



Belfast
City Council

Equality Action Plan 2021-24

We are committed to making sure that our services and information are available to all parts of the community. If you need this information in an alternative format or language, please contact us at:

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What is the Equality Action Plan?

This Equality Action Plan runs from 2021 until 2024, it is a corporate level document which outlines how we will promote equality and diversity in our ambitions to create a city in which people love to live, learn, invest, work and visit. It also contributes to our compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

What other documents is the Equality Action Plan linked to?

1. The Equality Action Plan is developed from some of the information in the **Audit of Inequalities**, which is a systematic approach to identify inequalities, across the nine Section 75 categories (religious belief, political opinion, race, age, gender, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, people with dependants or without), which are relevant to a public authority's functions.
2. The Equality Action Plan contains some of the key priorities from our Corporate Plan, which will have the biggest impact on inequalities. Our Corporate Plan is a reflection of what people in Belfast have told us they want and the type of leadership they feel the city needs. It takes the priorities of the Belfast Agenda, the Community Plan, and sets out the ways in which the council will deliver these to grow a sustainable, inclusive economy and equitable society. To fulfil our responsibilities, our Corporate Plan not only ensures we deliver the day to day services which the people of Belfast rely upon; we stretch ourselves through a series of strategic priorities to ensure we positively affect the lives of everyone in Belfast

How are the actions in the Equality Action Plan categorised?

Actions are categorised according to the Corporate Plan priority they contribute to. Each action includes a timescale for delivery, a performance indicator and the name of the department responsible for delivery. We will report on these actions annually.

1. Growing an inclusive economy

We will work to create an inclusive, resilient economy through creating good, sustainable jobs.

A thriving urban economy is a key foundation to achieving many of the outcomes in the Belfast Agenda. Not only can a successful economy generate the wealth required to grow local businesses, generate jobs and offer routes out of poverty for struggling families, it is also the main source of revenue for the city's public services, programmes and interventions.

Ref No	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator	Departmental Responsibility	Update/ Progress
1.1	Access to Employment work package - Deliver employment academies in sectors focused on workforce demand (Logistics, Social Care, Child Care, Public Sector), removing barriers to people furthest removed from the labour market to enter into or return to employment and/or advance in employment. (Annual programme)	2021-24	Percentage participating in Employment Academies. Percentage into employment (NB reviewed at key checkpoints within the year as the state of play within the labour market becomes clearer)	Place & Economy	Employment Academies helps Belfast residents to get jobs or move up the ladder to a better job. Academies help employers with their recruitment needs and sectors focus on workforce demand for example (Transport and Logistics, Child Care, Health and Social Care). Tailored training is provided for groups of up to 15 people, over a two-week period or longer. Qualifications are provided from Levels 1-5. Barriers are removed for participants attending training (by providing out of pocket expenses such as childcare and travel) and additional language support is provided for those where English is not their first language or where reasonable adjustments are made for people with

				<p>disabilities. To maximise participation across the city and promote opportunity, Employment Academies are widely advertised, and strong relationships are built among Section 75 groups and their clients.</p> <p>Since April 2021, 816 people participated in Employment Academies (with an into-employment rate of 75% for those successfully completing) in sectors ranging from logistics, driving instruction, public sector bus driving, construction, business admin, social care, health care, construction, leisure, utilities and childcare/ playwork. This significantly exceeded previous annual performance due to the additional resources provided via LMP and the level of demand across the labour market.</p> <p>Figures are broken down as follows: 454 people completed academy training, 342 people secured employment, representing an into-work rate of 75%. Of the 307 people still going through an academy, 110 are already in work and are receiving support, qualifications or licences needed to access a better job. These include Level 3-5</p>
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					<p>qualifications (e.g., in childcare sector, allowing staff to move to supervisory and management roles) and lorry vehicle licences for Council staff to progress to better-paid driving roles. This support has successfully removed barriers to people furthest removed from the labour market to enter or return to employment and/or advance in employment.</p>
1.2	<p>Support five training and skills development projects via the European Social Fund (in partnership with TEO), targeting those who are long-term unemployed, younger people not in education, employment or training and people with disabilities.</p>	2021-24	No. of participants achieving positive outcomes	Place & Economy	<p>As part of the Council's efforts to support the long-term unemployed and economically inactive to enter the labour market, the council provided match funding to four European Social Fund (ESF) projects. Programmes help key target groups (long-term unemployed, economically inactive, young people not in education, employment or training, lone parents, and disabled people) to develop their skills and get a job or become self-employed. Belfast's economic inactivity rate sits at 30.1 per cent and the primary reason is disability and sickness (especially among males). There a high unemployment rate among younger people and the labour market participation rate of people over 50 is lower than the average in the UK.</p>

