2 A hub for research and development

As the major drivers of research in Northern Ireland, our universities make an important contribution to research and development, creativity and innovation in the Northern Ireland economy, as evidenced clearly in the Government's response to the MATRIX Report, published in November 2009³¹. As such, they partially compensate for the recognised low levels of such activity in the local private sector. However, Northern Ireland's HEIs recognise the importance of increasing this provision as shown through their work with, the business and higher education sectors work on MATRIX, the Northern Ireland Science Industry Panel, which has produced a series of reports on how Northern

30. Making an Impact, Higher Education and the Economy: Kelly, McNicoll and McLellan, pg 7

31. www.matrix-ni.org/downloads/matrix_vol1_report.pdf

SECTION 5: HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY cont.

Ireland can maximise the commercial potential of its R&D, science and technology base.

The strength of Northern Ireland's university research base is reflected in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), a UK-wide peer review-based benchmarking exercise undertaken by the four UK Higher Education funding bodies in which the quality and volume of research activity in the HEIs they fund is periodically assessed. The results of the 2008 RAE show that the proportion of research in Northern Ireland graded at the highest level has increased significantly since the last RAE in 2001.

In the league tables produced by the Times Higher Education Supplement, Queen's University ranked 39th and the University of Ulster 45th (out of 159 higher education institutions) in the 2008 RAE, representing a rise from 45th and 63rd respectively compared to 2001.

Of the assessed research, 50% in Northern Ireland was classified as either 'internationally excellent' or 'world leading' and more than 98% of the researchers submitted for assessment are working in disciplines where world leading research is taking place.

The contribution of Queen's University and the University of Ulster will, therefore, continue to be central to Northern Ireland's economic development. Their R&D and wider international knowledge networks are indispensable to the further development of the Industry-led Innovation Communities proposition as outlined in the MATRIX report. Northern Ireland's universities are already providing invaluable world class knowledge, skills and research strengths to the start up stage of the programme. Without this supply of inspirational leading edge research and high quality technical advice from the research base, the Communities would not flourish.

The Department is committed to maintaining a broad research base in Northern Ireland's HEIs through recurrent research funding provided to the universities, such as: Quality related Research (QR) Funding and the Support Programme for University Research (SPUR); cross-border R&D collaborations including Strengthening the all-Island Research Base and the US-Ireland R&D Partnership; and funding each year to Queen's University and the University of Ulster for 495 postgraduate students. In addition, the Department has provided increased resources in the Programme for Government 2008-11 to "increase by 300 the number of PhD research students at local universities by 2010," taking the total number of research students supported by the Department to 795 in the academic year 2010/11³². The importance of the higher education research base to the Northern Ireland economy cannot, therefore, be over-emphasised, particularly in an economy dominated by small and medium sized enterprises. R&D has been identified as an important contributor to economic development in Northern Ireland and the UK as a whole³³. It is important, therefore, that research continues to be funded at an appropriate level to enable our universities to fulfil this central role and to develop and sustain a world class research base in Northern Ireland.

32. These additional 300 PhD research places are being part funded by the "Funding for Innovation" initiative (which ends in March 2011) and are focused on areas of economic relevance as agreed with DETI.

33. Independent Review of Economic Policy (Barnett, September 2009)

SECTION 5: HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY cont.

5.2.3 Knowledge transfer and the promotion of entrepreneurship

The acquisition of knowledge through research is important for Northern Ireland's continual development. However, it is through the transfer of knowledge to the local economy that its contribution to wider society is maximised. As well as the knowledge transfer that takes place through graduates entering the workforce, there is a growing body of evidence showing that considerable benefit is generated by engagement between universities and businesses. For example, a company is four times more likely to innovate if it is in a collaborative relationship with a university³⁴. The Department remains committed to the core funding of the HEIs' knowledge transfer activities, alongside teaching and research. This core support is supplemented by "Connected", a programme which enables HEIs and FECs to identify and meet the knowledge transfer needs of businesses and the wider community.

The outcomes from this ongoing investment, through the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) in particular, are reflected in the latest UK-wide Higher Education-Business & Community Interaction (HE-BCI) survey. The survey reveals that Queen's University and the University of Ulster generated investment from companies, public and third sector organisations of approximately £51 million³⁵ during 2008/09 for key knowledge transfer services such as consultancy and contract research. This performance is a key indicator under PSA 1 of the *Programme for Government 2008-11*.

There are also many examples of where, through collaborations with local industry and the establishment of 'spin-off' companies, knowledge transfer has led to the development of leading edge products in the market place. Northern Ireland's universities are also engaged in promoting entrepreneurship in the local economy, as demonstrated by the activities of the Northern Ireland Centre for Entrepreneurship (NICENT), which is led by the University of Ulster in partnership with Queen's University. The primary aim of the Centre is to drive, promote and support entrepreneurship in higher education in Northern Ireland. The commitment to entrepreneurial excellence of the Northern Ireland higher education sector is further reflected by the success of Queen's University in the prestigious "Entrepreneurial University of the Year" category in the 2009 Times Higher Education Awards which recognised and celebrated the University's outstanding commitment of that institution to entrepreneurial activity.

Knowledge exchange to support public policy and to help the third sector develop is also of critical importance. Recent research by the University of Cambridge³⁶ has demonstrated that Northern Ireland academics are extensively engaged in knowledge exchange activity with businesses, the public sector and with the third sector. This engagement is undertaken across all academic disciplines, including for example; engineers, scientists, linguists, historians, geographers and economists.

34. See, for example, Do University-business collaborations make firms more innovative? Howells et al http://www.impact-hei.ac.uk/Portals/8/ImpactReport_no3.pdf

35. Contract Research £20,039; Consultancy Contracts £4,107; Facilities and Equipment £7,564; Regeneration Income £15,449; and IP Income £4,039.

36. <http://www.cbr.cam.ac.uk/pdf/AcademicSurveyReport.pdf> for the UK wide report. The specific Northern Ireland findings will be presented at a future seminar to be held in NI in February 2011 as part of the Impact of HEIs research initiative.

SECTION 5: HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY cont.

5.3 CHALLENGES FACING THE NORTHERN IRELAND ECONOMY

However, Northern Ireland faces a series of economic challenges in the short and medium term.

5.3.1 Financial challenges

The recent economic downturn has significantly affected Northern Ireland. Public finances are under pressure, unemployment has risen and the economy has contracted. Given the structure of Northern Ireland's economy and its significant reliance on the public sector, lower levels of public spending are likely to have a negative impact locally unless other sources of investment are sufficient to offset reductions in public spending from the Comprehensive Spending Review and the proposals of the Browne Review.

5.3.2 International challenges

We are living in a fast-changing world. Rapidly advancing technological innovations, cheaper and more accessible air travel and increasing numbers of highly skilled workers from emerging countries have enabled people and goods to be moved rapidly and efficiently over great distances. More importantly, information can be transferred in large volumes and at low cost via the Internet. This enables many functions to be outsourced to anywhere in the world. The continuing rise of the BRIC economies (Brazil, Russia, India and China) is also driving increased global competition for jobs, graduates, students and capital.

Northern Ireland is not insulated from these pressures. It cannot compete in the global market as a low-wage economy. To maintain and improve its competitive position, Northern Ireland must play to its strengths. In that regard, the core strengths of the Northern Ireland economy, as highlighted in the Independent Review on Economic Policy, need to be utilised to ensure increased inward investment³⁷. Strengths include: “a fresh talent pool in one of the youngest populations in the EU; a highly educated, English speaking workforce; an excellent infrastructure with advanced telecoms and transport networks; a competitive cost environment; and; generous incentives and ongoing support from Invest NI.”. Notwithstanding these strengths, the quality of Northern Ireland's skills base and willingness to respond to investors and potential investors needs will be critical to Northern Ireland's success.

5.3.3 Skills challenges

In order to grow a dynamic, prosperous economy Northern Ireland needs a highly skilled workforce with the right balance of skills at the right levels. As highlighted in *Forecasting Future Skills Needs in Northern Ireland*³⁸, there will be an increasing need for people with higher level skills. As almost 80% of the 2020 workforce have already completed their compulsory school education, the skills gap must be addressed in order to fulfil the needs of employers up to 2020 and beyond³⁹.

37. <http://www.irep.org.uk/Docs/report.pdf>

38. http://www.delni.gov.uk/es/del_future_skill_needs_final_report_june_09_v4_no_links.pdf

39. The current consultation on “Success through Skills 2”, the Departmental Skills Strategy sets out these challenges in more detail.

SECTION 5: HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY cont.

Northern Ireland must continue to understand the demand for skills and improve the quality and relevance of education and training. There is a need to increase employer engagement with higher education and improving productivity by increasing the skill levels of the workforce. The Northern Ireland higher education sector has a key role to play in addressing these challenges.

5.3.4 Economically relevant subjects

It is clearly important that the higher education sector continues to offer as wide a range of subjects as possible to meet the needs and aspirations of students. However, it is also important that it meets the needs of local employers. Evidence shows that almost 50% of higher education provision in Northern Ireland is in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects⁴⁰. However, as highlighted in the previous section, 43% of STEM enrolments are in medicine, dentistry and subjects allied to medicine.

The Department's Skills Strategy has also identified a need for more graduates, not just in STEM subjects, but in other economically relevant subjects such as law, the creative arts and design. Achieving the right balance between these and other subject areas, whilst respecting academic freedom, will be a key challenge for the sector. On a long-term basis, efforts to increase student numbers in STEM and economically relevant disciplines must begin at an early age if our young people are to be inspired to make career shaping decisions in STEM areas. This will require cross-departmental co-operation to promote interest in, and the study of, priority subjects from an early age.

5.3.5 Meeting the needs of SMEs

Northern Ireland's economy is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which constitute 98.2% of all businesses here. It is important that SMEs articulate their knowledge and skills requirements and explore R&D opportunities in partnership with the higher education sector. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that SMEs are less likely than large companies to do this.

At present, mechanisms exist that could be used to facilitate SME collaboration with the higher education sector, such as business organisations⁴¹ and professional bodies⁴². In addition, SMEs have the potential to cluster, at either geographical or sectoral level. This work has already commenced through the Collaborative Networks Programme and the Competence Centre Programme in Invest NI. Industry-led Innovation Communities, which are the ultimate objective of the MATRIX vision for Northern Ireland businesses, offer a potentially excellent mechanism in which to bring together business, Government and academia to pursue market opportunities. A key issue for the future will be to maximise the potential of such collaborations.

40. Learning Expert Group Paper, footnote 23: "The performance of Northern Ireland universities in terms of STEM provision (in soon to be published statistics) will show that of the 48,240 students enrolled at Northern Ireland higher education institutions in 2008/09 - 23,000 (48%) were enrolled on STEM related courses. The equivalent percentages for England, Scotland and Wales are - 40%, 47% and 38% respectively." STEM subjects relate to Medicine & Dentistry; Subjects Allied to Medicine; Biological Sciences; Agriculture & Related subjects; Physical Sciences; Mathematical sciences; Computing Science; Engineering & Technology; and Architecture, Building & Planning.

41. For example, the Federation of Small Businesses, Institute of Directors, NI Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of British Industry

42. For example, Institute for Personnel and Development, Institute of Chartered Accountants

SECTION 5: HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY cont.

5.3.6 Graduate employment

Graduates have not escaped the effects of the economic downturn. Despite leaving Northern Ireland HEIs with good qualifications, many face a lack of appropriate jobs. As businesses experience difficulties, there is evidence to suggest that they scale back on graduate recruitment. The public sector is also contracting, further limiting employment opportunities for graduates. With 39,000 public sector jobs taken by graduates every year in the UK, the impact could be significant. The Higher Education Careers Service Unit estimates that, if even one-fifth of those jobs were to disappear, UK graduate unemployment may reach 25%⁴³.

In addition, the Higher Education Policy Institute has stated that unemployment among UK graduates aged under 24 rose by 25% from 11.1% in December 2008 to 14% in December 2009. This trend is mirrored in Northern Ireland. With the continuing economic uncertainty, graduates will be forced to look elsewhere for employment or apply for non-graduate roles. This will, in turn, have significant implications for Northern Ireland's economy.

5.4 POINTERS TO THE FUTURE: LOOKING TOWARDS 2020

Our HEIs clearly make a significant contribution to the local economy in a range of ways, attracting substantial external investment which would otherwise go elsewhere. However, our assessment is that their potential is not yet being fully realised.

Northern Ireland has particular strengths on which to build as it seeks to improve its competitive position in the global economy in terms of its location, its young population, its excellent education system and its track record in innovation in some sectors. Its scale, too, is an advantage in supporting necessary collaborative networks between Government, business and academia.

As we look to the future and seek to capture growth opportunities as the global economy emerges from recession, we must be mindful that, no matter how generous financial and other incentives are, investors will not be persuaded to invest in the 'wrong place'. In working with others to ensure that Northern Ireland is perceived as the 'right place' for future investment we believe that our HEIs could contribute in the following ways:

- ensuring that future graduates emerge with a profile of skills and attributes which are internationally recognised as relevant to the future needs of industry;
- promoting, in a more systematic way, entrepreneurship in both the curriculum, in teaching and in the development of relationships and partnerships with local industry;
- working more closely with local industry particularly SMEs and potential investors to ensure that skills gaps are identified and addressed, and putting in place flexible client-focused approaches to do so;

43. <http://hecsu.blogspot.com/2010/07/public-funding-cuts-could-leave.html>

SECTION 5: HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY cont.

- assisting in the growth of indigenous companies beyond SME status and attracting large companies to Northern Ireland; and
- working with industry to establish clusters and hubs of leading edge research and innovation of global significance and impact.

The sector cannot do this on its own. Government, in its spending priorities and subject to affordability considerations, should recognise the intrinsic short and long term value of maintaining and enhancing its investment in the Northern Ireland R&D infrastructure and associated knowledge transfer activities. More importantly, business and industry must provide a lead in identifying future needs and in helping to create an environment in which our HEIs have a meaningful role to play in moving Northern Ireland towards the Executive's goal of becoming a dynamic, innovative, knowledge-based economy.

5.5 PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION

Based on the analysis and evidence in this section, we propose the following for consideration within a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland:

- Research should continue to be funded at an appropriate level to enable our universities to fulfil their central role to develop and sustain a world-class research base in Northern Ireland.
- Increased employer engagement with higher education and the continual development of knowledge exchange activity with businesses, the public sector and with the third sector is required.
- Entrepreneurship should be promoted in the local economy through the higher education sector, including the development of graduates with the right set of skills necessary to compete in a global economy.
- Closer collaboration with local industry, particularly SMEs and potential investors to ensure that skills gaps are identified and addressed, putting in place flexible client-focused approaches to do so.
- Northern Ireland must play to its strengths, ensuring the development of a high quality skills base and a willingness to respond to investors.
- Cross-departmental co-operation should promote interest in, and the study of, priority subjects from an early age, achieving the right balance between these and other subject areas, whilst respecting academic freedom.

5.6 QUESTIONS

With these proposals in mind, we would welcome your response to the following questions:

Question four:

- How can the higher education sector maximise its contribution to Northern Ireland's economy, particularly in relation to research and development?

SECTION 5: HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY cont.

Question five:

- How can higher education, government and business work more effectively to identify research and development needs and improve the knowledge and skills of the current, and future, workforce?

SECTION 6: INTERNATIONALLY CONNECTED

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The last 25 years have witnessed the accelerating globalisation of education and the increasing international mobility of students and academics alike. This rising global academic mobility reflects the general expansion and growth in importance of the global knowledge economy.

Internationalisation broadens the mind, stimulates creativity and builds confidence. Through travel and overseas life experience, horizons are widened and ambitions enhanced. This is true in all walks of life, especially in higher education. Senior academics and business leaders acknowledge the benefits to be gained from international experience and the added benefits it brings to graduates.

In this section we assess the extent to which the benefits of internationalisation accrue to Northern Ireland.

6.2 BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONALISATION

It is not difficult to identify the tangible benefits of having a strong higher education sector with an international reputation and globally competitive standing. High quality students, researchers and staff can be attracted from around the world. Trade links can be enhanced and foreign direct investment decisions positively influenced. Additional income can be earned from student fees and from research collaborations with universities, institutes and companies abroad. However, income should not be the only, or indeed the dominant, motivation for internationalisation. Of greater significance and value is attracting international researchers, scholars and students who will share their knowledge and skills widely, benefiting all sectors in Northern Ireland.

There are, of course, less tangible but equally important benefits of internationalisation in higher education. International study and work placements provide opportunities for intercultural learning which, in turn, enables people to live and work harmoniously in a world of cultural differences.

Incoming international students and staff enrich the diversity of life on our campuses and enable intercultural learning. Participation by our students and staff in programmes of teaching, learning and research abroad enhances their experience, capability and career prospects. Structured institutional partnerships with overseas institutions can also open doors to commercial opportunities.

6.3 INTERNATIONALISATION WITHIN NORTHERN IRELAND'S HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

Over recent years, the prominence of international activity has significantly increased in Northern Ireland's HEIs. Internationalisation is now regarded as an institutional priority within Northern Ireland HEIs to ensure continual growth and development opportunities. The analysis below assesses the scale and profile of Northern Ireland's international

SECTION 6: INTERNATIONALLY CONNECTED cont.

higher education activity to establish whether it is securing an appropriate market share and corresponding educational, social and economic benefits. It considers student mobility, international research and the overall contribution international activity makes to the economy.

6.3.1 Incoming student mobility

The UK has become part of a large international flow of students and academics. A significant proportion of the UK's research base is undertaken by international students. In 2007/08, 44% of those enrolled in research degrees in the UK were international students and there is an increasing number of UK students studying in other countries⁴⁴.

The sheer volume of international students and staff now studying and working in the UK has shifted the axis of the higher education system; from a predominantly domestic focus to a truly international outlook.

The UK is performing well within the international student arena. There are currently over 3 million higher education students enrolled outside their home country; of these, 12% come to the UK to study⁴⁵. In context, this places the UK joint second in terms of international student market share, on a par with Australia and behind the world market leader at 20%, the USA. In 2008/09, 370,000 students from 237 countries throughout the globe chose to study in the UK, constituting 15.4% of total enrolments within the higher education sector.

However, when compared with the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland is lagging significantly behind in terms of market share. Overseas enrolments account for 4.1% of total enrolments in Northern Ireland (excluding students from the ROI). This is significantly lower than England (14.8%), Scotland (16.1%) and Wales (15.7%). The ROI (Universities and Institutes of Technology) is also out performing Northern Ireland with overseas enrolments accounting for just over 8% of full-time total enrolments.⁴⁶

There are not insignificant numbers of ROI students enrolled at both Queen's University and the University of Ulster (4.1% and 9.7% respectively, or 6.9% overall)⁴⁷. Leaving aside any issues of 'international' status, clearly these students are a special case in the context of our geographical and jurisdictional arrangements. However, their welcome presence does not compensate for the relatively low level of overseas enrolments in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland is also underperforming in regard to attracting students from the rest of the UK. In 2008/09, 74% of Northern Ireland domiciled students⁴⁸ studying at UK HEIs studied at HEIs in Northern Ireland (including those enrolled at the OU) with the remaining 26% studying elsewhere within the UK. By contrast, only 1,305 students from

44. http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/acrossuk/highered/helibs/postgraduate_education.pdf - Postgraduate Education in the United Kingdom, Higher Education Policy Institute and The British Library, Geneva House, January 2010

45. BIS, 'Motivations and Experiences of UK students studying abroad' 2010

46. Higher Education Authority 'Student Statistics' 2010

47. Learning Expert Group Report, pg 10

48. Both undergraduates and postgraduates

SECTION 6: INTERNATIONALLY CONNECTED cont.

Great Britain chose to study in Northern Ireland in 2008-09, making up less than 3% of the student population at Northern Ireland's HEIs.

6.3.2 Outward student mobility

The benefits of an international higher education experience are widely recognised. In December 2007, the European Commission Lisbon Report called for such experience to become a standard part of higher education. The European Council concluded in November 2008 that 'every young person should have the opportunity to take part in some form of mobility whether this is during their studies or training, in the form of work placement, or in the context of voluntary activities.' The Leuven Communiqué agreed on 29 April 2009 that, in 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) should have a study or training period abroad.

In 2008/09, 280 Northern Ireland students studied abroad, 1.4% of the overall UK figure⁴⁹. In addition, 659 students travelled abroad for work and study placements in 2008/09 through schemes such as IAESTE and BEI⁵⁰. Even though there are mechanisms in place to ensure ease of mobility, such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), additional funding for student mobility, mobility programmes and established relations between 'home' and 'host' institutions, it would seem that there is significant resistance towards travelling abroad amongst our higher education students.

6.3.3 Research and partnerships

The global standing of an institution is becoming increasingly linked to the quality of its research provision and the recognition of that research. International research and development activities by our institutions are of key economic benefit to foreign trade, investment and promotion, supporting the Northern Ireland Economic Development Strategy and underpinning the work of Invest NI.

Queen's University has major ongoing research contracts with, for example, Petronas (the national oil company of Malaysia), the Gates Foundation and a wide range of multinationals, including Elanco and Hewlett Packard. Ulster has strong links in Migration Studies with Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA, and in Health Sciences with Pakistan, Korea, Australia and the Middle East. Stranmillis and St. Mary's University Colleges are involved together with the Universities in capacity building projects in Africa.

An indirect measure of the comparative scale of Northern Ireland's higher education international research links can be derived from postgraduate research enrolments. In 2008/09, the percentage of 'overseas'⁵¹ postgraduate research enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs was 27.4%, a rather low figure in comparison to the UK average (41.7%)⁵².

There is, therefore, scope for increasing this number in Northern Ireland, particularly when compared with equivalent enrolments elsewhere in the UK⁵³. In particular,

49. BIS, 'Motivations and Experiences of UK students studying abroad' 2010

50. The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE) and the Business Education Initiative (BEI)

51. 'Overseas' students comprise 'other EU' (i.e. not including ROI) and 'non-EU'

52. International Expert Group report, Research Links section

53. International Expert Group report, Appendix 2, section 1.1 and Appendix 1D

SECTION 6: INTERNATIONALLY CONNECTED cont.

Scotland has placed heavy emphasis on building a strong international research capability within higher education and these figures indicate success in that regard.

The majority of UK universities now implement a structured strategy for the development of, and ongoing participation in, overseas institutional partnerships. This usually includes the requirement for a strong research focus and good opportunities for student and staff exchange.

Queen's is strengthening and refining its links, particularly in China, India, Malaysia and the USA. Similarly, Ulster has extensive institutional links with Saudi Arabia, the USA and China. Stranmillis and St. Mary's have benefited greatly from their well-established links under the Erasmus programme and have also developed additional worldwide linkages in the USA and Africa.

There is no doubt that Northern Ireland has a growing portfolio of healthy and well managed overseas institutional partnerships, with capacity to expand. These international networks provide the infrastructure for course development, research collaboration, student exchange and staff development. Ultimately, the visibility and recognition of our universities will help to market Northern Ireland to prospective students, scholars, researchers and investors, thus benefiting Northern Ireland as a whole.

6.3.4 Economic benefits

With regard to institutional income generated by overseas students, the level of fees earned from international enrolments is modest. A total revenue of £11.7 million was achieved in 2008/09 (£7.5 million at Queen's and £4.2 million at Ulster), less than 1% of the UK total of £1.9 billion raised from 'non EU' students.⁵⁴ In comparison, it is estimated that Scotland earned £127.9 million and Wales earned £51.4 million⁵⁵.

The global demand for tertiary education is continuing to increase. It is estimated that 5.8 million places will be sought within the UK higher education sector by 2020, with over 1 million international students seeking higher education in the UK by 2025⁵⁶.

Transnational education (TNE) is also attracting increasing attention. It is forecast that the global demand for transnational education will increase even faster than that for overseas study. Transnational education (TNE) refers to education provision from one country offered in another. TNE includes a wide variety of delivery modes, including: distance and e-learning; validation and franchising arrangements; twinning; and other collaborative provision.

The latest UK TNE figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency show that for 2008/09, there were 388,000 students following UK higher education programmes from outside the UK. Thus, there is a significant opportunity for generating additional income

54. BIS 'Higher Ambitions' 2009

55. British Council 'Choose NI' Report 2008

56. DEL's Strategic Approach to International Activity 2006

SECTION 6: INTERNATIONALLY CONNECTED cont.

from the international higher education market which is not yet fully exploited by our local institutions.

Of the greatest economic significance to Northern Ireland, however, is the value that the internationalisation of higher education contributes to trade promotion and the pursuit of foreign direct investment (FDI). This is fully acknowledged by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) and Invest NI through their technology and trade missions overseas with local institutions and academics. The brand recognition they have developed and the networks they have created add value and credibility to the international standing of Northern Ireland.

6.4 POINTERS TO THE FUTURE: LOOKING TOWARDS 2020

Although significant steps have been taken by our institutions in building their international reputation and developing international partnerships, there remains considerable opportunity for expansion. Northern Ireland is not garnering its full potential market share of the UK's international activity, with consequent opportunities for economic growth being lost. There is definite scope for more students, scholars, researchers and investors to be attracted to Northern Ireland and for our 'home' students to become more internationally mobile.

Now is the time to build on the good work to date to enhance our sector's international competitiveness and to gain a greater share of the international student market. There is no doubt scope to develop measures to ensure Northern Ireland is securing an adequate proportion of international student enrolments, both undergraduate and postgraduate. Good structures already exist for outward student mobility. However, there may be opportunities to develop similar and also more flexible arrangements for other countries. It is also imperative that Northern Ireland students should be encouraged, incentivised and supported to use every opportunity open to them.

Northern Ireland's HEIs have a growing portfolio of healthy and well managed overseas institutional partnerships, with capacity to expand. There is scope to develop stronger international links through already established connections and increased international activity, both inward and outward. Healthy and substantial international research links are important for industry, for overseas trade and inward investment.

For these issues to be successfully addressed, a concerted joined-up approach across Government, the higher education sector and industry is required. Challenging targets need to be set for our local institutions, with incentives for growth and development, underpinned by local employers' contribution and support. There may be scope to develop a collaborative approach within an international strategy for Northern Ireland. There is no reason why Northern Ireland's HEIs cannot perform on a par with the rest of the UK, especially by 2020.

SECTION 6: INTERNATIONALLY CONNECTED cont.

6.5 PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION

Based on the analysis and evidence in this section, we propose the following for consideration within a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland:

- Expansion of Northern Ireland's market share within the UK in respect of international activity and overseas student enrolments through the development of a unique Northern Ireland higher education selling point.
- Encouraging, incentivising and supporting Northern Ireland students to avail of the opportunities for international mobility.
- Institutions should seek to further develop their portfolio of well managed overseas institutional partnerships that benefit not only their students and institutions but Northern Ireland as a whole.
- Healthy and substantial international research links should continue to be fostered, for overseas trade and inward investment. In particular, HEIs should continue to work with SMEs to ensure they are well placed to reap the benefits of internationalisation.

6.6. QUESTIONS

With these proposals in mind, we would welcome your views on the following questions:

Question six:

- As higher education becomes increasingly globalised, how can Northern Ireland's institutions further expand their international portfolios, to assist not only the higher education sector, but Northern Ireland as a whole?

Question seven

- How can Northern Ireland's students be encouraged, incentivised and supported to become more internationally mobile?

SECTION 7: HIGHER EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In previous sections of this document we have seen how higher education helps individuals to realise their full potential and how, through teaching and learning activities, R&D and knowledge transfer work, supported by a variety of international partnerships, the sector can make a very tangible contribution to Northern Ireland's economic prosperity and international standing.

The scope of higher education, however, reaches further than that. It has a key role to play in contributing to the development of a fairer, more just society which is inclusive, tolerant and culturally diverse. These broader societal benefits are not as well articulated as some of the more tangible and quantifiable benefits associated with public investment in the sector, but the contribution that the sector can make to the overall cohesiveness of society is increasingly recognised.

In this section we outline how existing relationships and interfaces between the higher education sector, the individual and the community are contributing to this agenda, and look at ways in which these can be further developed in the future.

7.2 HIGHER EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

As the Council of Europe's report *Universities as Sites of Citizenship and Civic Responsibility* highlights, HEIs are key platforms for the transmission of democratic values and civic education for their students, the local community and wider society. Our HEIs provide, as the Council's report suggests, "a platform for a new social architecture that advances the related objectives of greater political participation, and the internalisation of civic values"⁵⁷.

A considerable number of relationships and interfaces exist within and around the Northern Ireland higher education sector at a variety of levels. It is through such relationships that higher education can contribute to the peaceful, fair and prosperous society envisaged in the Executive's *Programme for Government 2008-11*.

7.2.1 The individual

Northern Ireland's HEIs have an important role in ensuring economic and social mobility for the people of Northern Ireland, playing a pivotal role in the development of a modern knowledge-based economy and a confident and inclusive society which values diversity. A key contribution to this will be the steps taken by the sector to ensure equality of opportunity of access for disadvantaged groups.

Step-Up, for example, a science-based initiative of academic and vocational activities delivered by schools, the University of Ulster, industry and Government, is a highly structured programme providing an opportunity for disadvantaged pupils to improve their academic performance, self-esteem and motivation and to complete a period of

57. *Universities as sites of Citizenship and Civic Responsibility* - Final Report Council of Europe 2002, page 65.

SECTION 7: HIGHER EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY cont.

study at university. Step-Up is targeted at schools in areas of social and economic disadvantage and is designed to increase participation rates in higher education from lower socio-economic classification (SEC) groups 5-7. The programme currently operates in 16 secondary schools in areas of relative socio-economic deprivation in Derry/Londonderry (since 2000) and Belfast (since 2006).

Likewise, Discovering Queen's delivers bespoke activity for disadvantaged and under-represented groups from primary school pupils to adult returners. The initiative is province-wide and targets pupils from low participation neighbourhoods. Thus, it facilitates interaction directly with key influencers at community level and within communities of practice, such as teachers, careers guidance staff and colleagues in the third sector. Since 1999, over 15,000 participants have enjoyed a range of targeted and tailored programmes to raise awareness of, and aspiration to, higher education, as well as developing their personal capacity to respond to opportunities and achieve their potential. Programmes include insight days, taster days, summer school, career planning events, STEM challenges and curriculum enrichment activities.

There are also various projects and initiatives currently underway in the sector to improve retention. Examples include the University of Ulster Peer Mentoring Project, which is aimed specifically at students with mental health difficulties and the STAR (Student Transition and Retention) project, which aims to address student needs at a variety of stages: prior to entry; during induction processes; and throughout the course.

Queen's University also recognises the need for additional support to improve retention rates. Over the last two years the School of English, through the Learning Development Service, has been running a peer mentoring scheme to help improve retention rates in the School. In addition Queen's has recently launched a Student Mental Health Strategy which "seeks to realise a vision of positive mental health and well-being for all students of the University which maximises academic achievement and personal development".

Northern Ireland's HEIs also need to be responsive and flexible in how they support individuals in work and those seeking employment. There are also a number of initiatives in place to bridge the link between HEIs and the Northern Ireland workforce, which are supported by the work of the Sector Skills Councils and the Workforce Development Fora.

7.2.2 Our communities

Northern Ireland's HEIs continue to make a considerable contribution to their local communities and wider society. Each HEI boasts strong links with neighbouring councils on areas of mutual co-operation, such as Coleraine Borough Council's joint funding of the University of Ulster's Riverside Theatre and Belfast City Council's Holyland Inter-Agency Group. Northern Ireland's institutions and their students also play an important civic role and are represented on local residents' groups in their areas. A strong community focus has always been at the forefront of the Northern Ireland's HEIs' agendas. In 1983, when the New University of Ulster and Ulster Polytechnic

SECTION 7: HIGHER EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY cont.

merged, it was agreed that Magee College would be an important force in regional development in one of the most disadvantaged areas of the UK. Courses were developed in areas which would provide substantial benefits for Northern Ireland's economy. These courses, many of which are delivered on a part-time basis, continue to receive an enthusiastic support from the community, and the Magee campus of the University of Ulster continues to play a crucial and popularly recognised role in the economic and social development of the North West region. This is an example of the important way in which higher education can act to seek to deal with geographical 'cold-spots' with both opportunities and developments.

Through a range of mechanisms, Northern Ireland's institutions play a vital role in the cultural life of the community. Each year, Queen's University hosts the internationally renowned Belfast Festival at Queen's and has a pivotal role in hosting events on behalf of other festivals, such as the Belfast Film Festival. The University of Ulster, through its Cultural Development Office, provides an annual programme of arts and entertainment including exhibitions, recitals and a popular 'Talks and Tours' series. In addition, the University's Riverside Theatre plays host to national and international theatre companies alongside local talent.

Research output from Northern Ireland's HEIs also continues to play a vital role in wider society. The Northern Ireland Assembly's Inquiry into the Prevention of Suicide and Self-Harm, for example, has benefited from research undertaken by students of Queen's University into the relationship between substance abuse and suicide.

Through engagement with local communities, Northern Ireland HEIs can continue to play an important role in providing opportunities for learners to enter higher education and assist in the establishment of an open and diverse society.

7.2.3 Our society

There are strong cultural, social and political interfaces between higher education and society in Northern Ireland through which our institutions help promote the values of good citizenship, democracy and civic responsibility among their students.

Internally, the institutions promote engagement and participation through student representation in their governance structures. Externally, they are engaged with wider civic society in promoting access to learning opportunities to people who would otherwise not have considered a higher education qualification. Through their international activities they help to broaden the horizons of students and staff, creating a diverse higher education environment which, in turn, helps to challenge our insularity as a small regional economy on the fringe of Europe. Economically and culturally, their activities have helped to bring additional private, philanthropic and European investment into the region. Locally, the HEIs also have a powerful role in raising aspiration and in providing an environment where individuals from different communities and nationalities can mix freely with tolerance and mutual respect.

SECTION 7: HIGHER EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY cont.

7.2.4 Beyond our borders

Northern Ireland's HEIs have well-established links with HEIs and business partners throughout the globe. These represent gateways to the world, offering opportunities which can be exploited by other local stakeholders as these relationships mature and are built upon for mutually beneficial purposes. They also create opportunities for Northern Ireland to brand itself as an outward looking, innovative and dynamic economy.

International activity also contributes to Northern Ireland's international reputation through its application for the benefit of other less well developed economies. Northern Ireland's HEIs recognise the importance of higher education in the field of international development, as shown by the work currently being undertaken in Africa by Queen's University, the University of Ulster, Stranmillis University College and St. Mary's University College.

This work has been supported by the Department through the Education Partnership Africa Scheme Northern Ireland (EPA NI), which aims to contribute to the capacity of higher and further education institutions in sub-Saharan Africa to deliver employability skills for the local economy, and the Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance (ELRHA) project, which aims to create a bridge between the resources of the higher education sector and the needs of the humanitarian sector.

7.3 POINTERS FOR THE FUTURE: LOOKING TOWARDS 2020

There are, clearly, very tangible economic benefits to be achieved from higher education's learning, R&D and knowledge transfer activities. However, the sector also has the potential to play a pivotal role in the wider societal development of Northern Ireland, particularly in the promotion of social justice, cultural enrichment, inclusion and diversity.

All of our HEIs are engaged, in some way, in activities which contribute to these wider goals. Indeed, there are many fine examples where their activities have produced results and outcomes to which other economies aspire, for example our widening participation initiatives and the success of our research collaborations with the ROI.

It is important, therefore, that we build on these successes. With almost 50% of our young people currently entering higher education, we need to recognise that it is not merely a process for learning and research. Our institutions are important civic institutions in their own right, playing a significant role in the cultural and economic life of their local communities and the regional development of Northern Ireland. They have the capacity to influence our values, our sense of fairness and the promotion of tolerance and diversity as we seek to establish a 'shared future'.

To achieve this, there is a need to translate the myriad individual projects and initiatives into a concerted and systematic programme of civic and cultural engagement and development through, for example:

SECTION 7: HIGHER EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY cont.

- the development of sustainable outreach links between the HEIs and the local voluntary, community and local Government sectors, supported by external engagement committees in which all stakeholders are represented;
- initiatives to render our institutions less remote and intimidating and their facilities more open and accessible to local communities;
- the role of the FECs in their provision of higher education in enabling those from geographical ‘cold-spots’ to benefit from a higher education experience;
- the development of closer relationships with the school system, particularly in disadvantaged areas;
- the identification of role models to demonstrate what is achievable and to promote aspiration;
- initiatives to encourage community participation by the student body; and
- looking outward, a new commitment to internationalisation.

Northern Ireland’s HEIs should be strongly committed to being a cultural and social resource for the local community. Such a commitment carries with it an involvement in numerous aspects of the whole life of the wider community. In this way, the institutions and staff should aim to act as a positive force in the process of social and economic regeneration.

HEIs also have a responsibility to challenge insularity by developing a diverse, multicultural campus and encouraging international student and staff mobility, both inward and outward. A diverse student campus must also engage with the community so that the benefits can be shared across the whole of society in Northern Ireland.

However, the higher education sector cannot shoulder such responsibilities in isolation. All stakeholders who benefit directly or indirectly from the sector have a significant role to play. Effective collaborative relationships between stakeholders will be fundamental to the development of a vibrant sector of international calibre, which pursues excellence in teaching and research and which plays a pivotal role in the creation of a modern, knowledge-based economy and a confident, inclusive society which values diversity.

7.4 PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION

Based on the analysis and evidence in this section, we propose the following for consideration within a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland:

- Increasing opportunities for learners to enter higher education and assist in the development of initiatives and programmes at the HEIs to ensure the establishment of an open and diverse society.
- Promoting the creation of sustainable outreach links between the HEIs and the local voluntary, community and local Government sectors, supported by external engagement committees in which all stakeholders are represented.
- HEIs working in partnership with FECs to encourage and promote access to higher education and to enable students from geographical ‘cold-spots’ to benefit from a higher education experience.

SECTION 7: HIGHER EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY cont.

7.5 QUESTIONS

With these proposals in mind, we would welcome your response to the following questions:

Question eight:

- How should the already established relationships and interfaces with local communities and civic society be developed further to maximise their effectiveness?

Question nine:

- If new relationships and interfaces need to be established, what should they look like?

SECTION 8: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Department for Employment and Learning provides funding towards higher education provision in Northern Ireland to the Queen's University of Belfast, the University of Ulster, St. Mary's University College, Stranmillis University College and the six further education colleges.

In 2008/09, the Department provided more than £214 million to the universities and university colleges⁵⁸. Government investment accounted for 38% and 46% of Queen's University's and the University of Ulster's total income respectively, and 63% and 64% for Stranmillis and St. Mary's respectively. In the same year, the Department provided £25.7 million to the further education colleges (FECs) for the provision of higher education; this figure does not include the provision of student support⁵⁹.

It must be acknowledged that the proposals set out in Lord Browne's Review into Higher Education and Student Finance, which was published on 12 October 2010, provide for the radical transformation of the financial relationship between Government, the higher education sector and students. If these proposals are adopted by the UK Government and reflected in its spending plans for England, they will have implications for the local Executive's ability to sustain the current arrangements. As these issues are considered as part of a wider debate on the system of funding to be applied to the higher education system in the future, the proposals below may be subject to radical change.

8.2 FUNDING STRUCTURES

Funding allocations to the universities are provided through an annual recurrent and block grant, which includes funding for teaching and learning, research and initial teacher education.

8.2.1 Core university funding

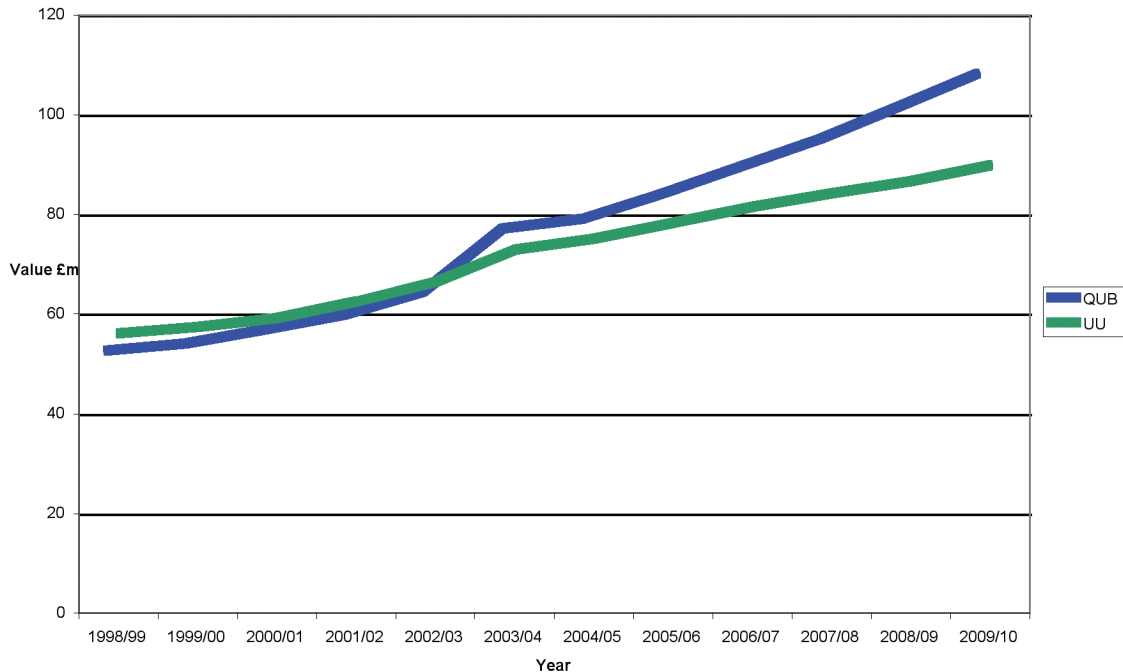
The Department for Employment and Learning has steadily increased funding to the universities over the last decade. This increase has taken account of a growing student population, inflationary pressures and a strong commitment to encourage and invest in research. For financial year (FY) 1998/99, Northern Ireland's two universities received a total of £111.9 million in institutional core block funding. This increased to £201.2 million in 2009/10, representing an increase of 80%.

58. See section 3.2.1

59. Of which, £17.7 million for part-time and £8 million for full-time

SECTION 8: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE cont.

Table 1: Northern Ireland universities block grant 1998-2010



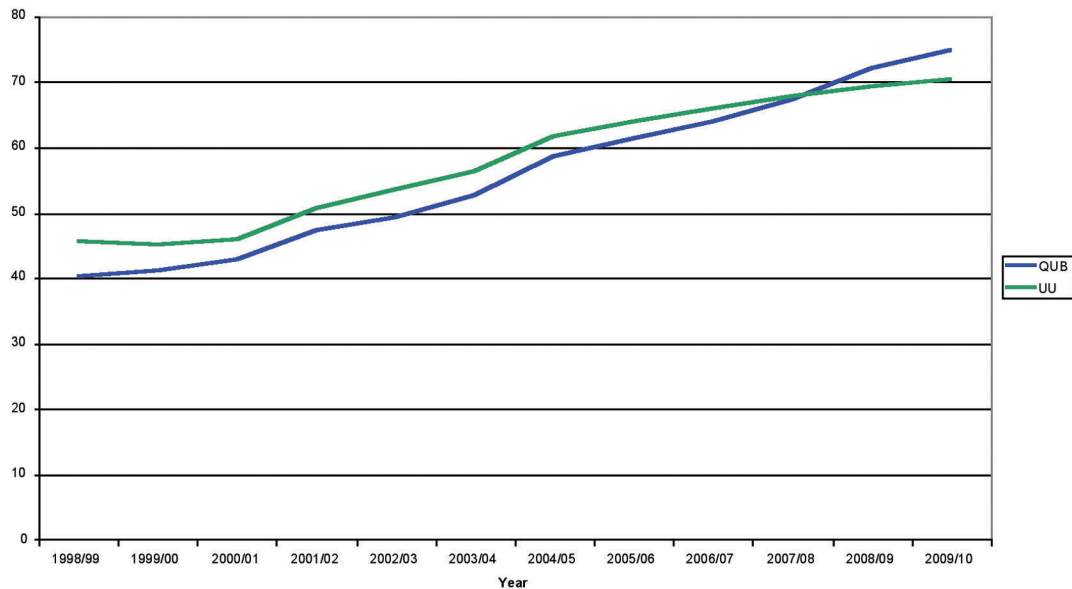
It should be noted that the overall percentage of Departmental funding for universities in Northern Ireland (42.6%) is higher than comparative figures for the rest of the United Kingdom (England 35.5%, Wales 38.4% and Scotland 41.5%).

A significant proportion of the annual block grant covers teaching and learning provision. For FY 1998/99, the universities received a total of £85.9 million for teaching and learning, compared with £143.7 million for 2009/10; an increase of 67%. The teaching and learning funding allocations are calculated using a model which largely mirrors that employed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The broad principle of the funding model is to provide similar resources for similar activities.

SECTION 8: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE cont.

Table 2: Northern Ireland universities teaching grant 1998-2010

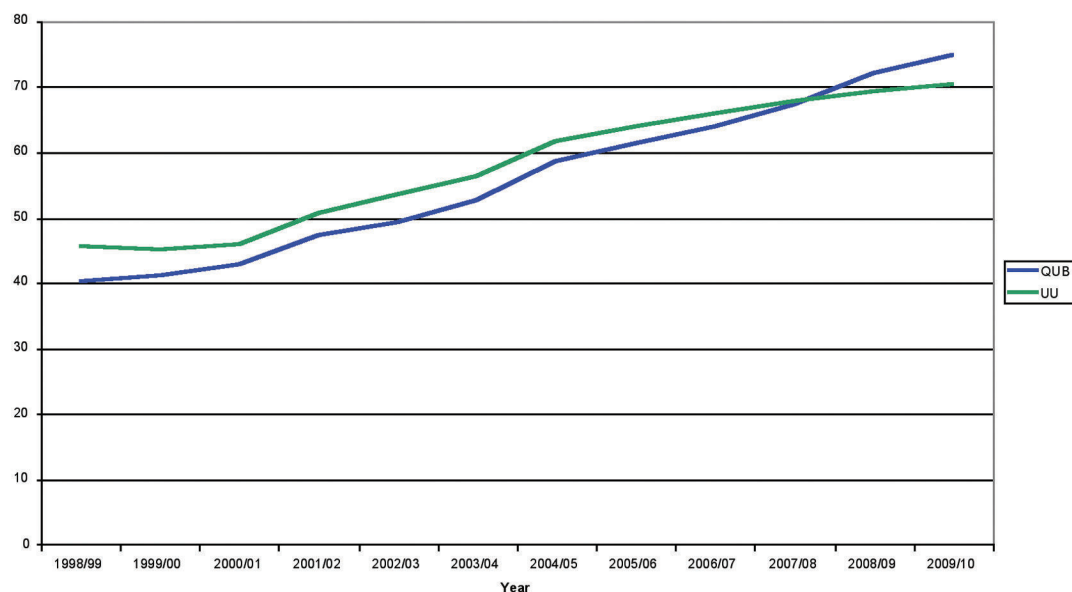
Northern Ireland's teaching grant 1998 - 2010



While funding for research makes up a smaller proportion of the annual block grant, the amount of research funding provided by the Department has increased significantly over the last decade. For FY 2009/10, the universities received a total of £55.9 million for research, compared with £21.2 million for 1998/99; an increase of 164%.

Table 3: Northern Ireland universities research grant 1998-2011

Northern Ireland HEI's research grant 1998-2011



SECTION 8: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE cont.

8.2.2 Initial Teacher Education funding

The majority of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses are provided by St. Mary's and Stranmillis University Colleges, with Queen's University and the University of Ulster both offering a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). The Department also funds the Open University to deliver a number of PGCE courses. The principal statistical model used to determine the numbers of ITE students to be admitted to these institutions is the Department of Education's Teacher Demand Model (TDM), which takes account of projected pupil numbers, pupil:teacher ratios, course wastages, teacher wastages and re-entry rates of teachers.

Until 2008/09, the funding allocated to the university colleges was not directly related to the number of students enrolled. However, a new funding model has since been introduced, with ITE places funded at rates comparable to those paid by the Training & Development Agency in England and non-ITE places funded at HEFCE rates. A decline in ITE numbers, as set each year by the Department of Education, has meant that the amount of grant which the university colleges receive under the funding model has also declined. Both university colleges have therefore been developing strategic approaches to their long term sustainability. Pending the outcome of these, the university colleges have been receiving additional top-up or 'conversion' funding from the Department to ensure that neither faced a significant decline in government funding in the 2008/09 to 2010/11 academic years.

8.2.3 Capital funding

The Department has provided capital funding to the universities, both for teaching and learning and for research. Teaching and learning capital funding is designed to allow the universities to enhance the physical infrastructure used for teaching and learning purposes. Research capital funding is broadly designed to allow the universities to enhance their research facilities.

In the current Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period (2008-2011), the total capital funding provided to the universities by the Department for teaching and learning and research is £65.3 million.

Table 4: CAPITAL FUNDING FOR THE PERIOD 2008-11

Capital programme (2008-11)	£ m
Learning and teaching capital	30.78
Research capital investment fund	31.99
Universities – strategic capital investment fund	1.30
University colleges – strategic capital investment fund	1.29
Total	65.36

SECTION 8: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE cont.

In Northern Ireland, approval of capital funding is decided very much on a project by project basis. Project proposals in the form of an economic appraisal are subject to Departmental, and possible Department of Finance and Personnel, approval. Therefore projects may or may not be funded depending on the availability of funds and the Department's evaluation of the supporting economic appraisal.

In contrast, HEFCE has taken a 'lighter' approach to capital funding. HEFCE allows English HEIs to manage their own capital projects as long as they have been assessed capable of managing capital funding in a strategic manner. HEFCE also expects HEIs to undertake an investment appraisal, which is very similar to the economic appraisals completed in Northern Ireland. However, as autonomous bodies, the HEIs do not need to present these to HEFCE for scrutiny or approval. Moreover, the funding is provided on an agreed profile with no requirement to claim the funding on a retrospective basis as is the case in Northern Ireland.

Therefore, within the English system, universities are guaranteed a capital funding stream across the CSR period and are free to manage individual projects within very broad constraints. However, each institution does remain accountable for the capital funds it receives and must be able to demonstrate that public funds are being well used and are delivering real value.

There is a need for continued capital investment in Northern Ireland's universities. Without this continued investment, students in Northern Ireland will enjoy a poorer quality higher education experience; the competitiveness of Northern Ireland institutions will be eroded, both within the UK and internationally; and this will have a detrimental effect on the general economic and social development of Northern Ireland⁶⁰.

8.2.4 Funding for higher education in further education

Each Further Education College's HE in FE budget allocation is determined on the basis of a range of factors, including: delivery in previous years, actual and projected delivery in the current year, the College Development Plan bid, bilateral negotiations and Departmental resources and priorities.

The funding distribution mechanism is derived from student enrolments being converted to standard Funded Learning Units (FLU), taking into account the mode of attendance (i.e. full-time or part-time), duration, level and economic priority of the study, as well as disadvantage weighting. The value of a FLU is £3,400 for both mainstream further education and HE in FE provision, with additional weighted funding available for the higher education provision. The FLU mechanism is also the means by which each college's in-year progress is monitored against agreed curriculum targets, to establish actual delivery at year end and to inform next year's provision within each college.

60. Future needs for capital grant funding in higher education in Northern Ireland. A review of the future of SRIF and Learning & Teaching Capital. JM Consulting – September 2006

SECTION 8: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE cont.

8.2.5 The Maximum Aggregate Student Number (MaSN)

Since 1994, the number of full-time undergraduate places in Northern Ireland institutions has been subject to a ‘cap’ known as the Maximum Aggregate Student Number (MaSN).

While the MaSN has been used as a cap on student numbers, it is in reality a method of controlling two elements of expenditure, the block grant and student support. However, the MaSN only relates specifically to full-time undergraduate students who attend universities and university colleges in Northern Ireland, as student support provided to Northern Ireland students who attend university in England, Scotland or Wales is not ‘capped’. Nor does the MaSN restriction apply to postgraduate, part-time, and Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) student numbers, some social work places or to students from outside the EU. Therefore, in terms of controlling government expenditure, the MaSN is not a perfect formula.

The use of the MaSN can also potentially have unintended consequences in relation to the “displacement” of local students or those from particular socio-economic backgrounds.

However, as the traditional undergraduate demographic decreases, if Northern Ireland’s current participation rates remain constant and the current funding regime remains in place, less funding will be required under the MaSN as fewer ‘traditional’ students enter the system, which may prove detrimental to our institutions. Consequently, there is a variety of options available for consideration in regard to the future of the MaSN:

- the MaSN could remain at its current level as the 18 year-old population decreases, which would increase participation rates from ‘other learners’;
- the MaSN level could decrease in parallel with the reduction in the number of the 18 year old population, thus maintaining current participation rates and, subject to wider funding policy, releasing resources for other activities; or
- the MaSN could be removed completely providing institutions with greater freedom to decide how they shape and fund their respective student demographics.

In the short term, the former Minister for Employment and Learning, Sir Reg Empey, said that he would consider potentially targeted expansions in areas such as STEM and the University of Ulster has requested an increase of 1,000 in its MaSN allocation to be used at its Magee campus. A strategic outline case for this expansion is currently with the Department for consideration, with a bid for funding submitted as part of the Budget 2010 process.

However, a fundamental question for the strategy to address is whether it is appropriate for the key formula for teaching support to the higher education sector to be so heavily dependent on the number of full-time undergraduates at a time when the numbers in the 18-21 cohort are reducing and the market requires more flexible approaches to learning and an expansion of postgraduate opportunities.

SECTION 8: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE cont.

8.3 STUDENT SUPPORT

The Department provides a range of financial support measures for full-time undergraduate higher education students. These include: tuition fee loans; maintenance loans; maintenance grants; parents' learning allowance; disabled students allowance; and childcare grants. Part-time undergraduate students, who are studying at least 50% of an equivalent full-time course, can also apply for student support in the form of a fee and course grant. In 2009/10, £286 million of student support was paid out to undergraduate students by the Department, an increase of £128 million since 2005/06.

Not all student support needs to be repaid by the student and students do not have to pay tuition fees upfront. For support requiring repayment, graduates only have to repay when they are earning over £15,000 per annum and then only at a relatively small (9%) proportion of their earnings above the threshold at a non-commercial rate of interest linked to inflation. In addition, all outstanding debt (excluding arrears) is written off after 25 years.

A review of tuition fees and student support in Northern Ireland, chaired by Joanne Stuart, Chairman of the Institute of Directors Northern Ireland Division, has been completed and was published on 12 October 2010. A public consultation is to be carried out in early 2011 which will take into account the findings of Lord Browne's Review in England and the UK Government's response to it.

The Browne Report makes a series of proposals which could potentially have a significant impact on the funding of higher education in England. When considered alongside the Stuart Report (which will be adapted in light of Browne's recommendations) it is clear that the balance of funding between the student and Government in Northern Ireland may alter substantially from the current position. One scenario which emerges is that the overall "control" on student numbers may actually be determined by the amount of funding available for student support, rather than that available through the block grant. While the earliest changes to either tuition fees or student support could be made in academic year 2012/13, it will ultimately be the Northern Ireland Assembly which will take any decisions following the public consultation.

Students will continue to choose to study in the rest of the UK and ROI for a variety of reasons; reasons that in the majority of cases cannot be attributed to these students not receiving a place at a Northern Ireland institution. The percentage of people who go to university outside Northern Ireland has decreased over recent years with the large majority of students being "determined" leavers who want to leave Northern Ireland to study elsewhere⁶¹. The Department welcomes the fact that students choose to study outside Northern Ireland; the experience that they gain can greatly benefit employers and the local economy when they return. However, graduates will go where opportunities for high level employment prospects exist. If Northern Ireland cannot provide such opportunities, these graduates will go elsewhere, and this will ultimately have an adverse impact on our economy.

61. Osborne Report

SECTION 8: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE cont.

8.4 GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Institutional autonomy and academic freedom are regarded as two of the key principles characterising high performing HEIs. Northern Ireland's universities are autonomous corporate institutions with charitable status. Both university colleges are also legally and financially autonomous, but are academically integrated within Queen's University as Schools of the University, and are regarded as such for the purposes of academic quality assurance.