					Since April 2021, 1,993 people were engaged in training and skills development projects, of which 1,683 started work: 89.8% successfully gained employment.
1.3	Develop a GIS (Geographic Information System) monitoring approach to systematically assist programme development to continue to tackle inequalities in access to the labour market.	2021-24	Effective monitoring mechanism established to better understand inequalities, and the needs of S75 groupings. / Improve quality and quantity of monitoring information to support policy making on Employability and Skills (retrospective measure)	Place & Economy	This project is part of collaborative work between Belfast City Council and Queen's University; to be able to track geospatial participation on Employability & Skills (E&S) interventions. Officers are currently embedding the tracking of section 75 and Inclusive Growth priority groups within the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) developed for E&S.
1.4	Working with partners and stakeholders across the city to put in place an (enterprise framework) action plan which supports long term ambitions to increase the number of business start-ups, including targeting workless residents, females and young people - and any under-represented groups	2021-24	Increase in % participants from under-represented groups on enterprise awareness initiatives. / No. of business starts.	Place & Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged 873 individuals through awareness supporting them to progress to start a business. We continue to extend our reach to engage those individuals who are underrepresented in terms of entrepreneurship, providing them with support to overcome barriers to take positive steps to starting a business. For example, we engaged with 143 females providing them with mentoring and access to networks in partnership with Women in Business, we

					<p>supported 41 individuals who were economically inactive and 50 students and graduates accessed support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 731 individuals engaged in business start-up activity, 514 of those developed a business plan through the 'Go For It' programme, supporting the creation of 311 jobs.• We provided additional support to 75 individuals through 1-1 mentoring and access to incentives of £1,500 to help kick start their business.• We also enabled test trading opportunities for 49 new businesses through our dedicated start up space at St George's Market. <p>Through our support for social enterprises and cooperatives we have engaged 48 individuals and organisations to start a new enterprise, 606 individuals attended awareness raising events. We have been developing our outreach and engagement to increase awareness of the Social Enterprises and Co-operatives sector and delivered two</p>
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					<p>pilot projects for youth to explore social economy: one project is delivered through schools and one through community groups. The school's youth pilot began in December 2021 with 4 schools recruited city wide and the community pilot began in March 2022 with 5 community groups recruited (North/East/West), a total of 94 young people have been engaged through these programmes.</p>
1.5	<p>Understand the barrier to employment to support employability skills and capacity building programme for disabled people and those from ethnic minority groups.</p>	2021-22	<p>Use insights to inform programme design</p>	Place & Economy	<p>A strategic assessment, carried out in 2021 to establish the Belfast Labour Market Partnership identified a number of key groups that were under-represented in the labour market or that faced significant barriers to finding work. These groups include (among others) those with a disability, justice system leavers, older people, lone parents, those living with health issues (including mental health), ethnic minorities. Likewise, the research identified that there are specific parts of the city where levels of Long-term Unemployment and economic inactivity are more than twice the city average. Government programmes over many years have tried different approaches to support</p>