The existing governance framework between the Department and each university and university colleges is set out in a Financial Memorandum with which the institutions are required to comply as a condition of funding. The Financial Memorandum sets out the terms and conditions under which annual funding is allocated. The Financial Memorandum is split into two parts. Part 1 details the high level terms and conditions common to both universities and university colleges and is normally only updated every 4-5 years. Part 2 is re-issued every year and states conditions specific to each institution, detailing the funding available for that academic year and the educational provision agreed to in return for this funding. The Financial Memoranda are supplemented by other accountability codes and guidance documents, many of which are specifically aimed at the higher education sector.

8.4.1 Universities

Each year, Queen's University and the University of Ulster are required to supply a range of accountability reports to the Department. Under a Service Level Agreement with the Department, the HEFCE Assurance Service assesses the extent to which these returns, supported by any other relevant information, demonstrate the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance arrangements across many areas, including student recruitment and retention, financial performance, audit and estates management.

The conclusions from the assessments are summarised in an annual Risk Assessment report to the Department which places each university into one of two categories, 'at higher risk' or 'not at higher risk'. In common with the majority of HEIs across England, Queen's University and the University of Ulster are currently deemed to be 'not at higher risk'.

In addition, the HEFCE Assurance Service carries out periodic review visits to the universities to gain an overview of the adequacy and effectiveness of their risk management, control and governance arrangements. HEFCE's most recent visits to the University of Ulster (in February 2008) and Queen's University (in May 2009) did not raise any significant issues of concern.

A review was commissioned by the Finance and Governance Expert Group to establish if the assurances required by the Department from the institutions were comprehensive, reasonable and appropriate, and whether they imposed an unfair accountability burden on the Universities in Northern Ireland compared to HEIs in England. The review found

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that the assurances required by the Department were fair and reasonable. The review, however, also noted that the governance framework for the sector was different in certain respects to that which would apply to large private or public sector bodies.

8.4.2 University colleges

HEFCE does not provide an assurance service to the Department in respect of St. Mary's and Stranmillis University Colleges, as HEFCE does not support comparable (teacher training) institutions in England. The university colleges are, however, required to provide the Department with accountability information.

As with the universities, both university colleges submit an Annual Assurance Statement on Internal Control directly to the Department's Permanent Secretary who holds annual Accountability Meetings with the Principal of each university college. The university colleges also provide progress reports and/or audit certificates in respect of special initiative and capital projects as required by the relevant grant letter or Letter of Offer. All assurance documentation provided by the University Colleges is reviewed by Account staff in the Department's Higher Education Finance Branch and any areas of concern are raised with the relevant institution.

8.4.3 Higher education in further education

The present Governance arrangements for the further education colleges are determined by the Further Education (NI) Order 1997. Under Article 13 of the Order Governing Bodies have a duty to secure the efficient and effective management of the institute and to ensure that the institute provides, or secures the provision of, suitable and efficient further education to its students. They are required to have regard to the provision of education in their areas and the educational needs of industry, commerce and the community in their areas. The Instruments and Articles of Government of the FECs set out the constitution of the Governing Body and how it is to be conducted. The Order also requires the Governing Body to establish an Audit Committee.

The FECs' Governing Bodies are also required to have regard to the strategic direction and priorities set for the sector by the Department. These priorities have remained the same for the past few years. They are:

- to support the regional and local economy;
- to widen access and increase participation;
- to raise standards and improve quality; and
- to ensure an efficient and effective sector.

The Department has established a number of special initiatives to promote its strategic objectives. Further education colleges set out their forward plans in rolling three year College Development Plans which are approved by their Governing Bodies.

SECTION 8: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE cont.

8.5 POINTERS TO THE FUTURE: LOOKING TOWARDS 2020

There is a degree of uncertainty about the exact nature of the governance framework that is required to regulate the relationship between the sector and Government on behalf of the taxpayer. Opinion is diverse, ranging from a position which fully respects the autonomy of the organisation and academic freedom (a “hands-off” approach), to one which recognises a need for a proportionate degree of accountability (a “light touch/arms length approach”), to one which essentially treats the institutions as public bodies subject to the full range of government and Assembly controls (the “hands-on” approach).

There is a consequent need to resolve some fundamental issues in this regard. A balance needs to be struck in respect of bodies that receive substantial levels of public funding but also have significant levels of income from other sources, and a consensus needs to be reached on what level of influence, if any, the Department should attach to the use of block grant funding to the universities. The issue of how the funding model can best secure the interests of taxpayer over the next decade should also be considered.

8.5.1 A new funding model

Northern Ireland’s universities and university colleges are in competition with those from the rest of the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Therefore, any decisions regarding fees and funding mechanisms must ensure that they are not significantly disadvantaged.

As autonomous institutions with substantial resources of their own, a case can be made that Northern Ireland universities and university colleges should not be subject to excessive regulation. However, as the primary funder, the Department, on behalf of the taxpayer, has a legitimate right to ensure that university and university college resources are deployed efficiently and effectively and that their business plans are aligned with the Programme for Government, specifying if necessary desirable/required outcomes in return for public funding (including research funding).

Currently the Department and Northern Ireland’s universities work within an Assurance Framework to ensure that the Department is confident of the appropriate spend of funding. However, as the majority of funding is allocated as a core grant which is minimally targeted, the universities have significant freedom to determine how those resources should be deployed and to what effect. However, some elements of expenditure are subject to very detailed monitoring.

Although the current model also includes some limited funding for part-time students and recognises the additional cost to institutions of such provision, it is predominantly dependent on full-time student numbers. Despite recent modifications to help take account of students who do not complete their intended course of study, the model does not fully accommodate those who wish to undertake flexible study on a modular basis or online.

If Northern Ireland’s higher education sector is to rise to the challenges it faces beyond 2010, there is a need for greater financial flexibility. Consequently, the time is right to

SECTION 8: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE cont.

assess the opportunities for changing the current higher education sector funding model. Potentially, a new model could be simplified to include the following characteristics:

- mode-free funding of teaching and student support, allowing students to move between modes and institutions, learn in class and online and build up transferable credits over time;
- funding by module, removing the distinction between full-time/part-time and undergraduate/taught postgraduate study;
- a comprehensive credit accumulation and transfer scheme which enables student mobility, both in time and location; and/or
- a comprehensive integrated virtual learning environment.

A key consideration is how the funding model might best influence the behaviour of the sector in delivering the policy changes deemed necessary in a highly competitive higher education market in a way which gives proper regard to the social and economic benefits to which Government aspires to for the population.

A new simplified model with a focus on outcome has the capacity to encourage the upskilling of the current workforce. This model could also improve retention rates by allowing students who would otherwise drop out to ‘bank’ completed modules and take a break from studying until they are ready to return to higher education, thus making it more flexible and accessible. It may also provide the opportunity for students to move more freely from institution to institution using credit transfer mechanisms, enabling student mobility and thus supporting an outward looking, internationalised student body. It could incentivise wider participation, greater emphasis on postgraduate opportunities and the recruitment of more students from GB, ROI the EU and beyond.

8.5.2 Governance

As legally autonomous organisations, Northern Ireland’s universities and university colleges’ status should be appropriately reflected in the governance framework put in place by the Department. As these institutions are currently substantially funded through public monies, they are part of the public sector in a broad sense and must be duly accountable for their spending.

Most of Northern Ireland’s universities and university colleges now generate significant income from private and voluntary (trust) sources and are accountable for the use of such monies to the funder, but not to the Department. It is, therefore, important that they demonstrate adherence to the highest standards of corporate governance irrespective of the funding source. As the primary funder, the Department must be assured that the corporate governance arrangements for these HEIs are fit for purpose. The Financial Memorandum should take account of UK-wide HEI Financial Memoranda but also reflect the appropriate degree of assurance required by the Department’s Accounting Officer

SECTION 8: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE cont.

(and regulators such as the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Department of Finance and Personnel). It is, however, important that the degree of scrutiny applied to universities and university colleges is proportionate and reflects accurately the risk posed to the Department and its objectives, with public funders liaising closely with the institutions to ensure that there is minimal duplication of effort in terms of the level of scrutiny.

In addition to considering a new funding model for the sector there is also a need to assess the current higher education governance framework to achieve a framework that would recognise institutional autonomy and also the relationship between Government and the sector.

Northern Ireland's universities, university colleges and the Department must have a clear understanding of where responsibilities of accountability and governance lie. As public finances become more constrained and learners' needs evolve, it is imperative that Northern Ireland has a flexible model in place to respond, with all stakeholders recognising the important contribution they can make to achieve this.

8.6 PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION

Based on the analysis and evidence in this section, we propose the following for consideration within a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland:

- Changing the funding model for higher education to a simplified system that better reflects the need for part-time, modular study to ensure flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness in higher education.
- Assessing the extent to which the MaSN, as a means of controlling expenditure, is still fit for purpose.
- Considering whether the Financial Memorandum between the Department and the universities and university colleges takes account of the UK-wide HEI Financial Memoranda and also reflects the appropriate degree of assurance.
- Striking a clear balance between HEI autonomy and the role of the Department through a renewed funding and governance framework to ensure clarity in roles and responsibilities.

SECTION 8: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE cont.

8.7 QUESTIONS

With these proposals in mind, we would welcome your response to the following questions:

Question ten:

- How can we ensure that government funding is being used effectively to support learners and respond to economic priorities?

Question eleven:

- What are your views on the higher education funding model in Northern Ireland?

Question twelve:

- How could government funding, including student support, be revised to support modular and flexible study?

Question thirteen:

- What are your views on the cap on student numbers (MaSN)?

SECTION 9: PROPOSAL FOR CONSIDERATION

9.1 PROPOSAL FOR CONSIDERATION

In order to build on and strengthen relationships between all higher education stakeholders, it may prove beneficial to establish a body to oversee the implementation of a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland. This body would comprise key stakeholders from within and outside the higher education sector whose remit and purpose would be clearly stated. Its primary focus would be to ensure that the recommendations contained within the Strategy are taken forward and to ensure co-operation between all stakeholders in focus and delivery.

It is important that the size and composition of any implementation body should provide the appropriate blend of experience and expertise to ensure that it can undertake its mission effectively, and that all stakeholders recognise and understand the contribution they can make to the success of higher education in Northern Ireland.

9.2 QUESTION

We would welcome your response to the following question:

Question fourteen:

- What are your views on the establishment of a strategic implementation body to oversee the implementation of the Strategy when it is finalised?

ANNEX A: SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND QUESTIONS

A vision for higher education: 2010-2020

PROPOSAL

- The Department’s vision for higher education is one of a sector which is vibrant, of international calibre, which pursues excellence in teaching and research and which plays a pivotal role in the development of a modern, sustainable knowledge-based economy which supports a confident inclusive society which recognises and values diversity.

QUESTION

Question one

- What are your views on the vision outlined above for the development of the higher education sector up to 2020?

A learning society

PROPOSALS

- Teaching and learning needs to be flexible, accessible and of the highest quality. More flexible pathways to qualifications need to be developed, with funding arrangements incentivising this change.
- The sector should seek to develop “Distinctive Northern Ireland Graduates”; graduates who possess additional skills that will place them at an advantage globally.
- A greater emphasis on part-time participation in higher education and on postgraduate research and training is required involving closer collaboration with industry and continuing Government commitment to research and development activities.
- The roles of the FECs in the provision and delivery of higher education should be further developed and fostered in partnership with the universities and university colleges.
- There is a need to incentivise choices for STEM areas beyond the traditional higher education courses
- There is a need for a greater emphasis on sub-degree qualifications which better meet the needs of local industry and brings Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK and Europe.
- It is imperative that we build on the success to date of widening participation to ensure access for all those who can benefit from higher education, addressing inequalities of gender and socio-economic grouping at a time of constrained resource availability.

ANNEX A: SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND QUESTIONS cont.

QUESTIONS

Question two:

- How should higher education in Northern Ireland be delivered to best support the needs of current and future learners, including those in the workforce?

Question three:

- How can learning at higher education institutions in Northern Ireland be made distinctive from the rest of the UK, the Republic of Ireland and Europe, leading to graduates with greater employability potential?

Higher education and the economy

PROPOSALS

- Research should continue to be funded at an appropriate level to enable our universities to fulfil their central role to develop and sustain a world-class research base in Northern Ireland.
- Increased employer engagement with higher education and the continual development of knowledge exchange activity with businesses, the public sector and with the third sector is required.
- The promotion of entrepreneurship in the local economy through the higher education sector, including the development of graduates with the right set of skills necessary to compete in a global economy.
- Working more closely with local industry, particularly SMEs and potential investors to ensure that skills gaps are identified and addressed, putting in place flexible client-focused approaches to do so.
- Northern Ireland must play to its strengths, ensuring the development of a high quality skills base and a willingness to respond to investors.
- Cross-departmental co-operation to promote interest in, and the study of, priority subjects from an early age, achieving the right balance between these and other subject areas, whilst respecting academic freedom.

QUESTIONS

Question four:

- How can the higher education sector maximise its contribution to Northern Ireland's economy, particularly in relation to research and development?

Question five:

- How can higher education, government and business work more effectively to identify research and development needs and improve the knowledge and skills of the current, and future, workforce?

ANNEX A: SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND QUESTIONS cont.

Internationally connected

PROPOSALS

- Expansion of Northern Ireland's market share within the UK in respect of international activity and overseas student enrolments through the development of a unique Northern Ireland higher education selling point.
- Encouraging, incentivising and supporting Northern Ireland students to avail of the opportunities for international mobility.
- Institutions should seek to further develop their portfolio of well managed overseas institutional partnerships that benefit not only their students and institutions but Northern Ireland as a whole.
- Healthy and substantial international research links should continue to be fostered, for overseas trade and inward investment. In particular, HEIs should continue to work with SMEs to ensure they are well placed to reap the benefits of internationalisation.

QUESTIONS

Question six:

- As higher education becomes increasingly globalised, how can Northern Ireland's institutions further expand their international portfolios, to assist not only the higher education sector, but Northern Ireland as a whole?

Question seven:

- How can Northern Ireland's students be encouraged, incentivised and supported to become more internationally mobile?

Higher education and civil society

PROPOSALS

- Increasing opportunities for learners to enter higher education and assist in the development of initiatives and programmes at the HEIs to ensure the establishment of an open and diverse society.
- Promoting the creation of sustainable outreach links between the HEIs and the local voluntary, community and local Government sectors, supported by external engagement committees in which all stakeholders are represented.
- HEIs working in partnership with FECs to encourage and promote the provision of higher education in enabling those from geographical 'cold-spots' to benefit from a higher education experience.

ANNEX A: SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND QUESTIONS cont.

QUESTIONS

Question eight:

- How should the already established relationships and interfaces with local communities and civic society be developed further to maximise their effectiveness?

Question nine:

- If new relationships and interfaces need to be established, what should they look like?

Higher education finance and governance

PROPOSALS

- Changing the funding model for higher education to a simplified system that better reflects the need for part-time, modular study to ensure flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness in higher education.
- Assessing the extent to which MaSN, as a means of controlling expenditure, is still fit for purpose.
- Considering whether the Financial Memorandum between the Department and the universities and university colleges takes account of the UK-wide HEI Financial Memoranda and also reflects the appropriate degree of assurance.
- Striking a clear balance between HEI autonomy and the role of the Department through a renewed funding and governance framework to ensure clarity in roles and responsibilities.

QUESTIONS

Question ten:

- How can we ensure that government funding is being used effectively to support learners and respond to economic priorities?

Question eleven:

- What are your views on the higher education funding model in Northern Ireland?

Question twelve:

- How could government funding, including student support, be revised to support modular and flexible study?

Question thirteen:

- What are your views on the cap on student numbers (MaSN)?

ANNEX A: SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND QUESTIONS cont.

Implementing the Strategy

PROPOSAL

In order to build on and strengthen relationships between all higher education stakeholders, it may prove beneficial to establish a body to oversee the implementation of a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland.

QUESTION

Question fourteen:

- What are your views on the establishment of a strategic implementation body to oversee the implementation of the Strategy when it is finalised?

ANNEX B: EXPERT GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Learning Expert Group recommendations

1. The purposes and benefits of learning in higher education need to be articulated and clearly communicated to all stakeholders.
2. Higher education in Northern Ireland needs to articulate and communicate the opportunities and benefits of 'higher' education across society and particularly to businesses.
3. Higher education in Northern Ireland needs to continue to develop multiple transition routes into and out of higher education to enable the opportunities for meaningful learning experiences to be accessed through an adult's life.
4. Curricula and Credit Frameworks should be designed to maximise accessibility to and progression within, higher education thereby facilitating lifelong learning.
5. Society and Government in Northern Ireland must recognise the importance of postgraduate provision (both taught and research) in areas which are research-led and/or have the potential to contribute most to the growth of the knowledge-based economy, including areas such as providing postgraduate opportunities for accredited Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
6. To ensure an internationally competitive knowledge-based economy there must be even closer engagement and collaboration between higher education in Northern Ireland and businesses.
7. Higher education in Northern Ireland should place greater emphasis on 'matching' student expectation with course provision to ensure satisfying learner expectation. This would contribute to the reduction of non continuation rates.
8. The content of subject-based curriculum should be constantly evolving to meet the needs and demands of learners, the knowledge-based economy and society in Northern Ireland.
9. To support a knowledge-based economy and businesses higher education in Northern Ireland should work with schools and other providers and be incentivised to promote the numbers studying and completing STEM subjects.
10. Higher education in Northern Ireland must strengthen engagement with employers to support a knowledge-based economy and should consider further development of partnerships between higher education providers, businesses and development agencies.
11. Remaining internationally competitive: Internationalising the 'offer' and the university

ANNEX B: EXPERT GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS cont.

- For providers of HE in NI ‘the (further) internationalisation’ of higher education in Northern Ireland (such as internationalisation of the curricula, identifying the contribution and benefits of incoming international students, increasing the number of students from Northern Ireland having a period of overseas international experience , international staff, international, Bologna and research engagement especially through the European Research Council, etc).
 - Government agencies (such as Department for Employment and Learning) must work closely with higher education in Northern Ireland providing support to ensure higher education in NI remains internationally competitive.
12. There is a need for an Executive body to oversee the recommendations emerging from the HE Strategy for Northern Ireland.
 13. Modes of study need to be developed to match changing demands.
 14. Greater flexibility of choice by offering more flexibility of routes (time and place) of entry and access to the learning opportunities and the curriculum for all able to benefit irrespective of the individual’s personal status.
 15. Greater collaboration between providers and greater use of technology.
 16. To support a philosophical shift in regard to how students learn at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels higher education providers in Northern Ireland should review and re-think their approaches and practices to funding, curriculum design, modes and methods of accessing learning opportunities and the support of staff development to achieve these.
 17. To develop an evidence-based approach to practice and gain maximum benefit from technology continue to work with national agencies such as the Higher Education Academy (HEA), Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), Quality Insurance Agency (QAA) etc.

Economy Expert Group recommendations

1. As business benefits from a higher skilled workforce it should play a greater role in supporting students and graduates. This support should include providing high quality student placements and meaningful projects, supporting R&D and innovation, business incubation mentoring, student bursaries and attractive salaries for highly skilled graduates. Government should look at ways to encourage business to increase support.
2. As overall public finances come under increasing pressure Government should continue to ensure sufficient funds are allocated to support the skills agenda. Government, business and HEI should work together to ensure that affordability is not a barrier to higher level education and that we continue to provide world class higher education and R&D.

ANNEX B: EXPERT GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS cont.

3. A small higher education / Government / business group should be established (this may be a combination of existing groups or replace existing groups) and be chaired by the Minister or a senior official to ensure it is viewed as a meaningful body. The objective of this group would be to facilitate engagement between:-
 - (i) Higher education providers (including universities and FE).
 - (ii) Government (including Department for Employment and Learning, Department for Enterprise Trade and Investment, Department of Education, Office of the Northern Ireland Adviser on Employment and Skills and Invest NI).
 - (iii) Business (including business organisations, not for profit organisations, professional bodies and the public sector as an employer).

The remit of such a group would be to:-

- (i) Monitor effectiveness of implementation of the HE strategy.
- (ii) Identify gaps and define future HE requirements
- (iii) Make recommendations on course design
- (iv) Propose solutions to current issues e.g. high quality work placements
- (v) Improve communication flows between stakeholders

HEI / Government and Business would be responsible for selecting people to represent them (maximum three each) and to develop a governance structure to ensure full participation.

4. Higher education institutions should establish a single “one stop shop” in conjunction with other training/education partners, where businesses have a single point of contact to get support in identifying solutions to their training, education and R&D requirements.
5. Business and higher education should develop closer lecturer / business relationship. This may consist of an ambassadorial programme, enabling business and higher education institutions to develop meaningful placements/real life projects for students. For example see Appendix 2. Other examples of ‘connected universities’ can be found in the NESTA report <http://www.nesta.org.uk/library/documents/Report%202023%20%20The%20Connected%20Uni%20v4.pdf>
6. Within a flexible qualifications framework, flexible and varied postgraduate opportunities should be developed by business and higher education to encourage people to undertake continuing professional development. Business should lead on developing a more structured approach to masters level degrees and professional doctorates where the task/project is related to a specific business issue/problem.
7. Business and higher education to identify those areas where there is a lack of required bespoke training, including short courses for current staff. Courses which are already available should be identified, including available funding. In addition, continuing professional development (CPD) needs to be developed further. Government should, therefore, rationalise/optimize available funding to businesses

ANNEX B: EXPERT GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS cont.

for training and increasing the skills of staff. There is also a need to establish what funding is available. An increase in the funding of such training by businesses will be needed, and businesses should appreciate the value of this training.

8. Priority should be given to developing a broad range of skills required to encourage innovative thinking as a core skill. Higher Education Institutions should enhance their engagement with Invest NI.
9. Schools, the careers service, higher education institutions and business should provide high quality advice on career paths, including skills/qualifications required, employment opportunities, and salary expectations. This should include opportunities to start your own business. This information should be widely available to students and their parents.
10. Business / Government / higher education institutions should work together to identify the core competencies that should be incorporated into higher education courses. These may include:
 - Self management
 - Teamworking
 - Communication and literacy
 - Numeracy
 - IT literacy
 - Problem solving
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Customer service
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Innovation and creative thinking
11. Business and professional bodies, in association with the higher education sector and Government, should work to address the leadership and management skills gaps.
12. Business, higher education and Government should identify high level research areas of importance, recommend how to fund research in these areas and promote international co-operation. Consideration should be given to increasing the number of high quality international PhD level students studying in Northern Ireland. MATRIX should be central to this and the Northern Ireland Adviser on Employment and Skills should advise on the skills needed to support the development of high value sectors.
13. The panel supports the recommendations of the September 2009 STEM report and would encourage their speedy implementation.
14. Recommendation 1 of the September 2009 STEM report is that “business should develop and lead a framework of stakeholders which will engage directly with

ANNEX B: EXPERT GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS cont.

schools, FECs, universities and Government to focus on growing the STEM artery across the education services and the promotion of STEM within our society.” Currently it is not clear how this can be achieved. A business structure should be established to facilitate this recommendation.

15. Higher education institutions and business should support students enrolling in economically relevant courses by providing bursaries, scholarship and paid work placement opportunities.
16. Future government funding model should, if necessary, be modified to ensure that the higher education sector is incentivised to deliver a balanced portfolio of economically relevant courses.
17. Business and the higher education institutions to develop flexible qualifications framework and training models to upskill people who are currently in employment.
18. Funding for part-time higher education to be reviewed with a view, if necessary, to providing greater incentives for higher education institutions to provide part time courses and to encourage people currently in employment to enter higher education.

International Expert Group recommendations

For the HEIs

1. Challenging institutional targets should be set for increasing international partnership and overseas student recruitment, within the HEIs’ academic planning processes. We should aim to approach the performance of the rest of the UK by 2020.
2. Curricula should be reviewed to ensure their global relevance so that students are prepared for the modern world, and that there is appropriate content to attract international students.
3. Opportunities for students to study and have work placements abroad should be pursued and promoted, and arrangements to facilitate shorter periods overseas should be investigated and developed.
4. Academic staff early in their careers should be encouraged and supported in travelling abroad to establish contacts and build networks. Staff recruited from overseas have an especially significant role in this process.
5. International student enrolment across Northern Ireland, including at FE Colleges which can have a significant role and can benefit from the experience of the universities and university colleges, should be encouraged.

ANNEX B: EXPERT GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS cont.

6. The value brought to the Northern Ireland economy and society by HEIs' international research and institutional partnerships should be strongly promoted.

For the NI Government

1. An over-arching international strategy for Northern Ireland is needed, within which the HE international strategy and plan can relate to the agendas of relevant departments and agencies.
2. An International Education Unit should be established to drive the NI international agenda, to provide coordination, facilitate communication (including with the British Council and Universities UK) and support institutional delivery. Through this the Department for Employment and Learning, the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Invest NI, the universities and other stakeholders should liaise to co-ordinate trade, technology and investment missions overseas and take full advantage of all related opportunities and programmes supporting internationalisation.
3. 10% of Postgraduate Research Studentships should be designated to support the recruitment of high quality international (including European) research students in STEM subjects.
4. Additional funding should be provided to the universities and colleges to support an international placement and partnership programme for early career academic staff linking them with HEIs and companies overseas.
5. Financial support should be made available for the development of and student participation in new mobility programmes additional to existing schemes such as Erasmus and BEI, to include links with developing countries (e.g. in Africa).
6. Local employers should be assisted to provide additional IAESTE work placements for incoming overseas students, both for their own benefit and to increase overseas work opportunities for NI students.

Society and People Expert Group recommendations

1. Higher education institutions should explore how they systematically engage with their wider community with a view to enhancing political, social and economic life in Northern Ireland. They should create high level External Engagement Committees chaired by the Vice Chancellors. The purpose of the Committees would be to systematically connect the HEIs to Government, business and civil society. A symbiotic relationship with the purpose of developing the region and in turn further developing the universities will add value to both. The committees should involve representatives from Government and the Social Partners Group Concordia (Confederation of British Industry, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action and UFU) to consider the application

ANNEX B: EXPERT GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS cont.

of the HEIs' intellectual resources to drive step changes in political, social and economic policy in Northern Ireland.

2. The mission of each higher education institution in Northern Ireland should reflect a core value of providing an environment which facilitates enlightened political debate and a research-based framework which enables the growth and development of our political institutions.
3. HEIs should continue to provide a neutral ground for the development of values of good citizenship, democracy and civil responsibility among its students.
4. The issues surrounding participation in higher education are extremely complex and are as individual as the students themselves. The circumstances that will determine whether or not an individual will participate in higher education may have their origins long before the potential candidate applies for a course in a university or college. Indeed those same circumstances may well have considerable bearing on how well the individual succeeds once in higher education. The Department should recognise the complexity of the individual learner experience and should develop a strategy that addresses the entire student lifecycle. The Widening Participation Strategy should begin a process to identify the groups that may require additional support in a more strategically focused manner, examining best practice in various contexts at an international level. It should acknowledge and address the need to raise aspirations to participate in higher education among underrepresented groups and to raise educational attainment levels to permit that participation. Recruitment processes must be improved to ensure that students not only have the necessary information to apply for the right course but that all relevant information is taken into account in the selection process for courses. Finally, widening participation must include all stages of the student experience, including retaining the student throughout their programme and ensuring successful progression from higher education into employment or further study as appropriate.
5. Higher education institutions should develop an agreement, begun at offer stage, between the institution and each new student, that sets out the responsibilities of both parties clearly focused on their intention of obtaining a successful outcome. The agreement should be reviewed periodically in discussion between the student and their Advisor of Studies. While the student should be held to account this meeting provides the opportunity for pastoral care and action to head of problems that could lead to drop out.
6. While each school within a higher education institution examines specifically their own rates of retention, greater emphasis should be placed on intervention at critical points before a student finally decides to leave. Exit interviews should be collated and analysed and action taken if appropriate. Extra attention should be given to students with additional needs to ensure that the correct support packages are in place.

ANNEX B: EXPERT GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS cont.

7. Flexible learning options, for students who may need to take a short break from study due to illness or other personal circumstances should be explored.
8. Specialised support mechanisms may need to be funded and provided to meet the needs of non-traditional students recruited through access and widening participation programmes.
9. A strong emphasis should be placed on the quality of teaching standards equal to research standards.

Governance recommendations

1. All HEIs, their Governing Bodies and the Department should review the findings and conclusions from this section – both from Professor Clark’s review of the CUC Guide and the views of those interviewed – with a view to enhancing their governance arrangements where that is deemed appropriate.
2. HEIs should review their arrangements for engaging with stakeholders – Government, employer organisations, local councils etc – and satisfy themselves that these are effective and fit for purpose in the modern era.
3. The Department should amend the Financial Memorandum applied to HEIs in Northern Ireland to ease the (current) excessive regulation on the sale, leasing and transfer of land.
4. The Department should liaise with Department of Finance and Personnel and the Northern Ireland Audit Office to remove any obstacles to the adoption of the lighter touch Capital Investment Framework. The Group recommends that this should be treated as a matter of urgency.
5. The Department should ensure that regular meetings take place between the Minister/Permanent Secretary and the Chair of each Governing Body to obtain assurance that Governing Bodies are functioning effectively.
6. In line with a risk-based approach and consistent with value for money principles, there should be better liaison between public funders and significantly less duplication of audit and scrutiny. The Department’s Permanent Secretary should raise this issue with his colleagues on the Permanent Secretaries’ Group with a view to leading a concerted effort to reduce the level of audit and scrutiny put on HEIs and other public bodies in receipt of grant funding.

Funding and performance recommendations

1. The Department should actively contribute to the HEFCE consultation process with a view to ensuring that the resultant funding model is suitable for, and can be applied in, Northern Ireland. Any future funding model adopted for Northern Ireland should be as cohesive and simplistic as possible.

ANNEX B: EXPERT GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS cont.

2. The Department should address the issue of student loans for part-time study to facilitate the changing balance between full-time and part-time study which is likely to occur in the coming years.
3. The Department should be more strategic in its approach to the higher education sector. It should be more proactive in specifying desirable/required outcomes in return for public funding to ensure that maximum output is achieved from all HEIs to the benefit of the wider Northern Ireland economy.
4. The Department should try and ensure that any competition between HEIs, in particular Queen's and Ulster, is healthy and productive, represents value for money for the public pound in the current economic climate and is beneficial to the Northern Ireland economy.
5. There is a need for Northern Ireland to continue to invest in the higher education sector and to keep the level of investment as high as possible. While, this would ideally mean maintaining it at its present levels, this may not be a realistic expectation in a financially constrained environment where there will be many competing demands for resources.
6. In the group's view, HEIs should be encouraged to collaborate where possible and to diversify to maximise their income.
7. The Group recommends that the Department should make the appropriate representation to HMRC and the Assembly to tackle the practice whereby HMRC impose VAT on shared services.
8. HEIs are in competition with HEIs in Great Britain and Ireland. Consequently, it is important that fee levels in Northern Ireland are consistent with those in England and Wales.
9. The Group recommends that any increase in tuition fee levels in England (and Wales) should be mirrored in Northern Ireland. Where this is not the case, there may need to be a significant investment of government funding to ensure that HEIs in Northern Ireland are not disadvantaged.
10. One area where Northern Ireland is not on a par with the rest of the UK is in student retention rates. The Group recommends that, where possible, the Department continues to support steps being taken by individual HEIs to address this issue.

ANNEX C: HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGY GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Steering Group	
Sir Graeme Davies (Chair)	
Professor Richard Barnett	University of Ulster
John D’Arcy	Further education sector
Fergus Devitt	Department for Employment and Learning
Professor Roger Downer	University of Limerick
Gail Ferguson	National Union of Students/Union of Students in Ireland
Breidge Gadd	Voluntary/Community sector
Professor Peter Gregson	Queen’s University Belfast
Andrew Hamilton	Department for Employment and Learning
Dr Rosemary Hamilton (later John D’Arcy)	Open University
Rotha Johnston	Business sector
Mark Langhammer	Voluntary/Community sector
Marie Lindsay	Schools sector
Bill McGinnis	Northern Ireland Adviser on Employment and Skills
Renee Prendergast	University and College Union
Joanne Stuart	Business sector
Professor Sir David Watson	Green Templeton College, Oxford

ANNEX C: HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGY GROUP MEMBERSHIP cont.

Project Group	
Fergus Devitt (Chair)	Department for Employment and Learning
Ursula Kelly	IMPACT Initiative
Wendy Lecky	Department for Employment and Learning
Professor Richard Millar	University of Ulster
James O’Kane	Queen’s University Belfast
Alan Ramsey	Department for Employment and Learning
David Sadler	Higher Education Academy
Gary Sloan	Open University

ANNEX C: HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGY GROUP MEMBERSHIP cont.

Economy Expert Group	
Michael Murray (Chair)	BT
Professor Norman Black	University of Ulster
Carolyn Brown	Federation of Small Business
Joanne Coyle	Invest NI
Victor Dukelow	Department for Employment and Learning
William Fitzpatrick	PricewaterhouseCoopers
Fiona Hepper	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
David Hyland	Confederation of British Industry
David Leonard	Department for Employment and Learning
Professor James McElnay	Queen's University Belfast
Deirdre McGill	Office of the Northern Ireland Adviser on Employment and Skills
Sheila Rodgers	Department for Employment and Learning
Glyn Roberts	Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association
Rena Shepherd	Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce
Brian Webb	Open University in Ireland
Ken Webb	Further education sector

ANNEX C: HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGY GROUP MEMBERSHIP cont.

Learning Expert Group	
Gabriel Jezierski (Chair)	Higher Education Academy
Audrey Curry	Stranmillis University College
Dominic Doherty	National Union of Students / Union of Students in Ireland
Professor Ellen Douglas-Cowie	Queen's University Belfast
Professor John Gardner	Economic and Social Research Council
Paul Gibbens	Higher Education Funding Council for England
Faustina Graham	Department of Education
Brian Henry	Alliance of Sector Skills Councils
Dr Arlene Hunter	Open University
John Kerr	Department for Employment and Learning
Professor Denise McAlister	University of Ulster
Deirdre McGill	Office of Northern Ireland Adviser on Employment and Skills
Calum Morrison	Further education sector
Dr John Sweeney	St. Mary's University College

ANNEX C: HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGY GROUP MEMBERSHIP cont.

International Expert Group	
Professor Fabian Monds (Chair)	
Professor Alastair Adair	University of Ulster
Anne Davies	Bologna Expert
Helen Evans	Open University
Professor Peter Finn	St. Mary's University College
David Leonard	Department for Employment and Learning
Leo Murphy	Further education sector
Trevor Newsom	Queen's University Belfast
Dr Maureen Thatcher	Stranmillis University College
Professor Myles Wickstead	Association of Commonwealth Universities

ANNEX C: HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGY GROUP MEMBERSHIP cont.

Finance/Governance Expert Group	
David Nicholl (Chair)	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
Adrian Arbuthnot	Department of Finance and Personnel
Norman Bennett	Queen's University Belfast
Paul Gibbens	Higher Education Funding Council for England
Peter Hope	University of Ulster
Heather Laird	Open University
Billy Lyttle	Department for Employment and Learning
Angela McAllister	Department for Employment and Learning
Brian McFall	St Mary's University College
Stephen Mungavin	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
Alan Ramsey	Department for Employment and Learning

ANNEX C: HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGY GROUP MEMBERSHIP cont.

Society and People Expert Group	
Seamus McAleavey (Chair)	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Alan Carr	Open University
Wilma Fee	Queen's University Belfast
Susie Grey	Belfast Metropolitan College
Elaine Kelly	National Union of Students / Union of Students in Ireland
Kieran Mannion	Widening Participation co-ordinator
Dr Gerard McCann	St. Mary's University College
Tony McKibben	Department for Social Development
Professor Anne Moran	University of Ulster
Johnny Nolan	Careers Service
Dr Eamon Phoenix	Stranmillis University College
Alan Ramsey	Department for Employment and Learning

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Department for
**Employment
and Learning**
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Further information:

telephone: 028 9025 7512

email: hepolicy.branch@delni.gov.uk

web: www.delni.gov.uk/hestrategy

www.nidirect.gov.uk



Development Department

Your reference: Guidance on the Provision of Local Generalist Voluntary Sector Advice

Our reference: 115663

Being dealt with by: Brenda Kelly

Date: 10 March 2011

Tel: 02890 320202 ext 3770

Una Gilmore
DSD
(028) 90 829 430
Una.Gilmore@dsdni.gov.uk

Dear Una

RE: Consultation: Guidance on the Provision of Local Generalist Voluntary Sector Advice

Please find attached our provisional response to this consultation document. Please note that this is still subject to full consideration by committee and final ratification by full council. We note with regret that the deadline of 7th March could not be extended further to allow for Council ratification to be confirmed.

Provisional Response

1.1. Overall comments

- 1.1.1. The Council is broadly supportive of the draft guidance. The proposals are in line with our existing practice as recently verified by independent review (Deloitte 2008)
- 1.1.2. The draft guidance document proposes that advice provision is "provided through a network of Area Advice Centres" – this is the structure which is currently in place in Belfast City Council.
- 1.1.3. The document recommends that funded advice groups should work to quality advice standards. The advice hubs currently funded by the Council are members of CAB or Advice NI and work to these organisation's quality standards. This is in line with the draft guidance recommendations.
- 1.1.4. We would recommend that funding for provision of local generalist voluntary advice move from yearly allocation of funding to 3 yearly allocation to align with the Community Support Planning cycle.
- 1.1.5. There are potential hidden IT costs for advice providers to ensure appropriate mechanisms for case recording. BCC does not have additional funding available to support the sector with these potential costs.

1.2. Responses to the specific questions

- 1.2.1. We have used the template you provided for specific responses. Please see the following pages.

Thank you for asking us to respond to the proposals.

Yours sincerely

Brenda Kelly
Development Dept.
Belfast City Council
The Cecil Ward Building
4-10 Linenhall Street
Belfast BT2 8BP



Guidance on the Provision of Local Generalist Voluntary Sector Advice

Introduction

This survey forms part of the Department for Social Development's (DSD's) stakeholder consultation process on the Guidance on the Provision of Local Generalist Voluntary Sector Advice.

DSD have identified a number of key questions in relation to this draft Guidance Document and would be keen to hear your views.

The period for the submission of comments on this consultation document will extend from 5 January 2011 until 7 March 2011.

DSD have commissioned NISRA's Analytical Services Unit to collate the consultation responses. Under the Freedom of Information Act all information contained in your response may be subject to disclosure.

Following analysis of the responses received to this stakeholder consultation, it is anticipated that a guidance document to support local Councils in the resourcing of local voluntary advice services will be finalised by Spring 2011.

If you have any queries on this survey (or require it in an alternative format) please do not hesitate to contact:

Una Gilmore on 028 9082 9430 or by email at:

Una.Gilmore@dsdni.gov.uk

About You?

Q1 Are You Responding...?

As an individual

On behalf of an organisation
(please state name of organisation below)

.....Belfast City Council
.....
.....

Q2 Please enter your details below

Name : Brenda Kelly

E- mail Address : Kellybrenda@belfastcity.gov.uk

Your thoughts on the Guidance Document

Please answer these questions in conjunction with the guidance document - this document is available at:

<http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/consultation-provision-of-local-generalist-voluntary-sector-advice.htm>



Q3	How useful if this draft guidance for supporting discussions between local councils and local advice providers about the quality of advice services?	
	Not at all useful	
	Not very useful	
	A little useful	
	Quite useful	
	Very Useful	X
	Don't know	
	Any additional comments : Belfast City Council has an established and successful generalist advice provision structure and works through a consortium approach. The guidelines are in line with Belfast City Council's current practice _____ _____ _____	

Q4	Would you use this draft guidance?	
	Yes	X
	No	
	Don't know	
	Any additional comments : The draft guidance are in line with current Belfast City Council Practice. Point 2.6 of the guidelines proposes that advice "is provided through a network of Area Advice Centres". This is in line with BCC 's current consortium approach. Section 3 and 4 of the consultation document refer to the underpinning principles of local advice agencies and the quality of advice. Groups currently funded via Belfast City Council's consortium approach are members of CAB or Advice NI and adhere to their quality standards in advice provision.	

Q5	Would implementation of any of this draft guidance result in new costs being incurred?	
	Yes	
	No – not for BCC but potentially for advice providers	X
	Don't know	
	If yes, please specify what those additional costs would be : There are potential hidden IT costs for advice providers to ensure appropriate mechanisms for case recording. BCC does not have additional funding available to support the sector with these potential costs.	



Q6		Is there anything that should be added to this draft guidance?
	Yes	X
	No	
	Don't know	
	If yes, please specify should be added :	
	We would recommend that funding for provision of local generalist voluntary advice move from yearly allocation of funding to 3 yearly allocation to align with the Community Support Plan.	

Q7		Is there anything that should be removed from this draft guidance?
	Yes	
	No	X
	Don't know	
	If yes, please specify should be added :	

Q8		Do you think implementation of this guidance would be beneficial?
	Yes	X
	No	
	Don't know	
	If yes, please specify what the benefits would be:	
	_The guidance are in line with current BCC practice. The guidelines would help to ensure that there is standard, consistent advice provision across Northern Ireland.	

Q9		Do you have any concerns about the implementation of this guidance?
	Yes	
	No	X
	Don't know	



	<p>If yes, please specify what these concerns are:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
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Q10	If you have anything else to add to this response please do so in the space below:	
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

Thank you for completing this survey.

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Consultation: DSD Guidance on the Provision of Local Generalist Voluntary Advice
Date:	16 March 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development ext. 3470
Contact Officer:	Barbary Cook, Policy & Business Development Manager, ext 3620

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	As the committee will remember a paper regarding the DSD Consultation on Guidance on the Provision of local Generalist Voluntary Advice was tabled on the 15th February requesting an information session for Members. Due to diary pressures Democratic Services have not been able to arrange this session, instead the relevant papers have been sent to Members for information.
1.2	The deadline for a response to DSD was Monday 7th March 2011. We asked for an extension to the deadline but unfortunately DSD would only agree an extension to the 10th March. As a result we have notified DSD that we will submit a formal response after the deadline. To support committee consideration, officers have prepared a draft for discussion.
1.3	<u>DSD Guidance on the Provision of Local Generalist Voluntary Advice</u>
1.4	The draft guidance from DSD was produced in response to many Councils requesting such a document. The guidance will act as a tool to support Councils in making informed decisions about resourcing local generalist voluntary advice provision. The guidance does not seek to replace any requirements in relation to voluntary advice the Council already has in place nor is it intended to replace any legal advice that Councils feel they should seek in respect of any aspect of their relationship with local voluntary advice organisations.
1.5	There is little specific detail in the draft guidance. The approach taken is to provide a basic framework that lists key considerations and then points to good practice where it exists.

1.6	<p><u>SUMMARY of the draft guidance</u></p> <p>The guidance has 4 main sections.</p>
1.7	<p>Section 1: Method for allocating funding</p> <p>The business case for funding should be explained within the Council's Community Support Plan. It is recommended that advice services are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessible to all, and targeted at those most in need; - can be sustained in the long term; - can demonstrate value for money; and - can demonstrate appropriate quality of provision.
1.8	<p>This should be achieved through a network of Area Advice Centres backed up by appropriate outreach provision, to be determined by Councils, along with the use of technology to ensure access to the greatest number of disadvantaged communities.</p>
1.9	<p>Section 2: Overarching principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independence - Be independent of political parties, statutory organisations and free from other conflicts of interest. - Impartiality - Provide an impartial service open to everyone regardless of race, religion, politics, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability. - Accessibility - Provide a free and accessible service to all members of the community which it serves. - Confidentiality - Provide a confidential service to all its clients and meet all data protection legislative requirements. - Effectiveness - Provide an effective service to all of its clients and the community which it serves. The advice centre should be able to show its effectiveness through demonstrable and measurable outcomes. - Accountability - Provide a service which is accountable to users and others who work with the advice centre.
1.10	<p>Section 3: Quality of advice</p> <p>The framework suggests measuring quality in 5 areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing the facts and diagnosing the problem - The advice - Action or support - Signposting and referral - Advice records
1.11	<p>Councils are advised to discuss with their local voluntary advice organisations how their documentation and recording systems evidence that the criteria are being met. Consideration can also be given to any other quality schemes they may use to meet the standards.</p>
1.12	<p>Section 4: Organisational frameworks</p> <p>This section covers the governance arrangements that should be in place for a well run advice organisation. This includes, finance, planning, people management, and client care. Most of the section refers to existing guidance on good practice such as that from Investors in People, Volunteering NI, Investing in Volunteers, and DSD's earlier guidance on finance and governance in the voluntary and community sector. Reference is also made to legal requirements that apply to the provision of debt and immigration advice.</p>

1.13	The full proposal is available online: http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/consultation-provision-of-local-generalist-voluntary-sector-advice.htm , also see Appendix 1.
1.14	The 'Opening Doors' strategy is available at: http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/voluntary-and-community/vc-publication/vc-strategy-for-voluntary-advice-services.htm
1.15	The consultation document has been passed to all Departments within Council as well as to the Development Department Management Team to gather feedback. On Friday 28th January Community Services attended a briefing from DSD to better understand the proposals and their implications for Belfast. Attached is the summary from that meeting.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Belfast City Council's current practice on local generalist advice, which was endorsed by Council on 9 December 2009 following the Deloitte report, is in line with the draft guidance document. BCC has an established pattern and system for our advice services investment in the City. Deloitte's report concluded that our consortia model represents best practice in advice delivery.
2.2	Point 2.6 of the draft guidance document proposes that advice provision is "provided through a network of Area Advice Centres" – this is the structure which is currently in place in Belfast City Council.
2.3	The document recommends that funded advice groups should work to quality advice standards. The advice hubs currently funded by the Council are members of CAB or Advice NI and work to these organisation's quality standards. This is in line with the draft guidance recommendations.
2.4	Committee have agreed to extend the current funding arrangements to the Area Advice Consortia for 2011/12 pending consortia compliance with agreed procedure. This which will include the submission of effective work programmes and ratification of 2010/11 monitoring returns. They have further agreed to review the current BCC Advice Grant Programme in advance of any 2012 funding arrangements. This DSD guidance can inform the design of the new advice programme.
2.5	At the briefing sessions with DSD, some members of the advice sector raised concerns regarding potential hidden costs particularly regarding IT. They also strongly suggested that the funding be moved to a 3 year time scale to fit with the Community Support Plan cycle.
2.6	In general however the advice sector and other councils were in support of the guidance proposals.
2.7	As noted above, the deadline for a response to DSD was Monday 7th March 2011. We asked for an extension to the deadline but unfortunately DSD would only agree an extension to the 10th March. As a result we have notified DSD that we will submit a formal response after the deadline. To support committee consideration, officers have prepared a draft for discussion.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no additional resource implications for Belfast City Council.

4	Equality and Good Relation Considerations
	It is unlikely that the guidance would have an adverse impact on equality or good relations issues.

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the draft BCC response to the DSD consultation specific questions and raise any specific issues relating to the consultation document.

6	Decision Tracking
	Time line: Response by 10 March 2011 Reporting officer: Barbary Cook

7	Key to Abbreviations
	DSD – Department for Social Development

	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1: Department for Social Development “Consultation document on Guidance on the provision of Local Generalist Voluntary Advice” January 2011-02-17</p> <p>Appendix 2: Draft Response to Department for Social Development “ Guidance on the Provision of Local Generalist Voluntary Sector Advice Survey” Consultation</p> <p>Appendix 3: DSD’s Session notes from their information session 28 January 2011.</p>



DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Consultation document on Guidance on the Provision of
Local Generalist Voluntary Advice**

JANUARY 2011

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FOREWORD

The Department for Social Development (the Department) has policy responsibility for voluntary advice in Northern Ireland and is leading the implementation of the Department's Advice Strategy 'Opening Doors'. This aims to support local voluntary advice services based on a model of local commissioning arrangements led by Councils, supported by the Department and operating within an agreed framework of quality standards.

The implementation of the strategy is ongoing and during the consultation exercise on the location of Area Advice Centres many Councils requested that the Department produce guidance to assist them in the resourcing of local voluntary advice.

Councils, combining their funding with the Department's funding through the Community Support Programme are the main funders of frontline voluntary advice in Northern Ireland. In 2009/10, of the estimated £7.45m spent by Government (excluding Health Trusts) on frontline voluntary advice provision, circa £4.1m was planned expenditure by Councils and the Department.

Taking into consideration the current levels of funding and the requests from Councils for guidance, DSD has an opportunity to help in a way that is good for the consumer, i.e. the guarantee of a good service, and good for Councils, by helping to safeguard their investment in the provision of advice services, providing them with a tool to support discussions with their local advice providers in order to secure best quality within available resources.

These are challenging times for both the voluntary advice sector and government. There is a real need for collaboration and the sharing of resources and services to address the challenges presented by welfare reform and the difficult economic climate.

I welcome steps taken by the advice organisations to regulate themselves, through membership charter marks and quality standards. This draft guidance document reflects in many instances the standards that the Advice Services Alliance NI (ASA) have set themselves either within the region or as part of the wider network e.g. CAB UK etc

It is not our intention to place overly onerous demands on services at a time when demand for those services is high or to make it difficult to implement the guidance by making onerous demands on already stretched financial resources. It is hoped that the guidance document will support discussions between local Councils and local voluntary advice organisations to agree standards to be achieved in the context of available funding.

I am pleased to launch this consultation process and look forward to hearing the views of those who deal on the ground with the provision of voluntary advice services. This will help to make the final draft of practical benefit to Councils and voluntary advice organisations in their work together to provide good quality generalist advice services

Maeve Walls

Director, Voluntary and Community Unit

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1. Introduction

This draft guidance document has been developed within the overall context of the Department for Social Development Advice Strategy *'Opening Doors'* - *The Strategy for the Delivery of Voluntary Advice Services to the Community*.¹ This aims to put in place an integrated voluntary advice service across Northern Ireland along with a framework to ensure that services are planned and delivered in a way which matches resources to need. The strategy focuses on generalist voluntary advice provision.

Implementation of the Strategy is ongoing with a number of strands of work completed. These include:

- A Government Advice and Information Group has been established;
- A Specialist Advisory Panel has been established under the auspices of the Advice Services Alliance NI (ASA);
- Research mapping of advice sector activity has been completed; and
- Research to identify the optimum location of voluntary advice services has been completed and a policy statement published on the 'Number and Location of Area Advice Centres'.

During the Department's consultation exercise on the 'Number and Location of Area Advice Centres' many Councils requested that the Department produce guidance to assist them in the provision of voluntary advice services. As the quality of advice services is a key aspect of the Department's Advice Strategy the Department has taken the lead in producing this draft guidance using available information. This draft guidance represents a further step in the ongoing implementation of the Advice Strategy in relation to quality standards.

¹ The 'Opening Doors' document can be accessed at <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/voluntary-and-community/vc-publication/vc-strategy-for-voluntary-advice-services.htm>.

The Advice Service Alliance (ASA) in Northern Ireland has already commenced work in line with 'Opening Doors' on three themes that impact on the quality of voluntary advice services. They published reports in March 2008 on quality standards, IT and training and these are referred to within the guidance document where appropriate. Therefore it is intended that the Departmental guidance document will provide assistance to Councils in the interim as work continues on the further development of quality standards within the advice sector in NI.

The draft guidance document also draws significantly on the new quality standard being developed by the advice sector in England as part of the BIG Lottery funded 'Working Together for Advice Project'².

2. Responding to the Consultation

The period for the submission of comments on this consultation document will extend from 05 January 2011 until 07 March 2011. Respondents are asked to submit their views as early as possible to allow as much time as possible for consideration.

To aid the consultation process we have identified a number of key questions which are contained separately in our consultation response booklet. You can download this in word format from the Department's website or it can be completed online at <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/consultation-provision-of-local-generalist-voluntary-sector-advice.htm>

If you require a printed copy of the consultation response booklet, it can be requested from the Voluntary and Community Unit (VCU) at the contact details provided in section 1.6. Alternatively should you only wish to respond to a particular element of this consultation, you can submit your comments

² This project was led by the Advice Services Alliance (England) working in partnership with Advice UK, Age UK, Citizens Advice, Law Centres Federation and Youth Access

by e mail or written submission by referring to the relevant question. For example:

Question x – I/We consider that.....

All responses not submitted electronically must be made in writing and your name, address and organisation name (if applicable) should be clearly stated. Responses should be submitted before the closing date of 07 March 2011.

Hard copy responses should be sent to:-

**Una Gilmore
Voluntary & Community Unit
Department for Social Development
3rd Floor, Lighthouse Building,
1 Cromac Place,
Gasworks Business Park,
Ormeau Road,
Belfast,
BT7 2JB**

E mail responses should be sent to

Una.Gilmore@dsdni.gov.uk

We cannot accept responses by telephone however if you require any further information, or wish to discuss your proposed response in general terms, please contact us at the above address or on the telephone numbers below.

Tel: (028) 90 829 430
Fax: (028) 90 829 431
Text Phone: (028) 90 829 446

The information you send us may be passed to colleagues within the Department and published in any summary of responses received. Under the Freedom of Information Act all information contained in your response,

including information about your identity, may be subject to disclosure. More information about the Freedom of Information Act is at **Appendix 1** of this consultation document.

3. Next Steps

Following detailed analysis of the consultation responses, it is anticipated that a guidance document to support local Councils in the resourcing of local voluntary advice services will be finalised by Spring 2011.

APPENDIX 1 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Confidentiality of Consultations

The Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity should be made public or be treated as confidential. If you do not wish information about your identity to be made public please include an explanation in your response.

This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- the Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection

with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;

- the Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature; and
- acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office

(or see web site at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/>).

DRAFT Guidance Document

(text contained on pages 8 to 43)

Section 1 - Introduction and Scope

- 1.1 This draft guidance document has been developed within the overall context of the Department for Social Development (the Department) Advice Strategy *'Opening Doors' - The Strategy for the Delivery of Voluntary Advice Services to the Community* launched in September 2007. This aims to put in place an integrated voluntary advice service across Northern Ireland along with a framework to ensure that services are planned and delivered in a way which matches resources to need. The strategy focuses on generalist voluntary advice provision.
- 1.2 All 26 Councils in Northern Ireland support voluntary advice services and the Department for Social Development (the Department) is pleased to support Councils in this work through the Community Support Programme. This guidance has been produced by the Department in light of the requests from Councils during the consultation on the 'Number and Location of Area Advice Centres'. The guidance will act as a tool to support Councils in making informed decisions about resourcing local generalist voluntary advice provision.
- 1.3 Councils have a range of requirements in relation to voluntary advice already in place and this guidance does not seek to replace these but to enhance and supplement them where appropriate. Similarly this guidance is not intended to replace any legal advice that Councils feel they should seek in respect of any aspect of their relationship with local voluntary advice organisations.

- 1.4 It is hoped that Councils will find this guidance of use in enhancing their own arrangements for local voluntary advice provision. Councils can apply the guidance in the context of local circumstances and available resources. The Department anticipates that the application of the guidance will involve discussion between local Councils and their voluntary advice providers.
- 1.5 In the preparation of this guidance consideration has been given to current best practice in Northern Ireland, best practice in Great Britain and also to the following publications produced by the ASA in Northern Ireland in March 2008:
- Information Technology Working Group Report;
 - Training Working Group Report – Future Proofing the Skills Base of the NI Advice Sector; and
 - Quality Working Group Report.
- 1.6 This guidance sets out some key provisions and where relevant includes references to a range of documents and publications which set out the issues in more detail. In particular the three reports produced and endorsed by the ASA, along with subsequent responses to these reports, will be useful reference material for Councils. **Annex A** contains a useful list of reference materials.
- 1.7 Section 2 of the guidance offers comment on the method of allocating funding for voluntary advice provision. Sections 3 – 5 of the guidance set out principles, processes and standards that Councils may wish to consider in arranging local voluntary advice services. Section 3 considers overarching principles for advice work, section 4 sets out issues in relation to the quality of advice provided, while section 5 considers issues in relation to the organisational framework needed to support good quality advice. Sections 4 and 5 are consistent with the issues identified in the new quality

standard being developed by the advice sector in England as part of the BIG Lottery funded 'Working Together for Advice Project'.