					<p>these groups. We propose to explore some new models that are either target group-based and/or location-based in order to support incremental improvements in employment outcomes among the target populations.</p> <p>As part of the Belfast LMP Action Plan, officers will be scoping appropriate interventions and programmes using a place-based and people-based approach.</p>
1.6	Deliver the Access and Inclusion Programme of capital enhancement projects to encourage engagement with culture, arts, and heritage experiences (subject to funding)	2021-24	Number of small capital enhancement projects delivered	Place & Economy	<p>Five Access and Inclusion projects were supported during 2021/22.</p> <p>The council administered the Department for Communities' Access and Inclusion Programme. This Programme supports small-scale capital investments of up to £30,000 and acts to promote a more inclusive society so that physical barriers are removed that allow disabled people to participate more fully in arts, cultural and active recreation activities. The Council managed the 21/22 Access and Inclusion Programme within Belfast and received support for five projects with total value of £90,520. These have included capital improvements for accessible</p>

					entrance and frontage to buildings, Changing Places toilet facilities, mobility impaired / wheelchair friendly doors and accessibility for hearing and visually impaired people.
1.7	Develop schemes to support higher participation and representation at cultural events by disabled people such as gig buddies	2021-24	No. of events supported by Gig Buddies	Place & Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high-profile launch event was held in December 2021. • Two safeguarding training events were held. • Research and engagement was undertaken with venue providers. • A recruitment and interview process was established for volunteers. • Recruitment and meetings were held with participants to better understand their needs and make successful matches between disabled people and volunteers, based on shared interests. <p>The first Gig Buddies Social held in Black Box in April 2021.</p>
1.8	Deliver A City Imagining projects targeting LGBTQ+ groups, ethnic minority and newcomer communities, disabled people,	2021-24	No. of participants	Place & Economy	A scoping report was completed on LGBTQIA+ cultural profile and needs which has led to support for a co-designed study and report around next steps. A partnership

	older people, schools and multi-lingual communities				agreement was developed with Black Box to deliver Gig Buddies and plans have been developed to work with University of Atypical on ensuring participation and profile of disabled people. A further partnership agreement was developed with Thrive to continue their work on an Audience Panel for the city. Contribution to core funding to 56 Belfast based cultural organisations has been made to deliver year-round engagement and public programmes with a wide range of communities which includes all the targeted groups.
1.9	Development, publication and full public consultation of draft Social Value Policy	2021-22	Publication of finalised policy and guidance	Cross - departmental	<p>CNS: We will implement any Corporate approaches to this action within the CNS Department.</p> <p>The Council has developed a social value toolkit tailored to our needs – it is based on lessons learnt from elsewhere and best practice, along with local learning from approaches such as the ‘Buy Social’ model. Importantly, it is broader and more progressive than our ‘as is’ approach. We believe that our approach will offer greater potential to deliver social and environmental</p>

					<p>benefits. In developing the Toolkit, we have built on the good practices already established in our procurement processes to support and develop our local supply base by ensuring improved awareness of opportunities, advice and guidance and removal of any barriers to tender. Further details available at Social Value Procurement Policy (belfastcity.gov.uk)</p> <p>COS: Social Value Policy is now live.</p>
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2. Working and learning

BCC will work to ensure people are appropriately skilled for the jobs created in the city.

Education is the foundation for a better life, not only in facilitating future employment and providing access to a fulfilling adult life, but also as a major contributor to a person's wellbeing and to shaping lifelong health. Working with our partners, we will bring forward a work programme which supports the inclusive growth ambitions of the Council with a focus on addressing barriers to progression

Ref No	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator	Departmental Responsibility	Update/ Progress
2.1	Focus on young people by delivering the Youth Support Programme targeting young people between 14- 24 years at risk or disengaged from formal education or training/employment.	2021-24	Percentage participating in positive outcomes in education, training and employment	Place & Economy	166 young people were supported who either already have or are at risk of dropping out of the education system, employment or training through our Youth Support Programme which exceeds the annual target of 160. Officers have ensured that this programme operates in tandem with the Education Welfare Service which are the primary referral source for the Youth Support Programme. Of those young people who complete the Youth Support Programme in 2021, 55% have progressed into positive outcomes such as employment and further education/training.

3. Living here

Our city and neighbourhoods are vibrant, resilient, and safe places where people choose to live, work, and spend time being healthier and more active.

In our recent residents' survey, 86% of respondents were satisfied with Belfast as a place to live. We want everyone to be satisfied. We want to deliver a high quality of life for everyone. In doing so, we must deliver and plan effective public spaces and conserve our natural environment so it can be accessed and enjoyed.