Section 2 - Method for allocating funding

- 2.1 The rationale for funding and supporting local voluntary advice is well established within the Community Support Programme and 'Opening Doors'. In general terms each Council sets out its business case for supporting voluntary advice within their Community Support Plan.
- 2.2 Currently a variety of funding mechanisms are used across Council areas for the provision of voluntary advice services to the community. This allows for the differing circumstances within each area to be accommodated.
- 2.3 'Opening Doors' provided early thinking on the method of allocating funding under its proposed model and reflecting on Treasury Guidance at that time stated that 'a procurement process open to competition and leading to a conventional trading relationship under contract is the best option'. At the time of publication it was also envisaged that contracts would be awarded jointly by Councils and the Department. However, it is likely that the Department's funding for frontline voluntary advice services will continue to be channeled through the Community Support Programme where it is established practice that Councils are responsible for all local funding arrangements with the voluntary and community organisations supported through this programme.
- 2.4 In taking 'Opening Doors' forward a key determinant in the decision making process around funding methods will be to ensure that the overall outcomes of the strategy are achieved. 'Opening Doors' identifies the outcome of the strategy as providing a structure for delivering voluntary advice services that will ensure increased co-operation between local voluntary providers and improved accessibility for the many people who rely on these services across Northern Ireland.

2.5 'Opening Doors' develops these outcomes further and identifies the key features that any future structure should encompass:

- are accessible to all, and targeted at those most in need;
- can be sustained in the long term;
- can demonstrate value for money; and
- can demonstrate appropriate quality of provision.

2.6 The strategy proposes that this is provided through a network of Area Advice Centres backed up by appropriate outreach provision, to be determined by Councils, along with the use of technology to ensure access to the greatest number of disadvantaged communities.

2.7 It is therefore likely that, to ensure that the outcomes are delivered, within the context of the Community Support Programme, Councils can continue to apply funding mechanisms consistent with their policy for funding the voluntary and community sector.

Section 3- Overarching Principles for local advice agencies

General Principles for local advice agencies

3.1 The ASA Quality Working Group Report March 2008 set out general principles for local advice agencies as below and Councils may wish to give these consideration when making their arrangements for local voluntary advice.

i) Independence

Be independent of political parties, statutory organisations and free from other conflicts of interest.

ii) Impartiality

Provide an impartial service open to everyone regardless of race, religion, politics, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability.

iii) Accessibility

Provide a free and accessible service to all members of the community which it serves.

iv) Confidentiality

Provide a confidential service to all its clients and meet all data protection legislative requirements.

v) Effectiveness

Provide an effective service to all of its clients and the community which it serves. The advice centre should be able to show its effectiveness through demonstrable and measurable outcomes.

vi) Accountability

Provide a service which is accountable to users and others who work with the advice centre.

Section 4 - Quality of Advice

- 4.1 A good quality voluntary advice organisation ensures that the advice and information it gives to its clients consistently meets certain criteria. The criteria below have been developed by the advice sector in England as part of the Working Together for Advice Project.
- 4.2 **Establishing the facts and diagnosing the problem** - Relevant aspects of the enquiry are explored to establish the background, the facts, what the client wants and needs, and the client's relevant personal circumstances. This information is used to correctly diagnose the client's problem/s.
- 4.3 **Advice** – Advice has been offered on the options available to the client, including the likelihood of success, where appropriate. The advice given is accurate, sufficient and provided in time to deal with the client's problem. Where the advice provider has referred to research materials or sought expert advice, there is evidence that this research has been applied correctly to the client's problem.
- 4.4 **Action or support** - Action or support was appropriate to the client's needs and was sufficient to progress the issue for the client within any relevant time limit. There is a clear record of what action is to be taken and who (the advice provider or the client) is responsible for any specific action. The advice provider has considered whether the client requires advice on any other issues arising from their original problem/s.
- 4.5 **Signposting and referral** - Where the advice provider has identified that they cannot meet the client's needs, the client has been helped to gain access to another source of information or advice by signposting or referral.

- 4.6 **Advice records** - Written records are legible and provide a clear picture of the facts of the client's initial query, any subsequent developments, and the advice given by the advice provider at all times. Records clearly note any action necessary, and any taken. Copies of any relevant supporting documents are held on file.
- 4.7 Councils can discuss with their local voluntary advice organisations how their documentation and recording systems evidence that the criteria are being met. Discussion will also include how any membership scheme assessments or other quality schemes they participate in provide evidence of meeting the standards above. In the Quality Working Group Report (2008) the ASA set out the existing arrangements for Citizens Advice and Advice NI. For ease of reference these have been reproduced in this document at **Annex B**.
- 4.8 ASA recently published a summary of responses to their Quality Working Group Report and stated that quality assurance at a high level should include a quality of advice audit conducted by peer review. However there may be cost implications in respect of peer review systems.

Section 5 - Organisational framework to enable the delivery of good quality advice

5.1 Under the terms of the quality standard being developed in England an organisation which is quality marked is “managed effectively and independently”. The managing body ensures that the organisation meets legal and regulatory requirements, plans strategically and financially, exercises financial control, continuously develops client, community and stakeholder relations”. The new quality standard also sets out a number of processes that an advice service should have to meet the standard. These include:

- processes to ensure that an effective managing body is in place to provide an independent advice service;
- governance arrangements and management processes which are appropriate to the advice organisation’s size and complexity to ensure effective
 - understanding and implementation of the quality standard requirements;
 - annual planning, including financial planning;
 - financial control; and
 - back up of electronic records.

5.2 The new quality standard work in England sets out four service standards:

- Managing the organisation effectively;
- enquiry and case management;
- people management; and
- access client care and community relations

that an advice organisation should meet in order to obtain their quality standard. The detailed content of these service standards is reflected in this section and may provide a useful framework within which Councils can discuss performance standards with their local voluntary advice provider.

5.3 In the report of their Quality Working Group the ASA provided an overview of various external frameworks for quality standards. These have been reproduced at **Annex C** for ease of reference. It is worth noting that there are plans for 'passporting' organisations with existing quality standards into the new quality standard for England. For example, it is likely that those advice organisations with the General Help Quality Mark (similar to CAB membership scheme requirements) will not have to demonstrate that they meet standards that are covered by that Quality Mark.

5.4 Managing the organisation effectively - Finance and Governance

It is acknowledged that Councils will have their own criteria in respect of finance and governance requirements for the organisations they fund. Councils may also wish to consider the best practice set out in "*SETTING STANDARDS, IMPROVING PERFORMANCE*", the Best Practice Manual on Finance and Governance in the Voluntary and Community Sector produced by the Department. The manual highlights and illustrates best practice principles which Government would expect to find in a well run organisation. Each chapter of the manual deals with a key area of organisational management outlining best practice principles. Areas covered include planning, risk management, governance and accountability, financial management, fraud and irregularity, audit, monitoring and evaluation and embedding good practice.

An electronic copy of '*SETTING STANDARDS, IMPROVING PERFORMANCE*' may be found on the Department's Internet site at;

http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/finance_and_governance_for_vcu.pdf

5.5 Councils will also wish to note that there are some specific legal requirements in respect of:

- Debt Advice - It is a legal requirement under the Consumer Credit Act 1974 (as amended) that any organisation or individual that provides debt advice to the general public must have a valid licence in debt counseling and debt advice issued by the Office of Fair Trading; and
- Immigration Advice - The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) is an independent public body set up under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. It is a criminal offence for anyone to give immigration advice or services in the United Kingdom unless they are regulated by the OISC, a regulated solicitor, barrister or legal executive (or European equivalent) or exempted by Ministerial Order.

5.6 Enquiry & Case Management

A good quality voluntary advice organisation has appropriate processes and documents in place to ensure consistent good quality service and advice is delivered to clients. Where an advice organisation undertakes casework it also has additional processes to ensure good quality casework is provided for clients.

5.7 For **advice enquiries** these will include processes to:

- operate a case filing and records management system;
- keep its information resources up to date, both for legal advice and internal procedures;
- signpost and refer to caseworkers or other appropriate local service providers;
- provide advisers with access to technical advice guidance and support which includes at least one person responsible for supervising advisers who is competent to do so and who is accessible to them;
- effectively monitor and check the day to day advice given by the advice service, correcting or amending incomplete or incorrect advice provided, at regular intervals;

- operate a key dates and action items system which is accessible to all staff within the advice service, where appropriate;
- operate an internal quality of advice assessment procedure for both open and closed enquiries and act on the findings;
- create and securely store advice records for the time required; and
- ensure secure disposal and/or retention of advice records.

5.8 Where **advice with casework** is provided by a good quality voluntary advice organisation it will have additional processes to:

- allocate casework to advisers according to their level of competence and experience;
- provide technical advice and support for caseworkers which includes at least one person responsible for supervising caseworkers who is competent to do so and who is accessible to them;
- progress casework using its case management procedure;
- provide a supervised case checking system for casework which includes a system for taking any corrective action identified; and
- annually review case checking system and amend in the light of findings / experience.

5.9 It should be noted that the ASA report of the IT Working Group Report 2008 states that the three member organisations (Law Centre, Advice NI and CAB) confirmed that their members had already achieved an acceptable IT based recording ability to monitor advice work. This report also sets out detailed information on a range of IT issues, identifies quality standards and makes a number of recommendations. These recommendations are contingent on resources being available for their implementation. Councils may wish to refer to the ASA IT Working Group Report to support their discussions with their local advice providers to agree standards to be achieved within available resources.

5.10 The IT Working Group Report states that voluntary advice organisations should be registered with the Information Commissioner's Office. It also identifies and recommends BS7799/ISO27001 (External Standard) as the industry standard "Code of Practice for Information Security Management" to underpin the recording, storage, retrieval and management of all confidential client data collected by the voluntary advice organisation.

5.11 The IT Working Group Report also sets out a number of proposals in relation to reporting systems (sections 4.1.17 – 4.1.25 of the ASA IT Working Group Report refer) and these have been reproduced in **Annex D** for ease of reference. Councils will already have reporting arrangements in place with their voluntary advice organisations however the ASA (Northern Ireland) recommendations may also provide a useful benchmark.

5.12 **People Management**

A good quality voluntary advice organisation recognises that its staff, paid and voluntary, are its most valuable resource. It has sufficient competent volunteers and paid staff to achieve its purposes and mission and deliver its services efficiently. Volunteers and paid staff are selected, recruited and inducted according to agreed equality and diversity policies, and are well supported, supervised and trained. The organisation will have processes in place to:

- recruit and select people fairly and legally;
- provide induction for staff into the organisation and on their role within it;
- ensure that all staff are trained and supervised in order to achieve maintain and develop competence in their role within the organisation;
- ensure equal opportunities and diversity awareness training opportunities are accessible for all staff;
- manage, support and supervise its staff and volunteers appropriate to the size of the organisation;

- provide induction and updates for board members into the operation and management of the advice service, including how advice policies such as client confidentiality and conflict of interest apply to them; and
 - ensure effective internal communication
- 5.13 Some of the issues noted above, which are drawn from the work of the advice sector in England on the new quality standard are also covered within the ASA Quality Working Group Report.
- 5.14 The ASA Training Working Group Report – ‘Future proofing the Skills Base of the NI Advice Sector’ sets out a range of recommendations developed to improve the effectiveness of the training and development support available to the advice sector. These recommendations were contingent on resources being available. Among these were recommendations that training provision should be accredited where possible and linked to vocational and occupational standards. Work is currently ongoing within the voluntary advice sector in NI to map training provision to the relevant National Occupational Standards for Legal Advice and develop an integrated training strategy for the voluntary advice sector.
- 5.15 Councils may also wish to consider ‘Investors in People’ (IIP), as a standard for delivery of effective training and development for the voluntary advice organisation. A summary of this is featured in the extract from the ASA Quality Working Group report at **Annex D** of this document and further details on ‘Investors in People’ may be found at:
- www.investorsinpeople.co.uk
- 5.16 The Department has policy responsibility for volunteering in NI and is soon to launch the first Volunteering Strategy for NI. Volunteers play a key role in voluntary advice organisations and the Department is keen to ensure that the potential for volunteer involvement is maximised as far as possible. Councils should, in discussion with their voluntary advice organisations,

seek to ensure that volunteers are engaged as appropriate across a range of roles in the organisations from governance to service delivery and that the organisation's volunteer management follows best practice, for example that the voluntary advice organisation;

- Is committed to the involvement of volunteers, and recognises that volunteering is a two-way process which benefits volunteers and the organisation;
- Commits appropriate resources to working with volunteers; and
- Is open to involving volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community and actively seeks to do this in accordance with its stated aims.

5.17 Further good practice information on volunteer management and organisational standards can be found at www.volunteering-ni.org and www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk . 'Investing in Volunteers' is the UK quality standard for all organisations which involve volunteers in their work. The Standard enables organisations to comprehensively review their volunteer management, and also publicly demonstrates their commitment to volunteering.

5.18 **Access, Client Care & Community Relations**

A good quality voluntary advice organisation values its clients and community. It builds good relationships with them and includes them in the development and assessment of services to ensure that they receive a quality service. Its services are independent and accessible to all sections of the community which it serves. The organisation will have processes in place to:

- publicise its service using methods appropriate to its community/client group;
- ensure services are delivered as publicised;

- ensure client services are independent including a conflict of interest checking procedure which covers both staff and board members;
- encourage comment and involvement in service developments by all parts of the community; regularly survey client satisfaction;
- respond to feedback;
- address complaints by following a defined complaints procedure;
- monitor and record client data to identify the client profile of the advice service; and
- maintain up to date and relevant information as appropriate on other advice providers.

5.19 The Department and Councils have a statutory responsibility under Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to have due regard to the need to promote equality of treatment and opportunity in carrying out its functions. The Department and Councils must therefore take these responsibilities into account when planning and enabling advice services. It is anticipated that Councils will arrange these services in line with their own equality schemes.

5.20 *'Opening Doors' - The Strategy for the Delivery of Voluntary Advice Services to the Community* was subjected to a full equality impact assessment. The *STRATEGY FOR SUPPORTING DELIVERY OF VOLUNTARY ADVICE SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT* may be found at;
http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/equality_impact_assessment_april_2007.doc

5.21 Councils will also want to give consideration to compliance with disability access requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, such as advice centres being accessible for people with disabilities or who require special facilities due to visual or hearing impairments.

Annex A: - Reference Materials

- **Setting Standards, Improving Performance**, Best Practice in Finance and Governance in the Voluntary and Community Sector.
http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/finance_and_governance_for_vcu.pdf
- **Specialist Quality Mark Standard**, Legal Services Commission document 2nd edition September 2009.
qualitymark@legalservices.gov.uk
- **Advice Services Alliance Quality Working Group Report**.
<http://www.citizensadvice.co.uk/en/Publications/Advice-Services-Alliance/Working-Group-Reports/>
- **Advice Services Alliance IT Working Group Report**.
<http://www.citizensadvice.co.uk/en/Publications/Advice-Services-Alliance/Working-Group-Reports/>
- **Advice Services Alliance Training Working Group Report**.
<http://www.citizensadvice.co.uk/en/Publications/Advice-Services-Alliance/Working-Group-Reports/>
- **“Opening Doors” – The Strategy for the Delivery of Voluntary Advice Services to the Community**.
<http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/voluntary-and-community/vc-publication/vc-strategy-for-voluntary-advice-services.htm>.
- **Investors In People (IIP)**
www.investorsinpeople.co.uk
- **Investing In Volunteers (IIV)**
www.volunteering-ni.org
www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk
- **DSD Area Advice Centre Location Policy Statement, Oct 2010**
(<http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/voluntary-and-community/vc-publication/vc-strategy-for-voluntary-advice-services.htm>)
- **New advice sector quality standard – Working together for Advice**
(available on the ASA website “www.asauk.org.uk” in January 2011)

ANNEX B: - ASA Quality Working Group Report 2008 extract - existing arrangements for Citizens Advice, Advice NI.

1. Citizens Advice Membership Scheme

Citizens Advice was awarded Investors in People Status in 2005, and local CAB offices comply with the Citizens Advice Membership Scheme which is based on external audit. This includes an organisational audit and a quality of advice audit and is compliant with the requirements of the Legal Services Commission in England and Wales. This scheme is well established, and currently operates across England and Wales, and in the 24 District Councils in Northern Ireland which fund CAB offices.

The scheme is based on a model introduced by Citizens Advice in England and Wales which itself was developed from the PQASSO model, the Practical Quality Assurance Scheme for Small Organisations developed by Charities Evaluation Services in 1997. The scheme, through auditing processes, measures the quality of advice provided to the public and the quality of the local CAB organisation against a series of agreed quality standards.

Membership and Standards Committee

Audit reports are formally considered by a Membership and Standards Committee, which will note the details and timetable for any corrective action which is identified for the local management committee by the external auditor. Where these are not met then further timescales may be set. Where there is a failure or refusal to meet corrective action identified by the audit, the Membership and Standards committee, can impose sanctions and ultimately recommend removal of membership and closure of a local CAB office.

Purpose of the organisational audit

The purpose of this audit is to verify that the local organisation is providing quality advice, is undertaking social policy work, is accessible and relevant to its community and to evidence that effective governance and management supports consistent quality and constant improvement against the usual background of continual change. The Citizens Advice Membership Scheme is developed to embed PQASSO quality standards. In meeting the Citizens Advice quality assurance standard the organisation would meet the Quality Mark standard at the General Help level (at present not operative in Northern Ireland).

Audit Criteria

The audit criteria are defined by the policies of the Citizens Advice service, and the requirements of the *Citizens Advice Membership Scheme April 2005*, which is convergent with CLS Quality Mark at General Help Level only (GQM). Local Bureaux in Northern Ireland are subject to two audits, an Organisational Audit and a Quality of Advice Audit (professional practice & technical practice) undertaken on a three year cycle.

a) Organisational Audit Criteria

- Governance
- Financial Management
- Planning & Managing Resources
- Operational Management
- Employer Responsibilities
- Training and Development
- Networking and Partnership
- Client-centred service
- Case Management
- Casework
- Social Policy
- Complaints, suggestions and positive feedback

b) Quality of Advice Audit

In delivering a service that provides quality advice to clients, two aspects of advice practice need to be satisfied:

- professional practice - the process of advice giving.
- technical practice - the technical content of the advice.

The CAB standard for quality of advice

A Citizens Advice Bureau ensures that the advice and information it gives to its clients complies with identified criteria, where applicable, and demonstrates this by providing sufficient information in the case record.

Quality of Advice Assessment (QAA) examines the quality of advice given by advisers on individual cases dealt with by a bureau. QAA in the Membership Review is based on the principle of peer review – quality of advice assessments made by advice practitioners with current knowledge, skills and experience. The QAA incorporates a method for assessing the quality of advice developed by Andy Benson and Penny Waterhouse within the CAB Service over the last 10 years. The Assessment is based on a check of 30 generalist case files. The QAA is applied to each separate enquiry topic that is dealt with within a case (benefits, housing, employment, etc.), and to the way in which the case has been handled overall. The criteria are as follows:

- Problem diagnosis
- Information and evidence
- Exploring options and consequences
- Appropriateness to person, problem and local circumstance
- Accurate and complete advice
- Case management
- Signposting and referral
- Effectiveness of the advice overall
- Outcome

2. Advice NI Membership Scheme

Advice NI has a joint Membership Scheme with Advice UK. The Scheme sets out the standards which independent advice providers are required to meet in order to be members of Advice NI. Members must submit supporting documentation with their membership form and an initial meeting is held with each new member. On membership renewal all documentation is closely scrutinized by Advice NI with follow-up with individual members when required.

Advice NI has the following membership conditions:

- The centre is striving to pursue a policy of Equal Opportunities
- Advice is part of the centre's work
- The centre operates a confidentiality policy
- The centre operates a complaints procedure
- The centre is independent of central or local government control

- The centre has a means by which it is accountable to the community. This is normally a management committee that meets regularly, and a list of management committee members is provided to Advice NI
- The centre is non profit-making and advice is free
- The centre uses the AIMS case-recording system and/or the centre operates a compatible case-recording system
- The centre has professional indemnity insurance to cover any advice it gives
- The centre provides an Annual Report and Accounts
- The centre has or is working towards an Advice Services Development Plan

Members must provide details and documentation to confirm compliance with membership conditions. Members are also asked to provide details of the level of work undertaken, information resources, and advice services staffing – titles, experience, qualifications and training and development undertaken in the last 12 months.

External Accreditation

Advice NI undertook an options appraisal in relation to Quality Assurance in 2003 with BSP funding and recommends Investors in People (IIP) accreditation to its members in respect of organisational standards. It provides a group contract support scheme for members and has developed an IIP Quality Support Resource.

Advice NI has achieved revised IIP status and 29 members either have or are working towards IIP, 4 have the Matrix standard, 2 Charter Mark, 2 ISO standard and 1 Lexcel.

Quality of Advice

(a) Some Advice NI members use the LASA peer review model (London Advice Services Alliance) written by Benson and Waterhouse of Citizens Advice to measure the accuracy and effectiveness of advice. This is not a compulsory requirement for membership of Advice NI. Advice is assessed and scored against the following quality criteria:

- Problem diagnosis
- Information and evidence
- Exploring options and consequences

- Appropriateness to person, problem and local circumstance
- Accurate and complete advice
- Case management
- Signposting and referral
- Effectiveness of the advice overall
- Outcome

The level and type of enquiry being dealt with is also considered, as is client satisfaction.

(b) Advice NI audit the quality of the advice giving process by providing the NVQs in Advice in Guidance Level 2-4 although it is not compulsory at this stage for members to undertake this qualification. The NVQ assesses and verifies the advisers competency against occupational standards contained within the NVQ framework.

Outcome Measurement

Advice NI undertakes an annual profiling exercise with its members which measures outcome statistics in relation to caseload, tribunal representation, opening hours, staffing and income generation etc.

ANNEX C - ASA Quality Working Group Report 2008 extract - overview of various external frameworks for quality standards.

1. The Investors in People Standard

The Investors in People Standard is a business improvement tool that helps employers' link people management and development activity to the specific aims and objectives of the business. It provides a framework to assess the training and development needs of staff in helping them achieve the vision and a process to evaluate the extent the training actually achieves the purpose for which it is designed. At its heart the Standard has **three** principles - Plan, Do and Review - and 10 indicators of good business practice, each with a central theme:

1. Business Strategy
2. Learning & Development Strategy
3. People Management Strategy
4. Leadership & Management Strategy
5. Management Effectiveness
6. Reward & Recognition
7. Involvement & Empowerment
8. Learning & Development
9. Performance Measurement
10. Continuous Improvement

2. European Business Excellence Model

EQFM provides an assessment process to enable organisations to see what extent the commitment to meet user and stakeholder needs and expectations is being delivered, and to monitor continuous improvement.

3. PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations)

This framework has been developed specifically for smaller voluntary organisations. It provides suggested quality standards and types of evidence for self-assessment at three different levels of achievement, across the following 12 quality areas:

- Planning for quality
- Governance
- Management
- User-centred service
- Staff and volunteers
- Training and development
- Managing money
- Managing resources
- Managing activities
- Networking and partnership
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Results

4. Community Legal Service – General Help Quality Mark

The Quality Mark is part of the Community Legal Service (CLS), a major government initiative launched in April 2000. The aim of the CLS is to improve access for the public, to quality information, advice and legal services through local networks of services supported by co-ordinated funding and based on an assessment of local needs. It applies to advice agencies in England and Wales and is used in Northern Ireland by Citizens Advice. Initially it will consist of members with a Quality Mark for the level of service they provide. The Quality Mark is the quality standard that will underpin all CLS services, so that members of the public who need legal information, advice and other help can rely on receiving a quality assured service. To be awarded the Quality Mark and be able to display the Quality Mark logo organisations will need to demonstrate that they meet the standard required for the type of service being delivered. The three Quality Mark standards are:

- Information
- General Help
- Specialist Help

5. National Occupational Standards

National Occupational Standards (NOS) specify the standards of performance that staff are expected to achieve in their work, and the knowledge and skills they need to perform effectively. They have been agreed by all interests in the sector and approved by the education regulatory bodies of all four countries in the United Kingdom. The NOS for Legal Advice are relevant to all levels of advice provision from first line advice to representation in court. They apply to England and Wales and cover advice given in the Not for Profit, private and statutory sectors. The NOS for Advice and Guidance apply throughout the UK and have been developed into Scottish and National Vocational Qualifications.

National Occupational Standards cover mainstream advice giving operations as well as managerial, support and specialist functions. They can be used for a wide-range of purposes to support individual and organisational development and quality assurance at all levels in an organisation.

(a) The Legal Advice National Occupational Standards

There are 64 units within the Legal Advice NOS. Units LA1-LA30 describe standards of performance expected of advisers, regardless of their specialist areas of practice or the client group with which they are working. Units LA31-LA64 contain the knowledge required when practising in a particular area of law or with a particular client group.

Generic units contain -

- Unit Summary - describing the key aspects of the unit
- Outcomes and effective performance - showing what someone must be able to do, eg *'Agree with the client where a situation requires immediate action and take steps to implement this.'*
- Knowledge and understanding - required for someone to perform their jobs effectively - what someone must know, eg *'The kind of situation which may require immediate action and organisational procedures for doing so'.*
- The skills needed to enable people to deliver the service effectively, eg *'active listening, questioning, presenting information orally and in written form'.*

Knowledge units contain -

- Unit summary - describing the key aspects of the unit.

- Outcomes of effective performance - what someone must be able to do, eg *'Identify and explain the legislative framework relating to discrimination in employment or the provision of goods and services and describe how to access more detailed information when required.'*
- Knowledge and understanding - that someone must be able to show they know and understand, eg *'The grounds on which actions on the grounds of discrimination may be taken in the UK in relation to sex, race, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age (from September 2006).'*

Cross sector NOS

The Legal Advice NOS are advice specific; there may be other NOS which are relevant to some roles in the legal advice sector including:

- Business and administration
- Customer service
- Fundraising
- Health and safety
- Information technology
- Learning and development
- Management and leadership
- Managing volunteers
- Personnel
- Trustees and management committee members
- Workplace violence

(b) The Advice, Guidance and Advocacy Occupational Standards

There are 41 units within the Advice and Guidance Occupational Standards. Units AG1-AG30 describe standards of performance and knowledge required from advice and guidance workers. They cover areas such as establishing communication, assisting clients to decide on a course of action, managing a personal caseload, presenting cases in formal proceedings, operating within networks and negotiating and maintain service agreements. Eleven of the forty one units are imported from other sectors including, customer service, health and social care, health and safety and learning and development.

6. LEXCEL

LEXCEL is the quality mark developed by the Law Society of England & Wales for practices and legal departments which have been independently assessed as having achieved the Practice Management Standards. The Law Society of Northern Ireland has negotiated a licensing arrangement with LSEW to market and assess LEXCEL as a Quality Mark to solicitors in Northern Ireland. No compulsion is involved; it is a matter for the individual practice whether to undergo assessment.

7. The Matrix Standard

The Matrix Standard is the national quality standard for any organisation that delivers information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. The Standard is useful for organisations that deliver information, advice and/or guidance to external clients as part of their business and also for employers who are committed to developing their people. It consists of eight elements, four focused on how services are delivered, and four focused on how services are managed, as follows:

- People are made aware of the service and how to engage with it
- People's use of the service is defined and understood
- People are provided with access to information and support in using it
- People are supported in exploring options and making choices
- Service delivery is planned and maintained
- Staff competence and support they are given are sufficient to deliver the service
- Feedback on the quality of the service is obtained
- Continuous quality improvement is ensured through monitoring, evaluation and action

The Standard is outcome based and does not require the organisation to produce a portfolio of evidence. An Assessor will find the evidence by a mixture of talking to people, observation and reviewing any documents that may be used. It takes an average of 6-9 months to achieve accreditation and accreditation lasts for 3 years.

EMQC Ltd is responsible for the Assessment and Accreditation of organisations to the matrix Standard and acts as the Accreditation Body. ENTO is the guardian of the Matrix Standard and acts as the Standard Setting Body.

8. BS EN ISO 9001:2000

The origins of this standard are in manufacturing process systems. This standard specifies requirements for a quality management system where an organisation is required to demonstrate its ability to consistently provide services that meet customer and regulatory requirements. The aims of this standard are to enhance customer satisfaction through the effective application of the system, including processes for continual improvement and the assurance of compliance with customer and regulatory requirements. All elements of this standard are generic and can be applied to any type of organisation. Each section of BS EN ISO 9001:2000 is based upon 8 management principles:

- Customer focus
- Leadership
- Involvement of people
- Process approach
- Systems approach to management
- Continual Improvement
- Factual approach to decision making
- Mutually beneficial supplier relationships

9. Charter Mark Scheme

The Charter Mark scheme is a tool designed to help organisations focus on, and improve, their customer service and delivery to users. The six criteria shown below make up the Charter Mark standard. By addressing the elements shown against each criterion, the organisation will be focusing on its customers and aiming to constantly improve and give value for money. By reaching the standard the organisation will show that it puts its customers first.

Criterion 1: Set standards and perform well

Criterion 2: Actively engage with your customers, partners and staff

Criterion 3: Be fair and accessible to everyone and promote choice

Criterion 4: Continuously develop and improve

Criterion 5: Use your resources effectively and imaginatively

Criterion 6: Contribute to improving opportunities and quality of life in the communities you serve

**ANNEX D - Sections 4.1.17 – 4.1.25 ASA IT Working Group Report 2008
extract on reporting requirements.**

4.1.17 Integrated Reporting (Statistical)

As well as capturing and recording case data, the integrated system must encompass an effective management reporting tool that can be accessed from the browser interface.

Generated reports need to reflect statistical data at:

- Agency/Bureau Level
- Organisational Level (Citizens Advice, Advice NI & Law Centre)
- Sector Level as a whole.

Reports should consist of anonymised statistical data, not containing personal information that could specifically identify individuals, and comprise:

- Standard sector wide reports
- Standard organisation wide reports
- Standard agency/bureau reports
- Customised reports

Dynamic filters will allow reports to be produced on the basis of a full range of criteria including, but not limited to:

- Funded Projects
- Contracts
- Geographical Area
- Local Authorities
- Local Authority Wards/Parliamentary Constituencies
- Post Codes
- Health Trusts
- Policy Categories
- Age
- Gender
- Occupation

- Money/Debt Advice
- Etc

4.1.18 Integrated Reporting (Internal Management Information Reporting)

In addition to an anonymised statistical reporting capability, the integrated system must also provide an effective internal management information reporting solution. It should be able to produce flexible management reports (including some elements of personal data) reflecting areas of specific need. For example:

- Client Lists by Adviser
- Client Outcomes by Adviser.

Criteria and variables relating to report configuration should be user configurable.

4.1.19 Integrated Post Code Functionality

To ensure consistency and accuracy of data recording, the system will also include an integrated post code utility. This will allow addresses to be searched for on the basis of an individual post code with the resulting selected address automatically populating the relevant client record fields when a record is created. In addition to the associated full address, the post code utility will also identify the following information related to the selected address (again populating the relevant client record fields),

- Local Authority
- Local Authority Ward
- Parliamentary Constituency
- Member of Parliament
- Primary Health Care Trust
- Super Output Area (Aspirational).

4.1.20 Integrated Access to Information System

The Citizens Advice Electronic Information System (Advice Finder) has been identified as the probable on-line information library for the voluntary advice sector across Northern Ireland. Therefore, the case recording system should have integrated access to this resource using a single login and authentication process in order to minimise the number of required passwords necessary to access services and consequently reduce the overall administrative overhead of the system. Use of this integrated feature should not exclude access to other specialised on-line or paper based

information sources by any of the sector's agencies or bureaux e.g. Rightsnet

4.1.21 Time Recording

To meet existing funder and future LSC requirements, the case recording system must incorporate accurate time recording for individual issue/enquiry/matter records and associated contacts. Time recording should be exact (to the minute) rather than to pre defined blocks (i.e. <15 minutes, 15-30 minutes, etc) and also allow time apportionment between multiple funders for an issue/enquiry/matter where appropriate. As part of the time recording framework, time tracking will alert supervisors and advisers/case workers when time spent exceeds predetermined and configurable thresholds for individual cases.

4.1.22 Recording of Disbursements

In addition to capturing time spent on an individual issue/enquiry/matter, the case recording system will accurately record all associated disbursements resulting from and attributable to work undertaken on behalf of clients; for instance, translation and interpreting costs for non English speakers where external and third party services are retained.

4.1.23 Outcomes

It is essential that the system records both financial and non financial outcomes for each individual issue/enquiry/matter.

4.1.24 Social Policy Evidence Forms

To underpin the social policy and campaigning objectives of the advice and information sector, the adopted case recording system will have an integrated evidence capability. This will record, document and produce specific client and case study information in a format that can be used at local, regional and national levels to illustrate particular issues. This evidence should be exportable in both electronic and printed formats.

4.1.25 Customisation

In order to deliver consistency and ongoing quality in the recording of client cases across the advice and information sector any customisation of

recording and reporting fields for individual agencies/bureaux within the database should be avoided. The system should have the flexibility and structure to address the needs of both generalist and specialist advice providers without the need for specific user modifications. Any divergent functionality within the system itself will inevitably increase both initial development and ongoing support costs, and deliver the potential for diluting consistency in the recording of client data. All ongoing changes and enhancements to functionality need to be implemented on a system wide rather than on an agency/bureau basis.

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Advice Guidance Document - Stakeholder Consultation

Event

Community Relations Council, Dungannon

28 January 2011

**Facilitated by: Janine Fullerton -
Department of Finance &
Personnel
DSD**

Workshop 1

Is there anything that should be added to this draft guidance?

- Recognise the flexibility 'tool kit' rather than prescriptive.
- Differences in stats – include guidance on a 'standardisation' of these for comparison would be useful.
- Core performance indicators – there are interpretation issues (CARMA would require IT).
- Actual models of procurement practices & allocation of funds would be useful.
- Commitment to resource.
- Acknowledge rural areas.
- Quality standards already developed in Advice Sector.
- Council's would require some form of bench-marking or quality assurance for all advice providers. Statistics required.
- Need for guidance on match-funding for Councils, proportional by Council size and taking into account area need – measures of deprivation.
- Government Depts need to inform of funding streams re: DARD that are offering Advice funding in addition to Council funds. Joined up working is necessary.
- Guidance on funding - need to formalise funding from DSD on a 3yr basis.
- Indication of costs and an analysis of cost.
- Audit:
 - Who is external?
 - What are standards?
 - Minimum reporting requirements.
 - Sanctions for failing.
- Review of standards & allocation of funding.

- ASA need to set agreed quality standard.
- Partnerships – should this be required.
- Support for new needs service development.
- Link in local authority between advice providers & community planning.
- Client satisfaction.
- Responsibility of Council's to ensure quality, value for money, needs are being met.
- Council's need guidance on implementation of standards & repercussions.
- Providing a single set of guidelines to all Councils regards commissioning of Advice Services.

- Potential involvement of the private sector in the delivery of contracts – clarification is required as to whether they can be involved or not.
- Clarity about funding (para 2.3)
- Social Context:
 - Welfare reform.
 - Expenditure cuts.

Is there anything that should be removed from this draft guidance?

- We acknowledge references to other sources to read!
- Nothing to disagree with that it should be removed, since it is not prescriptive.
- A lot more clarity is required on the Area Advice Centres.

Workshop 2

Do you think the implementation of this guidance will be beneficial? – if yes, what benefits do you envisage from the implementation of this guidance?

- Yes it will be beneficial:
 - Better quality service for customers.
 - Easier to monitor performance/effectiveness of service.
 - Transparency of what is being delivered.
 - Potential for better continuity of advice provision across NI.
 - Training required will be beneficial for staff.
 - Ensuring that there is a standard of advice across NI to provide consistency of service.
 - Providing guidance to Councils.
 - Adopting a professional approach.
- Provides confidence for funders and client users.
- Encourage joint working & partnerships reflect on value for money & best practice models.
- Provides structure.
- Standardisation.
- Quality benchmark
- Makes sector accountable.
- Funding accountability for Councils.
- Outcome focused for service users/advice delivered in a professional and measurable way.
- V.F.M in terms of service being delivered.
- Uniform/universal standards for advice providers.
- Welcome guidance – flexibility of approach / prescriptive Vs structure.

Would the implementation of any of this draft guidance result in new costs being incurred?

- If implemented in full there would be additional costs eg: quality standards, training costs.
 - Councils don't have additional money to spend (additional monitoring and Admin costs).
 - External peer review costs money.
 - Does seeking other sources of funding need to be included? (& expertise to do this).
- Potential for leveraging additional funding.
- Additional costs to those who do not already meet standards (eg: training for advice providers).
- Disproportional costs for smaller agencies.
- Audits required to be completed.
- Potential capital refurbishment costs.
- Peer group review of advice.
- IT costs / Data protection.

Do you have any concerns about the implementation of this guidance? – if yes, please specify.

- Bar set too high but does not meet community needs.
- Volunteering;
 - Some areas don't have enough.
 - Not the right type of person to deal with customer groups.
- Risk losing continuity of service delivery if funding provided to one organisation.
- Commissioning arrangements.
- Councils have different approaches to the Community Support Grant.
- Financial concerns regarding resources for implementation (funding currently available is insufficient to adhere to guidance)
- The variation in terms of implementation.

- Timescales for implementation
- Funding – move away from yearly to 3 yearly funding allocation to allow for financial/organisational planning.
- Concerns re: any delay in implementation.
- If this guidance is used across all council areas it would provide consistency – universal guidance?
- Not a lot of guidance in it.
- Comparison issues – bench-marking not possible.
- Measuring guidance - a robust method 'singing from the same hymn sheet'.
- Look to DSD to lead this or guidance (clarification).
- Uniformity of Standards across CAB, Advice NI etc.
- Increased competition. –
 - Needs appropriate terms of reference for 'voluntary sector'
- Procurement legislation.
- Quality needs to remain the foremost importance.
- Too much flexibility and could lead to inconsistencies across Council as it is only guidance.

Workshop 3

How useful is this draft guidance for supporting discussions between local councils and local advice providers about the quality of advice services?

- Starting point -
 - Very vague.
 - In some areas implementation may require additional resources depending on no. of advice providers.
- Would be useful if Councils worked together / discuss issues.
- Need for discussions between Councilors, Council Officers and Advice Providers.
- Sets agenda for discussion.
- Document established that there is no consensus of reporting.
- Working group to establish performances indicators.
- Common quality standard – has to be agreed minimum quality mark standard.
- Standard methods of measuring qualitative outcomes and statistics
- Additional response from DSD / Councils to needs for additional resources.
- Differs in areas.
- Great in providing framework for consistency.
- Will implement more regular contact which will be valuable.
- Highlight breadth of service provided.
- Gives benchmark for quality of advice services.
- Discussions are already taking place.
- Guidance provides transparent consistency across NI.
- Need more guidance on measurement to assist with monitoring – this isn't consistent at present.
- Should be reviewed after 3 years to see how useful it should be.
- A lot of guidance is already in place so it will continue to be used.
- The guidance has been beneficial in bringing us all together in this room, learning about what is being delivered in areas. How can this be developed?

- Added value from the service – YES.
- Buy a quality service?
- Clarity on what is being purchased?
- Measurable standards?
- Verification & validation of service delivery?

Would you use this draft guidance?

- Broadly Yes -
 - Safety.
 - Recognises the professionalism of the Advice sector.
- Needs to be common framework for monitoring and evaluation.
- Sets minimum standards – there to be built on.
- Planning between local authority and advice providers – link to community planning.
- What happens to those who do not use the guidance?



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Final draft of BCC Framework to Tackle Poverty & Reduce Inequalities
Date:	16 March 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Barbary Cook, Policy & Business Development Manager, ext 3620

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>Members will be aware that the original proposal for a Poverty & Inequalities strategy was taken to the Development Committee on 11th November 2009. At that time, the Committee was reminded that in 2008 the Development Department had commissioned Dr. Mike Morrissey to undertake a study to assess the level of poverty in Belfast and to recommend anti-poverty initiatives which the council could undertake in the short and medium term. A number of workshops were held with Members and officers in 2009 to consider Dr. Morrissey's findings, which had concluded that the council should develop a framework to tackle poverty and inequalities.</p>
1.2	<p>Three main methods by which the council could implement the Framework were highlighted at the November 2009 Committee meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. improve access to, and delivery of, council services; 2. better targeting of the council's existing budgets; and 3. using the council's statistical and performance management systems to monitor both the levels of poverty at a neighbourhood level and the council's achievements following the implementation of the strategy. <p>The Development department and its Policy and Business and Development Unit (PBDU) were tasked to lead on the development of a council framework to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities, within the context of the corporate theme of "Improving Health and Tackling Health Inequalities", as recommended by the Chief Officers.</p>

<p>1.3</p>	<p>It was agreed that the process to develop the framework would involve working closely with Members, consulting key stakeholders and public consultation. Between November 2009 and October 2010, PBDU worked on this project and developed the first draft of a Framework for consideration by Committee.</p> <p>The draft Council Framework to Tackle Poverty and Reduce Inequalities was taken to Committee in November 2010. At Committee, following a recent Good Relations seminar under the 'One City' project, where Dr Mike Morrissey had presented on the relationship between economic development, good relations and tackling inequalities, Committee requested that Dr Morrissey be asked to give this presentation to Members and address how the issues he raised might be addressed by the new Framework.</p> <p>Dr Morrissey gave a presentation to the Committee in February 2011. Further details are given below. Issues raised by him have been addressed in the final draft of the Framework which is now being presented to Committee.</p> <p>Members also requested party briefings on the Framework. At the time of writing two briefings have been confirmed and Democratic Services are currently confirming the others so that they can be held before March Committee. Any additional issues raised in the party briefings will be raised verbally at the Committee.</p>
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<p>2</p>	<p>Key Issues</p>
<p>2.1</p>	<p>Presentation from Dr Morrissey, February 2011</p> <p>Dr Morrissey's presentation focused on the strong economic arguments for ensuring that cities exercise leadership in addressing poverty and inequalities. He noted a Centre for Cities report in 2011 which stated:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">'The varied geography of both recession and recovery makes it even more important that local authorities are empowered to devise strategies that respond to their distinctive local economic circumstances. Empowering cities, in particular to build on local assets, will be vital to supporting the UK's prosperity. Containing over 70 percent of Great Britain's private sector jobs, cities and their hinterlands will be critical to driving private sector growth in the future.'</p> <p>Given Belfast's key role as a regional economic driver, we need to look at what makes an urban economy successful. He noted that talented people are at the core of the urban economy and that these people re attracted to cities rather than to specific jobs. As such, cities need to be attractive, safe, green, clean and open. Therefore, we need a model of urban competitiveness that embraces comparative economic advantage; a commitment to social inclusion; engaged citizens and a sense of belonging and crucially, sharing.</p> <p>He also noted that Belfast has experienced persistent poverty which will be worsened by the extensive impact of the economic crisis. The most deprived wards in Belfast under the Robson Index in 1991 were the same under the Multiple Deprivation Index in 2010¹.</p>

2.2

Most Deprived Wards in Belfast (Common to Both)

Robson 1991	Noble 2010
Ardoyne	Ardoyne
Ballymacarett	Ballymacarrett
Beechmount	Beechmount
Blackstaff	Blackstaff
Clonard	Clonard
Crumlin	Crumlin
Duncairn	Duncairn
Falls	Falls
Glencairn	Glencairn
Glencolin	Glencolin
New Lodge	New Lodge
Shaftesbury	Shaftesbury
Shankill	Shankill
The Mount	The Mount
Upper Springfield	Upper Springfield
Whiterock	Whiterock
Woodstock	Woodstock
Woodvale	Woodvale

Macro-level policy development and interventions are the role of national and regional governments, but there is a need for city level action. Dr Morrissey noted that the Council had a key leadership role at this city level. In the first instance, he noted that Council would be exercising considerable leadership just by confirming this Framework, the first Council to do so in Northern Ireland. He noted that the Framework outlines Belfast City Council's unique role in exercising leadership, developing services and delivering interventions that will tackle poverty and inequalities. He made specific mention of research and monitoring on economic development issues and on the social impact of the current policy environment. The latter is included within the Framework, while the former will be addressed by the Review of the Masterplan and the new Integrated Economic Strategy.

2.3

Members presented Dr Morrissey with a series of questions including but not limited to: the need to shrink the public sector and encourage private sector growth; the impact of poor housing on poverty and inequalities; the issue of corporation tax; the need for immediate action rather than more research; the need for leadership on the part of the Council; the need to support people into employment and to target our resources effectively; the need to address segregation; the need to reduce benefit dependency and the need for participative democracy.

In his various responses, Dr Morrissey noted the need to build the private sector and mitigate the negative social impact of the economic crisis; the need to reduce economic inactivity rates; the need to encourage more movement and connection between public and private sectors; the need to see Belfast as a whole city and importantly to focus on the economic arguments for supporting inclusion as a path to creating a more competitive urban economy.

2.4 Developing the draft Framework

The draft Framework has taken considerable time to develop. As can be seen in the action plan, every council department is contributing to it. There was also pre-consultation research carried out with some key stakeholders. The Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network, Barnardos, the Women's Support Network and the Council for Homeless were commissioned to provide preliminary research findings on the needs of people in poverty and on ways the council could improve its service delivery. This qualitative research took the form of focus groups and was completed at the end of June 2010. The main objectives of this research were to address three main areas: a brief overview of what council services people in poverty (young people, older people, lone parents, homeless, etc) currently use; what problems or difficulties they face; and what they believe should be changed or improved. These research findings have been very useful in framing this draft plan making it more grounded.

In addition, the changing economic and financial climate has meant that Chief Officers and other key staff wished to ensure that any draft Framework was realistic about current and future council resources. As a result, any proposed action which could not confirm resources either in existing budgets or planned budgets for 11/12 and 12/13 was removed. Chief Officers met twice to consider and confirm this and to ensure the draft Framework presented to Committee was realistic.

At the time of writing two party briefings have been confirmed and Members Services are currently confirming the others so that they can be held before March Committee. Any additional issues raised in the party briefings will be raised verbally at the Committee.

2.5 Purpose of the draft Framework

The purpose of the Framework is:

- To raise awareness of poverty and inequalities in Belfast;
- To improve access to, and delivery of, councils services;
- To better target existing council resources to contribute to tackling poverty and inequalities in Belfast; and
- To use the council's statistical and performance management systems to monitor the levels of poverty across the city and in neighbourhoods and to monitor the council's achievements following implementation of the Framework.

The Framework defines clear and concrete actions the council is already taking or is planning to take over the next five years.

The Framework clearly notes that the council can't solve poverty or end inequalities. Rather, the council can:

- be more inclusive in our service delivery;
- ensure that the resources we have are used in the best way and with highest social impact;
- provide support to citizens at a time when it is most needed;
- collect poverty and inequality indicators and information to raise awareness, monitor and challenge; and
- build partnerships for more integrated service delivery.

	<p>In terms of managing public expectations, it is important to note that the Framework does not aim to end poverty and inequalities in Belfast, which would be beyond its scope and beyond the remit of the Council. The purpose described above very clearly notes that this is a Framework for how the Council can raise awareness of these issues and contribute to tackling poverty and inequalities.</p> <p>As such, the draft Framework is realistic and resourced. The emphasis is on describing and highlighting the work already being carried out across the council (which is already resourced) and to identify a relatively small number of new initiatives that have the potential to contribute to tackling poverty and reducing inequalities by improving the ways in which current services are delivered.</p> <p>The Council will closely monitor the performance of the Framework in order to ensure that it does make a difference on the ground. There will be a review of the Framework every two years which will identify its successes and areas for improvements. The draft Framework will be equality screened before going out for public consultation.</p> <p>2.6 Next steps for the draft plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - equality screening of the Framework, March 2011 - Draft Framework to be ratified by council on 1 April 2011 - Public consultation, April 2011 – June 2011 - Changes to draft Framework resulting from public consultation, July 2011 - Final Framework to Committee in August 2011, and - Final Framework ratified and launched in September 2011 <p>2.7 <u>Monitoring and reporting</u></p> <p>The Development department will monitor the day-to-day progress of the Framework and a formal report on progress will be brought to the Development Committee once a year.</p>
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4	Resource Implications
4.1	<p>The budget for this work was agreed by Committee in November 2009 – a total of £32,000. So far, £12,000 has been spent on pre-consultation research and developing the strategy. This leaves £20,000 for public consultation events, consultation materials, production of the final document and a launch event. It should be noted that it is not intended to produce a high spec designed document, rather a simple publishable Framework, designed internally. The aim is for a fully engaged consultation process.</p>

5	Good Relations and equality Considerations
5.1	<p>The Framework to Tackle Poverty & Reduce Inequalities aims to address inequalities in the city and as such will enable further the council's work on equality and good relations. The action plan within the Framework outlines specific actions that include work with marginalised communities including those in the Section 75 categories and actions which aim to mainstream approaches to reducing inequalities across the council's work.</p>

6	Recommendations
6.1	The Committee is asked to <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approve the draft Framework; and2. Approve a public consultation on the Framework.

7	Decision Tracking
John McGrillen will present the final Framework after the public consultation. Time Line: October 2011 Reporting Officer: John McGrillen	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1: Poverty in Belfast: What can the Council Do? Belfast City Council's Framework to Tackle Poverty and reduce Inequalities	



**Poverty in Belfast: What can the
Council Do?
Belfast City Council's Framework
to Tackle Poverty and Reduce
Inequalities**

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Introduction

One of Belfast City Council's corporate objectives is to contribute to reducing inequalities in Belfast. This Framework describes the role our services can play in raising awareness of poverty and inequalities in Belfast and in contributing to tackling poverty and inequalities in Belfast. It is not in the Council's power to end poverty in Belfast, but we can make our services more accessible and effective. The Council will play a key leadership role by promoting a model of urban competitiveness that balances economic development and social inclusion.

Purpose of the Framework

The purpose of the Framework is:

- To raise awareness of poverty and inequalities in Belfast;
- To improve access to, and delivery of, councils services;
- To better target existing council resources to contribute to tackling poverty and inequalities in Belfast; and
- To use the council's statistical and performance management systems to monitor the levels of poverty across the city and in neighbourhoods and the council's achievements following implementation of the Framework.

The Framework defines clear and concrete actions the council is already taking and will take over the next 5 years.

Poverty in Belfast

Poverty remains one of the most persistent and significant issues facing Northern Ireland with the population in Belfast being particularly affected. The city has eight of the 10 most deprived wards¹ in the region and nearly half (48%) of the population in the Belfast local government district live in the most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) in Northern Ireland. The most recent deprivation measures from 2010 show that 57% of the most deprived SOAs in Northern Ireland are in Belfast.

In 2008 the council commissioned some exploratory research² from Dr Mike Morrissey into the issue of poverty in Belfast to assess the scale of the issue and its complexity. Some of the findings include:

- Around 20% of people in Belfast live in poverty which is higher than the Northern Ireland average of 18% and the EU average of 16%;
- 37.6% of children live in workless households – NI average is 21%;
- 11% of lone parents are in poverty compared to 8% for NI;
- Those groups who in poverty or who are most at risk of poverty include:
 - Older people
 - Children in workless households
 - Lone parents
 - People from minority ethnic communities
 - People with disabilities.

The NI Executive defines a household in poverty³ as having one that has an income that is 60% or less than that of the median household income in the year. This is equal to £115 per week for a single adult with no dependent children or £195 per week for a single adult with two dependent children under 14.

¹ <http://www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk/>

² M. Morrissey, "Research on Poverty in Belfast", 2008

³ www.niassembly.gov.uk

At a presentation to Council in February 2011, Dr Mike Morrissey noted that Belfast struggles with persistent poverty. The 20 most deprived wards in Belfast under the Robson Index in 1991 were the same under the Noble Multiple Deprivation Index in 2010⁴.

Most Deprived Wards in Belfast (Common to Both)	
Robson 1991	Noble 2010
Ardoyne	Ardoyne
Ballymacarett	Ballymacarrett
Beechmount	Beechmount
Blackstaff	Blackstaff
Clonard	Clonard
Crumlin	Crumlin
Duncairn	Duncairn
Falls	Falls
Glencairn	Glencairn
Glencolin	Glencolin
New Lodge	New Lodge
Shaftesbury	Shaftesbury
Shankill	Shankill
The Mount	The Mount
Upper Springfield	Upper Springfield
Whiterock	Whiterock
Woodstock	Woodstock
Woodvale	Woodvale

The EU defines relative poverty as:

'People are said to be living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living considered acceptable in the society in which they live.

They may experience multiple disadvantages through unemployment, low income, poor housing, inadequate health care and barriers to lifelong learning, culture, sport and recreation. They are often excluded and marginalised from participating in activities (economic, social and cultural) that are the norm for other people and their access to fundamental rights may be restricted.⁵

The council has limited powers in terms of increasing income. However, we can have some impact on the disadvantages listed above that create poverty and inequalities. The Framework therefore adopts the EU definition of relative poverty and focuses on these wider determinants.

What can a local authority do?

Northern Ireland district councils do not have a direct statutory remit to tackle poverty and we recognise that we can't provide an additional income to

⁴ Presentation from Dr Mike Morrissey to Belfast City Council on the 3rd February 2011.

⁵ From The European Anti-Poverty Network's website (www.eapn.org/) and adapted from, Joint Report on Social Inclusion, European Commission, 2004

households at risk of poverty. However, we can contribute to tackling poverty and inequalities by raising awareness, making services more accessible and better target our resources. Given the large number of services that we deliver at a local level, there are opportunities for the council to have a direct and positive impact.

For example, we offer a range of programmes at our leisure centres and in our community facilities. Decisions around the design of such programmes, their pricing, opening times and promotion will all affect how easy it is for those in poverty to get access to them. We can be more inclusive in our service delivery, focus on where the needs are and ensure that the resources we have are used in the best way and with high social impact to serve all citizens in Belfast.

The council also delivers economic development programmes and works with small and micro businesses to help them grow and build their capacity in obtaining contracts from the public sector. The work of our procurement and economic development work clearly demonstrates that small actions can make a big difference in providing opportunities for micro businesses or social economy enterprises. A full list of council's activities and services that have an impact on people in poverty is in **Appendix 1**.

These interventions reflect the Council's key leadership role at a city level. Macro-level policy development and interventions are the role of national and regional governments, but there is a need for city level action. This Framework and action plan outlines Belfast City Council's unique role in exercising leadership, developing services and delivering interventions that will tackle poverty and inequalities.

Why create a Framework now?

Belfast City Council has decided to develop this Framework in order to:

- 1) Improve Belfast's urban competitiveness and encourage sustainable economic growth by addressing persistent social inequalities. Belfast can only become the leading world city if economic growth is supported by a decrease in social inequalities.
- 2) Align the council to the emerging regional and national policies in the area of poverty and social inclusion, including but not limited to OFMDFM's Lifetime Opportunities and its current work on developing a regional Child Poverty Strategy.
- 3) Ensure that through joint working we achieve economies of scale and integrate people and place based approaches 'doing more for less'.
- 4) Reduce the cost to the economy (and to the council): Recent research⁶ estimated that child poverty costs £25 billion each year in costs to the Exchequer and reduced GDP. This research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that child poverty represents 71% of social services spend across the UK.
- 5) Raise the council's profile as a key city wide local service provider supporting citizens across the city.
- 6) Fulfil our existing obligation under the Corporate Plan: A Framework for tackling poverty and reducing inequalities will make a substantial contribution to fulfilling our strategic objective to reduce inequalities under the 'Better Support for People and Communities'.
- 7) Support communities to deal with the legacies of the conflict - The most deprived areas within Belfast are those areas that suffered most during the recent conflict and are also the areas where there are disproportionate

⁶ Joseph Rowntree Foundation: 'What can we do to tackle child poverty?', 2009

levels of poor health, educational opportunities, job opportunities and social opportunities. These legacies need to be tackled in a coordinated manner in order to reduce overall poverty and inequality.

- 8) Build on the 2010 European Year of Social Exclusion: This is the European year against poverty and exclusion. The key objectives were to raise public awareness about these issues and renew the political commitment of the EU and its Member States to combat poverty and social exclusion.

How does the Framework support the Council's corporate objectives?

The Corporate Plan sets out six strategic themes for the organisation (NOTE: Once new corporate plan is developed, these themes and goals will need to be revisited). These are based on our analysis of need in the city, the views of the public and future challenges and opportunities.

Below we describe how the Framework supports each themes:

1. City leadership - strong, fair, together

This is about 'place-shaping' and being ambitious for Belfast and its people through advocacy, partnership working and leading by practical example.

Related poverty aims:

- Improve poverty and inequalities knowledge base and awareness;
- Influence regional and national poverty and inequalities policy; and
- Enhance the council's role in reducing poverty and tackling inequalities in Belfast.

2. Better opportunities for success across the city

This is about wealth creation – supporting business, developing key growth sectors and securing investment within the city by supporting opportunity, skills, innovation and regeneration.

Related poverty aims:

- Increase the use of the council's assets to support employment and job creation; and
- Increase the growth of social economy projects.
- Reduce worklessness and improve skills

3. Better care for Belfast's environment

The council supports a clean, green city now and for the future by securing the long term viability of the city and its environment by creating a cleaner, greener and healthier environment and through education and protection.

Related poverty aims:

- Contribute to waste reduction; and
- Reduce fuel poverty.

4. Better support for people and communities

This is about finding ways to better connect with local people; building capacity to influence and address local issues, tackling inequalities and improving relationships; making the best use of local services to address the issues facing the city and its neighbourhoods and enhancing the city by making it safer, healthier, more inclusive, welcoming and enjoyable.

Related poverty aims:

- Improve the quality of life of people in or at risk of poverty;
- Effectively engage people in or at risk of poverty, particularly in areas in and around interfaces where the legacies of conflict are most stark; and
- Provide advice services for people at risk of poverty.

5. Better services

Making the best use of our resources to provide a range of services which best meet local need and improve quality of life; providing services to a high standard that are easy to access and that maximise their value for money and effectiveness.

Related poverty aims:

- Improve our service delivery to provide a better access for people in poverty.

6. Better value for money

Ensuring resources are fully aligned to our priorities; that our services deliver value for money; that we attract people who will work to deliver the best services and develop the organisation and lead the organisation through the RPA.

Related poverty aims:

- Maximise social impact of our procurement, project and regeneration spend.

To achieve the goals we have developed a detailed Framework that brings together many existing contributory strands of council work with a number of new initiatives which have been proposed by the relevant council services.

How will we achieve these goals?

Framework

Key

New Initiatives	
Existing Initiatives	

Theme	Initiative	Outcome (linked to goals)	Council lead	Potential partners	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Budget
City leadersh	Develop an online resource for sharing information on poverty and social exclusion for all partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a website and gather information Administer the portal Monitor its success 	Improvement in poverty & inequalities knowledge base	Development (PBDU)	Community and Voluntary sector, Academia	✓	✓	✓			£500 (PBDU)
	Integrate the new equality framework in corporate planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closely with Good Relations Unit to develop a new Equality Screening Tool Undertake an audit of inequalities in the council Prepare improvement plans 	Enhanced role in reducing poverty and tackling inequalities	Good relations	Equality Commission	✓	✓				Existing
	Ensure up to date poverty & inequalities data included in CityStats info <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include poverty & inequalities related indicators in profiles Share profiles with external partners Use the information to influence decision 	Improvement in poverty & inequalities	Development	NISRA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Staff time

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<p>Maximise investment and funding streams to support Council work on poverty & inequalities</p>	<p>Enhanced role in reducing poverty and tackling inequalities</p>	<p>Development</p>	<p>Other local authorities, COMET, EU</p>						<p>Staff time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake the BIG lottery community planning project 		<p>HES/Belfast Health Development Unit EU/PBDU</p>		✓	✓				<p>£100,000 from the Big Lottery</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure EU and other funding to deliver on P&I related projects 					✓	✓			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue influencing at a European level for funding streams to tackle inequalities 				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<p>Exchange best practise with European and national partners</p>	<p>Aligned regional/national poverty & inequalities</p>	<p>Development /HES</p>	<p>Eurocities, Urbact</p>			✓	✓		<p>Existing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participate at relevant events, seminars and meetings 		<p>Support from EU Unit</p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue participation in Belfast in Europe group and contribute to joint projects 						✓	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showcase Belfast case studies through portals and newsletters 					✓	✓	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the relevant best practise examples in the poverty Framework delivery 						✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake one lead project at a European 						✓			
<p>Undertake any necessary research with external partners – aim is to monitor social impact of policy environment</p>	<p>Improvement in poverty & inequalities knowledge base</p>	<p>Development</p>							<p>£20,000 (Dev PBDU)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to and support research on inequalities and overcoming barriers to 		<p>HES/PBDU</p>		✓					
<p>Develop partnerships and build political legacy</p>	<p>Aligned regional/national</p>	<p>Chief Executive's</p>	<p>All</p>						<p>N/A</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to development of NI Child Poverty Framework 				✓	✓	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual inequalities briefing for Members 		<p>PBDU/HES</p>			✓				

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Better opportunities for success	Utilising council assets and facilities to reach marginalised groups (community, open spaces and leisure venues)	Increased use of the council's assets to support employment and job creation;	Development (EDU & Com Serv), Parks and leisure	DEL																Existing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support delivery of employability and skills programmes 																			
	Raising skills and reducing worklessness	Reduce worklessness and improve skills with our partners																		Existing and seeking ESF
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of year 3 of the HARTE programme 			Development (EDU)	DEL															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of TQ partnership to maximise job opportunities 				DEL															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify joint initiatives with Belfast Employment and Skills Board to address employment challenges of target groups 				BESB															
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll-out of Step up to Work initiative 																			
	Actively support development of social economy projects	Increase the growth of social economy	Development (EDU)/ Property and																	Existing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice and guidance to social economy enterprises who wish to apply for 																			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue delivery of meet the buyer 																			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a social economy enterprise 																			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign a dedicate member of staff who will be the first point of contact for the 																			
	Develop community tourism enterprises	Increase growth of social economy	Development (CA&T)	NITB																Existing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate current tourism infrastructure along the relevant tourism corridors (via Integrated tourism Framework) 																			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage the communities in relevant areas in order to raise awareness and potentials of social economy enterprises Arrange necessary training and advice Contribute in setting up at least one social economy enterprise per tourism hub in the <p>Ensure full inclusion of marginalised people through the council's employment programmes</p>	<p>Reduce worklessness and improve skills with our partners</p>	<p>Finance and resources</p>	<p>DEL</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>Existing (DEL)</p>
<p>Through Disability Framework ensure people with disability have full access to employment opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a pilot project Monitor and evaluate Extend the partnership and expand the initiative of resettlement of ex-offenders 				<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>Existing (thematic)</p>
<p>Provide support to older people who seek employment opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and enhance volunteering opportunities for older people 		<p>HES/Community Services</p>		<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>Existing (thematic)</p>
<p>Extend a cultural and arts skills development programme for marginalised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend development and outreach of the culture and arts programmes 	<p>Reduce worklessness and improve skills with our partners</p>	<p>Development (CA&T)</p>			<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>Existing</p>
<p>Better care for Belfast's environment</p> <p>Assist in development of a regional food scheme to provide people in poverty with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the extent of possible support 	<p>Contribution to reduced waste</p>	<p>HES/ Dev PBDU support</p>		<p>✓</p>			<p>TBC</p>

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<p>Increase access to cultural development and outreach initiatives across the city</p>	<p>Improve the quality of life of people in or at risk of poverty;</p>	<p>Development (CA&T)</p>	<p>Arts Council</p>							<p>Existing / Staff time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the pilot outreach programme to children and young people 										
<p>Develop community gardens in the areas of need</p>	<p>Improve the quality of life of people in or at risk of poverty;</p>	<p>Parks and Leisure</p>								<p>Existing / Staff time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver four pilot projects Evaluate the scheme Develop new initiatives 										
<p>Support & fund advice provision infrastructure in Belfast</p>	<p>Provide advice services for people at risk of Improved quality of life</p>	<p>Development (Com Serv)</p>	<p>CAB, Advice NI & Law Centre</p>							<p>DSD</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue providing £800,000 in funding Ensure capacity building of the advice Maximise the uptake of the rate relief (esp. by older people) 										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support extended outreach activity of the advice providers 										
<p>Community Support Development Programme with our partners</p>	<p>Improve the quality of life of people in or at risk of poverty;</p>	<p>Parks and Leisure</p>	<p>Sport NI, DSD, Public Health Agency</p>							<p>PHA</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Active communities programme Targeting Neighbourhood Deliver of the programme by community network (Belfast Community Sports Development) 										
<p>Develop capacity building through Community Development Framework</p>		<p>Community across the council</p>								<p>Existing /Staff time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop CD Framework Implement CD Framework 										

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Better services	Explore feasibility of a Belfast Pass at a reduced rate for people on low incomes	Improved access of people in poverty	Development	NITB					Existing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a feasibility study Prepare a business case 					✓			
	In partnership with the Public Health Agency provide free access to leisure facilities in the most deprived wards in Belfast	Improved access of people in poverty						✓	PHA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target 200 people in the most 								
	Ensure all children have access to parks and playgrounds	Improved access of people in poverty	SNAP to support P&L						Staff time
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a mapping exercise of provision 					✓	✓		
Better value for money	Explore development of 'social clauses' in our procurement, project and regeneration spend	Maximised social impact of our spend	Properties and Projects (PBDU to support	Central Procurement Directorate, EC					£20,000 (Dev PBDU)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a Task and Finish team 					✓			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake research and Provide best practise case examples 					✓			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a feasibility study 					✓			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a business case for the council 							✓	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a pilot project 							✓	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake evaluation of the pilot project 								✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If successful roll-out across the council 							✓	✓
	Develop indicators to measure the impact of regeneration on health and poverty in Belfast (linked to health)	Maximised social impact of our regeneration projects	HES	Belfast Healthy Cities					URBAC T
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree the indicators 					✓			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot the indicators and methodology 		HES				✓		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify target audience and provide training on the use of the tool 		HES				✓	✓	

How will we measure the success?

Over the past few years the council has placed much greater emphasis on creating effective performance management systems that allows it to better to measure the impact of our services on the city.

The poverty Framework will utilise the approaches and data gathering techniques emerging from these systems to assist with measuring the impact of the Framework on poverty in the city.

With the design of the Framework we have attempted to describe the clear linkages between:

- the measurable reality of poverty in Belfast
- the many inter-connected factors that contribute to it
- the subset of these factors which the council can have a positive impact on
- the strands of council work which can contribute to this impact

Impact of the Framework

We will use a number of ways to measure the success of this Framework. These will measure both the specific outputs from the Framework and a more indirect measure of impact based on the longitudinal tracking of a core set of key indicators.

External indicators

The external indicators we have chosen are based on a number of characteristics including that they are:

- taking into account levels of poverty across the most deprived areas within the city
- relevant to the corporate themes
- direct, unambiguous measures of progress
- available across different socioeconomic groups, geographies and over time
- have a direct link with interventions
- consistent with the decision-making cycle
- easy and inexpensive to collate
- understandable
- politically agreed

We have identified four sets of such indicators classified under the following headings:

- **Low income & employment**
- **Children and young people**
- **Communities**
- **Adult wellbeing**

Details of each indicator are listed in **Appendix Two**.

Quality of life matrix

The council's Health Development Unit is developing a Quality of Life matrix which will include a set of indicators to measure economic, social and environmental impact of council's policies and projects. Once developed, we will put it on the

council's poverty page at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/poverty and use it to monitor the impact of larger projects in the Framework.

Monitoring

The monitoring process will track progress over time. In the context of this Framework, this will involve a longitudinal assessment of poverty and should involve the following activities:

- **Agreeing indicators** to measure progress of the poverty Framework (*see previous section*).
- **Setting targets** to provide benchmarks against which performance can be assessed.
- **Identifying a system(s)** that will house the data.
- **Regular collation, analysis, review and response** in relation to the future indicator data.

Internal indicators

There are a number of internal indicators which while not directly measuring the impact of our work on poverty, will contribute to the direct measurement of the performance of the Frameworks' various initiatives. These include:

Corporate theme	Proposed Performance indicator	Frequency
City leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total amount of leveraged money targeted at social inclusion projects • Number of people using the web portal 	Quarterly
Better opportunities for success across the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of young people long-term unemployed who went through council's programmes (HR) • Percentage of jobs through regeneration projects that are given to local people • Number of set up social economy enterprises 	Annually
Better care for Belfast's environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of all housing stock in fuel poverty • The number of people through environmental projects (food scheme, community gardens) 	Annually
Better support for people and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total amount of claw-back benefits drawn by the advice services • Percentage of people who feel the council's work helps them play a bigger role in decision-making 	Quarterly Annually
Better services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of people satisfied with council's services 	Biennially
Better value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of the council's contracts with at least 5% of spend towards social clause 	Annually

There are a number of additional indicators that will offer complementary qualitative data:

Ongoing citizen engagement

While developing this Framework we have established partnerships with a number of anti-poverty NGOs whose beneficiaries are people experiencing poverty (a full

list of these organisations is in **Appendix Three**). We aim to utilise these partnerships and enhance dialogue with people in poverty in order to ensure their ongoing engagement.

How will we report the progress?

The Policy & Business Development Unit in the Development Department will monitor the day-to-day progress of the Framework. It will prepare and/or commission the monitoring and evaluation reports.

The actions within the Framework fall under three categories:

- 1) Existing initiatives - continuation and expansion
- 2) Existing initiatives - new ways of working, internal integration
- 3) New initiatives and projects

The following table illustrates the reporting mechanisms depending on the type of action:

Action in the Framework	Where is it recorded?	Who will collect it?	Where will it be reported?
Existing initiative – continuation or expansion	Thematic	Thematic Coordinator	Thematic reports
	Individual business plans	Development/PBDU	Poverty monitoring report
Existing initiative – new ways of working, internal integration	Thematic	Development/PBDU	Thematic reports
	Individual business plans	Development/PBDU	Poverty monitoring report
New initiatives or projects	It will need to be put in individual business plans	Development/PBDU	Poverty monitoring report

The Poverty Monitoring Report will be brought to the Health and Well-being Work Group which will act as the main internal reference group for the Framework. They will receive overarching results of progress on the Framework. The Framework will be a standing item on the agenda. The HWB group will provide advice on possible areas for improvements.

Formal reports on the progress of the Framework will be brought to COMT every quarter by the Chair of the Health and Well-being Work Group (Andrew Hassard, Director Parks & Leisure). A formal report on the progress of the Framework will be brought to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee annually by the Chair of the Health and Well-being Work Group (Andrew Hassard, Director Parks & Leisure).

In terms of progressing the work in the Framework, additional mechanisms may be used.

Internal mechanisms

- **Policy Officers Group** – regular updates will be provided to POG.
- **Internal Task and finish groups** – for larger projects we will set up Task and Finish groups with responsibility to lead and produce interim progress reports on specific projects.

- **Business Unit** - All the actions from the poverty Framework will be incorporated into different units' business plans and the progress will be reported at team and service management meetings.
- **Intercom and interlink** – we will utilise council's internal website and magazine to report on progress for all the staff.
- **Belfast Citystats** – we will use Local Information System and Data Observatory to monitor and report on all relevant poverty indicators mapped across Belfast areas, against council's service delivery. This will be updated annually and will provide us with a direction of travel reference.

External reporting mechanisms

We will use two main methods to report our progress externally: the council's poverty website and biennial events for our partners.

- As part of the Framework we will set up a poverty section on the council's public website that is open to all internal and external partners which will have all the statistical information, maps, research documents and information on all relevant organisations and projects. This will be a live and interactive forum for exchange of information and seeking partners.
- Every two years we will organise 'progress events' for all stakeholders which will be used to communicate the progress, seek new ideas, exchange views and find new innovative ways of working together on this important issue.

Biennial review

As with any other Framework this is a flexible and fluid process which depends on the progress, milestones and other external circumstances which might have an impact on it. Thus, every two years we are planning to undertake an internal review of the Framework, identify its successes and areas for improvements to be addressed. This will also include equality screening to ensure that equality of opportunity is fully promoted through the course of the Framework.

Final process evaluation

Considering the unique approach in developing and implementing this Framework, we are planning to commission an independent evaluation of the overall process to help us understand what went well and what needs to be improved in development of future corporate strategies.

What happens next?

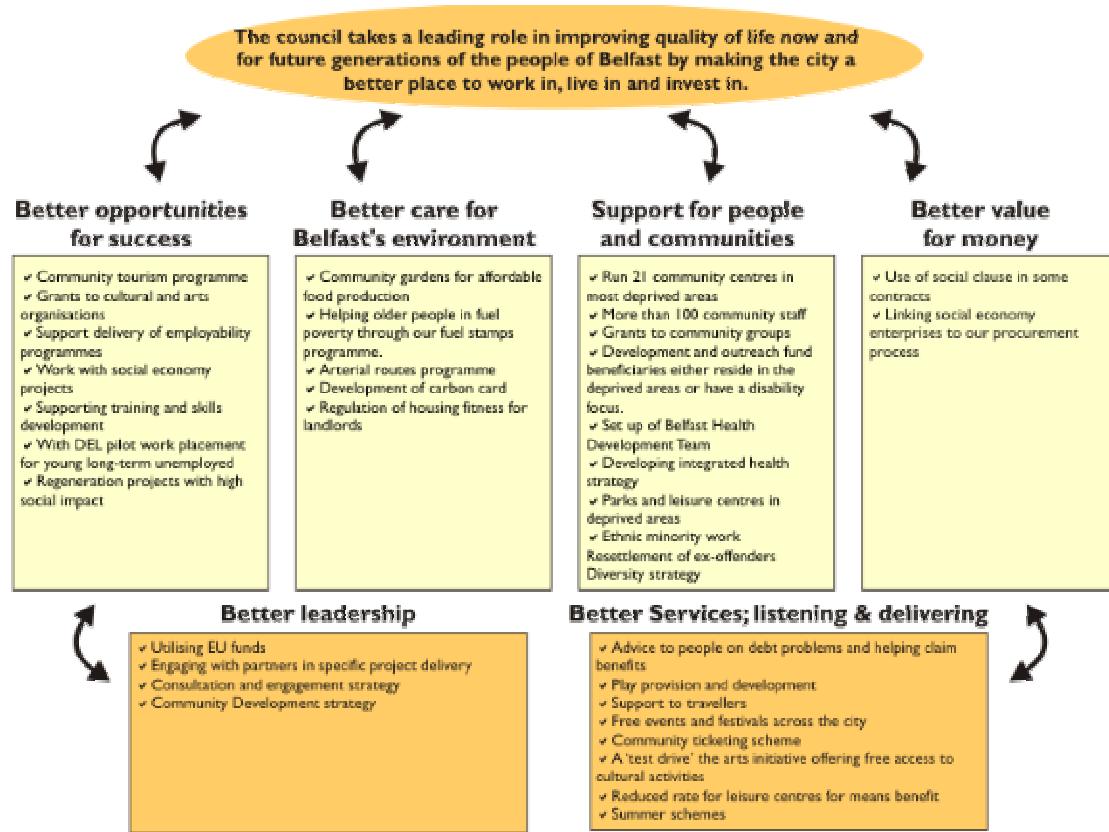
This is a draft document that needs input from all our stakeholders – the more people and organisations we engage the more meaningful and effective this Framework will be. Thus we are planning a series of phases before we launch the final document:

- Draft Framework to Development Committee in November 2010
- Presentation from Dr Mike Morrissey February 2011
- Final Draft Framework to Development Committee in March 2011
- Public consultation April 2011 – June 2011
- Feedback analysis and redrafting of the document in July 2011
- Final Framework to go through council internal decision making processes in August 2011
- Publication on the final Framework in September 2011
- An event for our stakeholders to disseminate the final Framework in September 2011
- Process of incorporating it into units' business plans September – November 2011

A corporate action plan to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities

- Set up of Task and Finish groups December 2011 – February 2012
- Implementation to commence in April 2012
- First monitoring report to COMT in October 2012

Appendix 1: What is the council currently doing?



Appendix 2: Selection of detailed indicators

Risk of being in low income groups of individuals by various family and household characteristics			
Percentage of Individuals			
Local govt district (3 year average 2004-2007)	Before housing costs Below median 60%	After housing costs Below median 60%	All individuals (thousands)
Belfast	21	22	236.8
All individuals NI (thousands= 100%)	19	19	1,712.9
Percentage of children			
Belfast	25	28	53
All Children NI	22	23	430.2
Percentage of pensioners			
Belfast	23	15	41.7
All pensioners NI	28	21	269.9

Low income & employment	Low income	Percentage of households in Relative Poverty, unequivalised ⁷
		Percentage of households in Relative Poverty, equivalised ⁸
		Children in low-income households ⁹
	Income inequality	Pay inequalities between men and women ¹⁰
	Repossessions	Mortgage cases received and disposed ¹¹
Worklessness	Percentage of working-age adults unemployed ¹²	

Children and young people	Economic circumstances	Children in workless households ¹³
	Education	16 year olds not obtaining 5 GCSEs ¹⁴
		19-year-olds without a basic qualification ¹⁵
	Child health	Rate of infant mortality ¹⁶
Teenage birth-rate ¹⁷		
Exclusion	16 to 19 year olds not in education, employment or training ¹⁸	
Adult wellbeing	Economic households	Percentage of workless households ¹⁹
		Percentage disabled working-age employed ²⁰
	Health	Percentage with limiting long-term illness ²¹
		Percentage of deaths to those aged under 75 ²²

⁷ Source: Small Area Income Measures (2003-2005)

⁸ Source: Small Area Income Measures (2003-2005)

⁹ Source: Labour Force Survey Local Area Database (2000-2008)

¹⁰ Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2004-2008)

¹¹ Source: Mortgage cases received and disposed (2005-2009)

¹² Source: Labour Force Survey Local Area Database (2000-2008)

¹³ Source: Labour Force Survey Local Area Database (2000-2008)

¹⁴ Source: School leavers' survey (2005-2009)

¹⁵ Source: School leavers' survey (2005-2009)

¹⁶ Source: Demography Methodology Branch (2001-2009)

¹⁷ Source: Demography Methodology Branch (2001-2009)

¹⁸ Source: School leavers' survey (2005-2009)

¹⁹ Source: Labour Force Survey Local Area Database (2000-2008)

²⁰ Source: Labour Force Survey Local Area Database (2000-2008)

²¹ Source: Census (1991, 2001)

²² Source: Deaths (1999-2008)

A corporate action plan to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities

		Standard Mortality Rate for all ages ²³
		Percentages of households with limiting long-term illness ²⁴
	Access to services	Percentage of older people claiming at least one of the main benefits ²⁵
		Percentage of pensioners with no income other than Pension Credit ²⁶

Communities	Place	Percentage of households in fuel poverty ²⁷
		Concentrations of benefit recipients ²⁸
	Housing	Number of presenters that are Full Duty Applicant ²⁹ (FDA) ³⁰
		Percentage of dwelling tenure through Housing Association ³¹
		Percentage of affordable houses ³²
	Ability to travel	Percentage of households with access to a car ³³
	Crime	Violent crimes rate per 10,000 population ³⁴
		Percentage of persons 'worry about crime and personal safety' ³⁵

²³ **Source:** Standardised Mortality Rates (1999-2008)

²⁴ **Source:** Census (1991, 2001)

²⁵ **Source:** Client Group Analysis Claimants (2002-2009)

²⁶ **Source:** State Pension Credit Claimants (2004-2009)

²⁷ **Source:** Northern Ireland House Condition Survey (2004 – 2009)

²⁸ **Source:** Client Group Analysis Claimants (2002-2009)

²⁹ **Full Duty Applicant (FDA):** this means the applicant is either homeless; eligible for assistance; in priority need or; unintentionally homeless.

³⁰ **Source:** Homelessness Statistics, Council for the Homeless NI (2005-2007)

³¹ **Source:** House Condition Survey (2001-2006)

³² **Source:** Affordability (2001-2006)

³³ **Source:** Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (2003-2008)

³⁴ **Source:** Recorded violent crime (2005-2009)

³⁵ **Source:** Perceptions of crime (2005-2008)

Appendix 3: Who have we engaged with?

Internal council stakeholders

- Members
- Health and Wellbeing group
- Chief Officers Management Team
- Policy Officers Group
- Departmental managers
- Head of Service
- Various officers

External stakeholders

- Age NI (Provided advice)
- Barnardos (Facilitated 8 research events with young people who are affected by poverty or disability)
- Equality Commission (Provided advice)
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- NICVA (provided advice)
- Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network (Facilitated 6 research events with people affected across the city)
- OFMDFM (Provided direction)
- Save the Children (Provided advice)
- Women Support Network (Facilitated 6 research events with women in poverty)

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Ballymacarrett Recreation Centre: agreed action
Date:	16 March 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen Director of Development ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update of the actions that have been taken following the January 2011 Committee meeting with regard to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. monitoring and financial control and 2. follow-up of probity issues.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>1. <u>Monitoring and Financial Control</u></p> <p>The following actions have been agreed and Connswater Community and Leisure Services Limited (CCLS) are being supported to implement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CCLS to produce a proposed programme of activities - Each element of the programme will be itemised and costed - BCC will release funds on a monthly basis based on a schedule of expected transactions - There will be a 100% review of actual invoices / expenditure at month end by BCC officers. This has to be completed to the Council's satisfaction before further funds are released - This process will be reviewed in line with committee decision.

2.2	<p>2. <u>Probity Issues</u></p> <p>Members will recall that concerns have been raised regarding certain historical transactions at CCLS. Community Services and Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) are in the process of compiling relevant information for the Legal Services Manager who will liaise, as required, with the appropriate authorities in relation to the further investigation of any of these issues. This work is ongoing.</p>
2.3	<p>Officers have agreed a training and development plan with the Board and are working, with support from the East Belfast Community Development Agency, to implement.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	All costs allocated to CCLS funding cost centre and are within revenue estimates.

4	Equality Implications
4.1	There are no equality or good relations considerations attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Committee are asked to note the agreed process to manage the interim arrangements for Ballymacarrett Recreation Centre

6	Decision Tracking
<p>Further to agreement John Nelson to implement committee decision.</p> <p>Time line: April 2011 Reporting Officer: Catherine Taggart</p>	

7	Key to Abbreviations
<p>CCLS – Connswater Community and Leisure Services Limited CDO – Community Development Officer CSUM – Community Services Unit Manager AGRS – Audit Governance and Risk Services</p>	



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Update on the work of the Traveller Liaison Management Unit
Date:	16 March 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen Director of Development ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart Community Development Manager ext 3525

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	To advise Members of the Development Committee of the work of the Traveller Liaison Management Unit (TLMU). The Traveller Liaison Management Unit was established in the late 1980s as a Unit within the Community Services Section. The TLMU was set up to address the adverse living conditions of the Traveller community.
1.2	Up to 130 Traveller families were living on unauthorised sites on the Glen Road in the Andersonstown area of the City with no access to toilet or washing facilities and water was provided by two unofficial stand-pipes. All accepted service delivery norms within the settled community had been denied to this community including health, education, housing and employment opportunities.
1.3	It was considered that accommodation was the key to address all of the shortfalls that affected this community and BCC were invited by the DOE Minister to become a member of the Advisory Committee on Travellers (ACT).
1.4	ACT was to be the Ministerial overseeing body to address the disadvantaged position of the Traveller community with a specific remit for Traveller site accommodation. BCC agreed to address the disadvantaged position of the Traveller community and to participate in a Traveller site development programme with 100% capital funding from the DOE Special Programmes Branch .

2	Key Issues
	<u>Key Legislative and Governmental Input 1997 to 2010</u>
2.1	<p>The TLMU was at the forefront of lobbying on Traveller related matters and all key issues addressed had Council support and approval.</p> <p>In 1999 the DOE Minister stood down from ACT. This would have left a void however BCC Councillor Fred Proctor in partnership with other Councils formed the Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues (LGP) in 2000 which continues to collectively represent Councils' views on Traveller matters .</p>
2.2	<p>The Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 was key legislation which identified the Traveller community as an ethnic group. This affords Travellers' legal protection in the delivery of goods and services against any form of discrimination or racism.</p>
2.3	<p>Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires Councils' to promote equality of opportunity and good relations .</p>
2.4	<p>Targeting Social Need / Promoting Social Inclusion Report on Travellers (PSI) 1999 was a key report which identified the severe disadvantaged position of the Traveller community . The Report set out 33 key recommendations for statutory service providers to comply with however ongoing reviews note that many agencies continue to fall far short of their stated responsibilities.</p>
2.5	<p>2003 Housing (NI) Bill which requires the NIHE to provide the Traveller community with a range of specific accommodation including Transit, Permanent and Emergency Sites as well as social and grouped housing schemes .</p>
2.6	<p>The Unauthorised Encampments (NI) Order 2005 empowers the PSNI and NIHE to address the issue of unauthorised encampments by the Traveller community. The legislation also requires the NIHE to make available Transit and Emergency site arrangements to ensure transient Travellers are not disadvantaged by the Order.</p>
2.7	<p>2010 Task Force Report on Traveller Education, which was instructed by the Education Minister and overseen by the NI Dept. of Education</p>
2.8	<p>2010 The Traveller All Ireland Health Study is a key report on Traveller health issues .</p>
2.9	<p><u>Comment</u> The TLMU in partnership with LGP are satisfied that all necessary legislation is in place to ensure parity in the provision of services to the Traveller community however there are agencies that still fall short of the norm with regard to their services to the Traveller community and it should be noted that litigation is now a real possibility to address failures in the system.</p>
2.10	<p><u>Key Challenges</u> Prior to the introduction of the Housing (NI) Bill 2003, the NIHE opined that the provision and management of Traveller Sites in NI should remain with District Councils'. The TLMU in partnership with LGP lobbied extensively to challenge the position of the NIHE on the grounds that it would be discriminatory against the Traveller community.</p>

	<p>It was considered that all the accommodation requirements of the Traveller community including site provision was the responsibility of the statutory housing provider (NIHE) and this position was supported by an Equality Impact Assessment carried out by DSD Housing Division. Following the DSD / EQIA, the Minister conceded that the NIHE should continue to be responsible for all Traveller accommodation including Traveller site provision and management. This reversal of the proposed RPA transfer is recognised as a significant achievement both for the benefit of the Traveller community and also from a Council perspective.</p> <p>2.11 Prior to the introduction of Reform of Public Administration (RPA) 2010, there was an attempt to transfer to local government the responsibilities for Transit, Emergency and Co-operated Traveller sites and responsibility for the management of the Unauthorised Encampments (NI) Order 2005. The TLMU worked in partnership with LGP and NILGA to lobby against this position with success, the DSD Minister agreed that all Traveller accommodation should be provided and managed by the NIHE.</p> <p>2.12 Following the transfer of the Council's Traveller sites to the NIHE in 2003, the then Director of Client Services instructed an independent review in the form of an EQIA of Council's work with the Traveller community in Belfast. The result of the EQIA was to retain the TLMU and the post of Traveller Liaison Officer (TLO) with a revised Job Description. Support from Community Services would continue to assist in project work with the Traveller community and support the Traveller support organisations .</p> <p>2.13 In 2004 the Traveller Outreach Office was destroyed in an arson attack however the TLMU in partnership with several Council Departments quickly reinstated a more appropriate temporary building which is still operational today. This Outreach Office is the hub of our direct work with the Traveller community and is also extensively used by key agencies to interface with the Traveller community.</p> <p>2.14 The TLMU in partnership with An Munia Tober (AMT) were successful in a bid to the Big Lottery which enabled the provision of accommodation for AMT to provide an After Schools Programme as well as a facility for many other Traveller development activities and this was operational in 2007 .</p> <p>2.15 <u>Current Challenges</u> The priorities noted in the developing business plan for the 2011/12 service are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to review all related matters re RPA and respond as necessary - Continued membership of, and support to, the Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues - Membership of NAGTO and use same to promote good practice in NI . - With Legal Services, to keep under review the requirements of Site Licensing re the 1963 Caravans Act - Review the Terms of Reference and membership of the existing Inter-departmental Traveller Liaison Group to align with the unit business plan, and agree priority work plan. - To ensure a city wide partnership approach to Traveller support, consider rational and options for a pilot Inter Agency Traveller Group (membership to be at senior officer level) for presentation to Committee. - Continue to promote the innovative Outreach Initiative from the Outreach Office on the Glen Road
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<p>2.16</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To develop and promote appropriate training programmes - Continue to support Traveller Focus Week which is an all Ireland event which promotes Traveller issues and celebrates their culture . - Ensure Council compliance with all relevant matters relating to Travellers. - Assist the PSNI in their bid for Peace 3 funding to promote a project under Policing a Shared Society with specific reference to policing the Traveller community as agreed November 2010 committee. <p><u>Summary</u> The BCC TLMU, is recognised as the lead Council in NI when dealing with Traveller issues and over the years the TLO has established a standing amongst the key service delivery agencies and also with the Traveller Support Networks in NI, ROI and GB. The TLO is also the only NI Council representative on the National Association of Gypsy and Traveller Officers and he has found this contact to be extremely positive in his work. This successful approach is supported through our partnership work with the LGP, NILGA and NAGTO.</p> <p>It is essential to continue to monitor Government and Agency initiatives relating to the Traveller community and where appropriate challenge. Recent experience demonstrates that without effective consideration and challenge Councils may inherit responsibilities that would have significant implications on resources and finance .</p> <p>While there have been improvements in the lifestyle of the Traveller community, they continue to be the most disadvantaged ethnic group within our society and suffer the worst statistics in areas of health, education, specific accommodation and employment: a situation which would not be acceptable for any group within the settled community. In order to continue to maximise the impact of our limited resource, it is important that the initiatives, networking and partnership approach already established are continued and extended where possible.</p> <p>The Traveller community are entitled by law to access all statutory services in an equitable fashion as enjoyed by the settled community and there is a responsibility on Councils to promote equality of opportunity and good relations under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998. BCC can demonstrate effective leadership in its approach to the needs of the Traveller community.</p>
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<p>3</p>	<p>Resource Implications</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>There are no additional resource implications over that agreed in budget estimates.</p>
<p>3.2</p>	<p>Asset and Other Implications: Note report and possible implications for the future which will be kept under review.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	The TLMU complies with the conditions as set out in Section 75 of the (NI) Act 1998 and actively promotes the same .
4.2	The TLMU was subject to Equality Screening and a full independent Equality Impact Assessment

5	Recommendations
5.1	Committee are asked to note the contents of the report

6	Decision Tracking
Further to Committees consideration of the report:	
Time line: April 2011 Reporting Officer: Catherine Taggart	

7	Key to Abbreviations
LGP : Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues	
NAGTO National Association of Gypsy and Traveller officers	
DSD : Dept for Social Development	
PSI : Promoting Social Inclusion	
AMT : An Munia Tober	
PSNI : Police Service of Northern Ireland	
ACT : Advisory Committee on Travellers	
DOE : Dept of the Environment	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1: TLO Brief Summary of Responsibilities	
Appendix 2: TLMU summary of achievements	

Appendix 1:

The Mission Statement:

To improve the quality of life of the Traveller community and strive to empower the Traveller community to take informed decisions that have a positive impact on their lives

Traveller Liaison Officer : Brief Summary of Responsibilities

- To be the Council's lead Officer on Traveller issues
- To maintain and update a data base on Traveller issues
- To respond to Traveller related publications
- Assist and advise all Council Departments on Traveller issues
- Provide assistance for Rate Payers on related matters
- Develop and present Traveller Awareness / Anti Racism Training both internally and externally
- Maintain Traveller Outreach Office
- Capacity building work with the Traveller community
- Be the Council's representative on all appropriate working groups
- Participate in Unit and Departmental Management teams
- Provide Committee Reports as and when required
- Represent BCC on the National Association of Gypsy and Traveller Officers (NAGTO)

Appendix 2: TLMU summary of achievements

The following is a summary note of the key BCC achievements in support of the needs of the Traveller community in the city:

- Key member of the Ministerial appointed Advisory Committee on Travellers
- TLMU developed a Traveller site programme for Belfast
- Promoting NI Traveller issues an national level via membership of NAGTO
- Instrumental in setting up the Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues
- In 1990 the Council provided and managed two temporary serviced Decanting Sites at Glen Road and Colin Glen which accommodated sixty families .
- By 1993 the Council's Site Provision Programme provided two 21pitch Permanent Serviced Sites and a 10 pitch Transit site at Glen Road Heights and Colin Glen Park
- Post 1994 the majority of Traveller families within the City had access to serviced pitch arrangements provided and managed by the Council .
- Established a successful Outreach Office on the Glen Road and continue to promote the Outreach Initiative to all key service providers and the Traveller community.
- Successful Big Lottery bid in 2006 which has provided a facility to promote a Traveller After Schools Project and other development projects managed by An Munia Tober and supported by Community Development officer.
- Successful high level challenge prior to the introduction of the 2003 Housing (NI) Bill which ensured the NIHE would be responsible for all Traveller accommodation including Traveller sites. Failure of the said challenge would have resulted in Councils' being responsible for the provision and management of all Traveller site requirements.
- A second successful high level challenge in 2010 with respect to the Reform of Public Administration which attempted to transfer all non permanent Traveller sites from the NIHE to District Councils. Again failure of this challenge would have had significant implications both financially and staffing for BCC and other Councils.
- Developed a series of Traveller Awareness / Anti racism Training Programmes which have been delivered both internally and also externally on request .
- Produced a DVD Training Prompt (Think Traveller) which has been distributed world wide on request with very positive feedback
- In partnership with BCC Community Safety Unit have established a Community Safety Traveller Group which has inter-agency input .
- Support for a young Traveller to join the Council's Youth Forum.

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	B-Team
Date:	16 March 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen Director of Development ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay Head of Economic Initiatives ext 3459

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Belfast City Council is the Lead Partner in the ERDF funded INTERREG IVC project B-Team.
1.2	The B-Team will bring together specialists in Brownfield regeneration from different countries to exchange knowledge contributing to improved developments and enhanced regional policies. The support and exchange of technical knowledge takes place during “Brownfield Days” events, while experiences will also be discussed and disseminated to a broader public in European Dissemination Events scheduled to take place at different stages during the life of the initiative.
1.3	The work programme for the project has progressed from the update provided to the October Committee with two Brownfield Days (Oulu/Finland and Torino/Italy) and one European Dissemination Event (Dresden/Germany) being completed and arrangements for the next stage of the programme agreed with the partners. This report seeks to secure approval for the attendance of Members at the next European Dissemination Event which is scheduled to take place in Debrecen/Hungary on the 19 th – 20 th April 2011.

2.0	Key Issues
2.1	The European Dissemination Events are scheduled to take place five times during the three year lifespan of the project. The project partners have the opportunity to broaden the participation at these dissemination events to encourage a wider audience and include political representation from each of the participating local authorities.
2.2	The dissemination event will seek to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress the practical process for identifying viable solutions to common Brownfield challenges (case studies will be presented with experts from different regions developing solutions or alternative approaches); - Explore the potential to use new unconventional methods (more innovative approaches successful in other countries are assessed for broader application); - Encourage engagement within the partnership to explore the potential for shared learning; - Identify the potential for more effective use of resources - time, money, assets (through improved policy and approaches to Brownfield regeneration future development processes can become more effective and sustainable); and - Explore the potential for the development of Brownfield pledges for adoption by the partnership as a means to secure future improvements in policy and practice.
2.3	The 2 nd European Dissemination Event (EDE) will take place in Debrecen, Hungary on 19/20 April 2011. As it coincides with the Hungarian EU Presidency the event programme will feature a significant level of political engagement from the local authority partner and up to the European level (Hungarian partners have secured speakers from their state departments).
2.4	This EDE presents the opportunity for the Council to contribute through both officer and political participation during the event. In seeking to address the regeneration challenges of redundant Brownfield sites the event focuses on some of the issues frequently encountered by the Development Committee. It is therefore suggested that participation by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Development Committee, or their nominees, would be appropriate at this event.

3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	The provision for the participation at the dissemination event of operational staff along with political representation is contained within the agreed project plan. There are no fees for the event and the costs for travel and accommodation is estimated at £350 per person which will be covered by the project. There are no additional resource implications arising from the EU funded INTERREG IVC initiative.

4.0	Good Relations and Equality Considerations
4.1	There are no equality or good relations considerations attached to this report.

5.0	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is asked to approve the attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair or their nominees, at the Debrecen Dissemination event on the 19 th and 20 th April 2011 as an approved duty.

	Decision Tracking
Further to approval the Chair and Deputy Chair or their nominees, will attend the Debrecen Dissemination event on the 19 th and 20 th April 2011 as an approved duty.	
Time line: May 2011 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay	

	Key to Abbreviations
ERDF – European Regional Development Fund EDE – European Dissemination Event	

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Cathedral Quarter Steering Group seeking Political Party Meetings
Date:	16 March 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that the Cathedral Quarter Steering Group (CQSG) set up in 2008 by the Department for Social Development (DSD) in conjunction with Belfast City Council (BCC), Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) and other stakeholders has produced a 5-year draft Development Plan (appendix 1) which was launched on the 10 March 2011.
1.2	Members will be aware that a formal response (appendix 2) on behalf of BCC has been issued to the CQSG.
1.3	As part of the formal consultation process launch on 10 March, the CQSG are seeking additional political party meetings.
1.4	The purpose of the additional meetings requested by the CQSG are to ensure that that all issues and suggestions raised by BCC are taken on board with priority given to a commitment to work across the city and be inclusive.

2	Resource Implications
2.1	<u>Human Resources</u> Staff resources will be minimal at this stage in the draft.
2.2	<u>Asset and Other Implications</u> Asset and other implications are captured in the formal response.

3	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
3.1	There are no equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

4	Recommendations
4.1	It is recommended that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development Committee approves CQSG request for political party meetings to seek further comment on the draft Cathedral Quarter Development Plan.

5	Decision Tracking
Time Frame: March 2011 – June 2011	Reporting Officer: Kerrie Sweeney

6	Abbreviations
BCC – Belfast City Council BCCM – Belfast City Centre Management CQSG – Cathedral Quarter Steering Group DSD – Department for Social Development	

7	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 - Cathedral Quarter Draft Development Plan Appendix 2 - Belfast City Council Formal Response	



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Site Visits Update
Date:	16 March 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>Members agreed at the Development Committee on 11 November 2009 to undertake a series of site visits to a number of strategically important sites across Belfast as part of an ongoing process of relationship building between Councillors and the local business community. The proposed site visits were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Belfast Harbour; – Stena Line; – George Best Belfast City Airport; – Belfast International Airport; – The Northern Ireland Science Park; and – The Painthall.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Out of the requested visits, only the visit to Belfast Harbour has been undertaken. Due to difficulties in securing appropriate dates and times, Officers were unable to schedule the remaining visits.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	No additional resource implications

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Given that the visits are now unlikely to take place during the current committee timeframe, it is recommended that Members agree that the series of site visits are postponed until the new Committee is in place.

6	Decision Tracking
There is no decision tracking attached to this report.	



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Annual Events Programme for 2010/11
Date:	9 March 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen Director of Development ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Tim Husbands, Head of City Events & Venues, ext 1400

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Over that last fifteen years Belfast City Council has developed an annual programme of events. The programme spans the calendar year from the annual St Patrick's Day concert and parade in the spring to the Christmas Lights concert in winter and includes major sporting events. The events in 2010 attracted over 250,000 people generating just under £6.5 million additional economic activity for Belfast. The annual budget to provide for and deliver these events is just below £1.39 million for the 2010/11 year (in 2011/12 this figure was £1.5 million). In 2010/11 the return on the Council's investment was just under £6.00 for every £1.00 The events have also attracted on average 7% of out-of-state visitors to the city, adding to the economic benefit of, and the vibrancy and cultural activity of Belfast. The programme also acted as an attraction to local citizens and rate payers, providing large-scale free public events to Belfast, with extensive positive media coverage, while receiving a public approval rating of nearly 90% for the entire year's programme of activities.
1.2	These figures do not include St Patrick's 2011, Christmas and MTV events from 2010 and are projected estimates based on previous event statistics

2	Key Issues
2.1	<u>Breakdown of Events Budget</u> Details of the events programme, which is primarily based around key public and celebratory holidays and incorporates major sporting events including the Belfast Marathon, is indicated in the table below. This table shows a breakdown of all Council expenditure related to each event and its associated funding streams, including provision for the Support for Sport programme and a level of contingency.

2.2	Members are asked to note that the Events budget, as part of the Development Department revenue estimates, was approved by Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and approved by Council in February 2011.		
Event & Date(s)	Additional Details	Cost	
Titanic 100 Festival 31 March – 31 May	This event would involve a series of exhibitions in City Hall and its grounds, with free entry to talks, tours and theatrical performances. The event will mark key Belfast anniversaries connected to the Titanic story including: the opening of the Thompson Dry Dock; Harland & Wolff's 150 th anniversary; the 101 st anniversary of the laying of Titanic's keel and the centenary of the launch of the ship on the 31 May 1911. The planned programme would have input from other Titanic locations in: Cobh, Co Cork, Cherbourg, Southampton and Liverpool.	£150,000	
Deep River Rock Belfast City Marathon 2 May	This would be the 30 th year of Ireland's biggest mass participation event, which attracts nearly 18,000 competitors. At the time of writing this report some 1,000 marathon entries have been received, an increase year on year on the same period.	£40,000	
Belfast Titanic Maritime Festival, 24 – 26 June	Over the last five years BCC has developed a free to access maritime event that celebrates Belfast's historical connections to the sea. The three day event brings together the modern and historical aspects of sailing – from high tech vessels to heritage class sailing vessels of the 19 th century. Up to 20 vessels including modern tall ships and operational naval craft will be moored on the quayside close to Belfast's city centre. Land based activities will include continental market, live music, a family fun zone and a range of maritime exhibits and stalls.	£230,000	
Lord Mayor's Belfast City Carnival 18 June	This event introduces the new Lord Mayor to the citizens of Belfast	£28,478	
Royal Opera House Live Site Broadcast, City Hall, June/July TBC	This event would be a repeat of previous live links to the Royal Opera House in London. The event would be financed by the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure as part of their funding to the BBC Live Site Screen. The event would also be subject to approval by the SP&R Committee.	No input from BCC	

	European Scottish Pipe Band Championship, 30 July	Committee approved the bidding for this event in 2009 and Belfast was successful in securing this prestigious event for a three year period (2010-2012). This one day event is anticipated to attract in the region of 12,000 spectators. However, the Championships will also be complemented with a music festival, financial provision for which is included in the above costs and run in conjunction with the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association.	£135,000
	British Transplant Games, 4 to 7 August	This event was approved by Council back in November 2008 and will attract in excess of 1,000 transplant athletes from across these islands.	£70,000
	MTV EMA and Music Week, Date TBC	This would see the staging of Europe's biggest music award night in Belfast. It would also involve a week of music related events to showcase Belfast	£120,000
	Belfast Autumn Fair, 17 & 18 September operated with BCC Parks & Leisure	This proposed event would be run in cooperation with BCC Parks & Leisure incorporating their traditional Autumn Flower Show. This event normally attracts an audience of 12,000 people.	£30,000
	Halloween Monster Mash, Sunday 30 October	Annually this event has attracted an audience in excess of 25,000 and in the last few years has been staged in Belfast Harbour and outside the Odyssey complex.	£132,000
	Christmas Switch-on and programme, from Saturday 19 November	<p>Anecdotally seen as the official start of the City's festive season this programme would be launched with the annual switch-on concert, on a similar basis to the event in 2010, which was successfully orientated towards the family audience.</p> <p>This programme includes costs for a schools carol service at the Belfast Waterfront (organised with the Belfast School of Music), live music in Belfast City centre and festive lighting at City Hall, taking into account the associated issues raised by Members at the Development Committee in January 2011. Entertainment for 2011 will be family focused and there will be a more participatory elements to the Councillors' post-switch on function.</p>	£138,000

	St Patrick's Day, 17 March 2012	This planned event encompasses a carnival parade and live concert to mark St Patrick's Day. Parade participants come from across the city with the event attracting out-of-city & out-of-state visitors.	£140,000
	Support for Sport funding	This is an annual programme of funding that sports clubs and sports event organisers can access. The programme is issued via a single tranche via public notices and is accessible via the Council's webpage.	£97,500
	Sail Training Funding	As in previous years it is proposed that this funding will be used in connection with Ocean Youth Trust to continue the work of enhancing young people's personal skills base via sailing activities. This process also allows BCC to continue its bidding process for bringing the Tall Ships back to Belfast (possible return date for this event would be 2015).	£20,000
	Event Economic Impact Surveys & Event Bidding	This proposed finance comprises the economic surveys undertaken for each event and additionally provides for an additional level contingency for the annual events programme	£40,000
	Cultural Olympiad & BBC Live Site Screen	Approved by Council back in April 2010, this project would see the operation of a 25 sq m LED screen in the grounds of City Hall. It is anticipated that this screen will be on line by the end of April/start of May 2011. BCC finance allocated is for maintenance, insurance and security costs. The Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure will allocate £30,000 for the programming of this space as part their commitment to the BBC Live Site Screen.	£20,000
			£1.39 million
2.3	<p><u>Committee Approval Process</u></p> <p>Members are requested to note that historically Council approval process for the programme of events is obtained in the Autumn. However, due to a delay in the Council confirming departmental budgetary levels, this report has been held until after last month's Council meeting regarding budgets.</p>		

3.	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u> The table above indicates the annual civic and sports events programme with individual associated events budgets. The total overall budget for this programme is £1.39 million. This is the annual budget for events run by the Council and part of the overall Departmental revenue estimates.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Human Resources</u> There are currently no additional staff requirements.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	There are no equality or good relations considerations attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
	<p>It is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members approve the annual civic and sports events programme as outlined in the report and it's associated funding.

6	Decision Tracking
<p>Further to approval, officers will monitor funding and evaluate the outcomes of all events and provide post-project details as part of the Department's annual review. These outcomes will be presented to Members as part of the City Events Unit key performance indicators.</p> <p>Timeline: March 2012 Reporting Officer: Gerry Copeland</p>	

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Community Chest: Easter programme
Date:	March 2011
Reporting Officer:	Cate Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525
Contact Officer:	Cate Taggart , Community Development Manager ext 3525

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Prince William and Kate Middleton are to marry at Westminster Abbey on 29 April 2011, which has been declared a bank holiday in celebration. A limited number of community organisations and Community Centre Committees have requested information in relation to opportunities for support for community activities to celebrate the Royal Wedding
1.2	In line with previous practice, we have agreed the use of BCC Community Centres as location for activities outside our normal opening hours with BCC absorbing related facility and staff costs.
1.3	The bulk of enquiries have come from local community organisations and have centred on access to small grant support. Some requests for financial support have also been received from Community Centre Committees.
1.4	In consultation with other services managing grant programmes there is no specific related planned activity other than a possible fund within the Peace III bonfire management programme. SEUPB are currently considering a request from the Good Relations Partnership to utilise under spend through the provision of up to £50,000 to existing groups on the Tackling Physical Manifestations Programme to develop local community events to mark the Royal Wedding and/or the impending Royal Visit. The maximum cost for each individual event would be up to £1,000.
1.5	Also the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit are opening a Community Festivals Fund which is subject to formal Letter of Offer from DCAL. The closing date for the first tranche of this annual fund is 23 rd March 2011. The total programme budget is £158,000 and allocations are normally spread evenly across each of

	<p>the 4 open calls. This is a highly competitive fund with applications in the main sponsored by well established community based arts organisations. Any application for funds in support of Royal Wedding celebration events would have to meet the programme's definition of a Festival:</p> <p><i>A Festival is a series of activities within a condensed time period of at least one day in length (i.e. 8-10 hours). Activities are usually different but related. A Festival is not one event scheduled over several days i.e. a series of similar events (e.g. one performance happening several times) nor is it a fundraising event, nor a commercial event.</i></p> <p><i>A community festival is a series of events with a common theme delivered within a defined time period. It is developed from within a community and should celebrate and positively promote what that community represents.</i></p> <p>1.6 The Big Lottery has confirmed there are no specific funding streams for this event. However, they were able to reference the more general funding streams which may be used for this event.</p> <p>1.7 Precedent exists within the service to respond to celebration events of this nature within our Community Chest small grant stream. This mechanism was used in support of local community activity related to the Golden Jubilee in 2002</p> <p>1.8 The Community Chest is a grant aid fund that is established periodically in response to particular initiatives. This grant stream was established to allow the service to subsidise specific community activity such as, for example, responding to European themed years or local /international events or seasonal celebrations particularly at Christmas. The nature of the activities that will be funded will be decided, at any specific time, by the priorities of council however the emphasis is on community activities which promote a sense of community spirit and involvement. Access to Community Chest funding has been confined to groups in receipt of service grant aid support. The grant aid policy indicates that limits will be set on the total amount of funding available and on the amount of funding available to individual groups. All applicants are required to submit an Community Chest application form and are subject to assessment against agreed criteria.</p>
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2	Key Issues
2.1	Officers have identified a number of potential responses for consideration.
2.2	<u>Option 1</u> : Limit our resource support to the use of BCC Community Centres and indicate there is no available related BCC grant support. Officers would sign post organisations to the Big Lottery and other funding streams as appropriate.
2.3	<u>Option 2</u> : Do above but also set aside a limited budget within the 2011/12 service small grant allocation for community activity during the Easter week. This would include proposed events to celebrate the Royal Wedding but would not be limited. Officers propose the Easter seasonal fund should be managed in line with the agreed Community Chest process whereby there is no open call for applications, rather, correspondence is issued to all current grant recipients advising them of the opportunity to access small grant support up to a maximum of £200.

	<p>Correspondence would include the short community chest application form with details of eligible activity and indicate priority will be given to programmes where the emphasis is on community activities which promote a sense of community spirit and involvement. It would also include details of any related monitoring requirements which would be designed commensurate to the level of grant support.</p>
2.4	<p><u>Option 3:</u> Alongside option 1, set aside a limited budget within the 2011/12 service small grant allocation and invite applications from local community groups via public advertisement.</p> <p>Indicate the maximum likely grant size (£200) and outline eligible activity and criteria for consideration as Option 2 above. Successful applicants would also be subject to commensurate monitoring requirements.</p>
2.5	<p>Given the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited level of interest which however does include community centre committees, community organisations and elected members • Limited timeframe in which to manage any competitive call • Limited total grant budget • Officers can sign post groups not currently in receipt of service grant support to the Big Lottery fund or if agreed the Peace III Tackling Physical Manifestations Programme <p>Officers recommend Option 2. All applications would be assessed under current criteria and allocations made within delegated authority permissions. Officers suggest that committee may wish to extend eligibility to requests from Community Centre Committees.</p>
2.6	<p>If approved, officers across all funding streams will share applicant information during the assessment process.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p>From agreed grant budget stream 2011/12. In order to ensure sufficient resources for other grant categories, officers would suggest an upper allocation limit of £20,000 based on a maximum individual grant of £200.</p>
3.2	<p>DSD have not yet advised councils of levels of funding under their Community Support Programme. The draft BCC Community Service Grant Aid Programme 2011/12 has been developed to reflect the 2010/11 level of support and the BCC grant match has been included in the revenue estimates for the Service.</p>
3.3	<p>Staff resources would be allocated from within existing teams, however, depending on the level of interest, Option 3 would be resource intensive particularly given the obvious time constraints.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	<p>Any available resources would be open to all organisations defined by the preferred option.</p>

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>Committee are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Support the use of the Community Chest grant stream to subsidize specific community activity during the Easter period. The grant would be made available to community and voluntary groups, including community centre committees, wishing to organise small-scale events which would be assessed against existing criteria. Applications can include, but would not be limited to, activity to celebrate the Royal Wedding. ii. Agree £20,000 as the total amount of funding available and limit the amount of funding available to individual groups to £200 iii. Note that application approvals and related payments will be authorised by the Director of Development in accordance with the authority delegated to him.

6	Decision Tracking
Cate Taggart will action decision April 2011	

7	Key to Abbreviations
NRP Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix1 – Guidelines for Applicants	

Appendix 1: Guidelines

1. The funding made available will be on the basis that the celebration activity should be seen as an inclusive occasion and should be accessible to all who wish to celebrate.
2. It should support the Council's aim to promote and support the cultural diversity of the City.
3. The funding is for small-scale local community events or activities during Easter which promote a sense of community spirit and involvement.
4. Applications can include, but are not limited to, activity to celebrate the Royal Wedding.
5. Any proposal must represent value for money.
6. Groups receiving funding must¹:
 - be non-profit making organisations/groups;
 - enclose copies of their valid Constitution or set of rules;
 - have a bank or building society account, in the name of the group, which requires at least two (unrelated) signatures on each cheque or withdrawal;
 - enclose copies of the most recent annual accounts or formal statements of income and expenditure. These must be audited or signed as approved by an office bearer;
 - enclose a copy of their child protection policy and follow our child-protection guidelines if working with children and young people;
 - make sure that the project has enough insurance cover (we are not responsible for providing insurance for or claims which arise from grant-aided projects);
 - provide a budget report outlining expenditure, and
 - agree to provide a short report on how the funding has been used and applied to the work of the group.
7. Events or projects should be organised in the month of April 2011.
8. Grant aid will not be available for activities which are party-political in intention, use or presentation.
9. Travel costs will not be available for projects outside Ireland or the United Kingdom.

¹ Where the information in relation to point 6 is already assessed and/or held on file, groups will not be asked to resubmit

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