Ref No	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator	Departmental Responsibility	Update/ Progress
3.1	Deliver the Age-friendly Belfast Plan 2018-2021 assess achievements, identify challenges and develop a new Age-friendly Belfast plan 2022-2025	2021	Measure outcomes framework, consult with older people and stakeholder, review baseline information; 2022 develop new plan and begin to deliver	City & Neighbourhood Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed actions in current Age Friendly Belfast Plan and continued with recovery priorities • Reviewed current plan- commissioned Eos Community Consulting CIC to develop a revised baseline report, an impact report with key stakeholders and to co-ordinate a consultation process • Consulted Greater Belfast Seniors Forum on key issues and best ways to consult with older people during the pandemic • Held a number consultation events. (face to face, virtual and postcards) with older people and partners • Linked to other Belfast and regional strategies e.g., refreshed Belfast Agenda

					<p>and co-designing the new regional Active Ageing Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Age Friendly Belfast Plan 2022-2026 to go to public consultation June 2022 and be launched October 2022.
3.2	Finalise and implement the Belfast Open Spaces Strategy	2021	To be determined as part of the action plan development.	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>The Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS) was agreed at the June People & Communities committee where members were informed of the localised delivery plans and how this work would be progressed through the Area Working Groups.</p> <p>A draft delivery plan is being drafted and finalised internally. It is planned that we will be in a position to the consultation with stakeholders in the second half of 2022/23.</p>
3.3	Develop a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy	2021	To be determined as part of the action plan development.	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>This work has been delayed due to Covid. We have however now agreed the approach including revised timeline, governance structure for the project and the draft specification to engage external consultancy support to support the team. We are keen to move to procurement this month, and post public consultation, equality screening and RNA, finalise the strategy by April 2023.</p>

3.4	Implement the programme of development of playgrounds across the city to further improve accessibility (following consultation with disability groups in early 2021).	2021	To be determined following consultation with disability groups.	City & Neighbourhood Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ormeau Park (Park Road) playground was completed in early March 2022, it's the most accessible facility delivered to date under PIP. • Cavehill playground (senior zone) was delayed but is expected to be complete by mid-June 2022, unfortunately due to the challenging topography at Cavehill the two new senior items are not accessible/inclusive • Clarawood Park playground (junior zone) is due to start early June 2022 and will incorporate more inclusive equipment, it is due for completion by the end of July 2022. <p>PIP is an annual programme that has been running now for 11 years, each year we endeavour to make selected playgrounds more accessible and inclusive by using equipment from our corporate supply contract, as noted before over 60% of the equipment available is deemed as inclusive. We also undertake civils works to ensure entrances, surfacing and circulation spaces are also accessible, this goes beyond replacement of equipment.</p>
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					<p>We are now seeking committee approval for PIP 2022-23, site selection is again based on a suite of annual quality inspections, undertaken by an external consultant.</p> <p>We were unable to undertake the consultation exercise with disability groups due to Covid restrictions. We plan to undertake this consultation the second half of 2022/23.</p>
3.5	Achieve Onus Safe City status and retain platinum-level status	2021	Re-accreditation of Onus Workplace Charter- Platinum level / Safe City Status Achieved	Cross – departmental	<p>The Council was awarded Onus Safe City Charter status on 2nd February 2021. <u>Agenda item - Safe City Charter Status (belfastcity.gov.uk)</u> and retained Platinum Status- Onus Charter</p> <p>Ongoing support for the Raise Your Voice Project to help address misogyny, sexual harassment, and violence e.g., as part of IWD activity a ‘male only’ sexual harassment awareness session was delivered; funding of external domestic violence training to raise awareness in the city.</p>

Ref No	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator	Departmental Responsibility	Update/ Progress
3.6	Review and implement the council's Toilet Provision Strategy to improve the accessibility of toilets and maintain and promote the Changing Places toilet facility	2021-24	Report on the review of existing process and the number of stakeholder organisations engaged for 19/20. Increase in choice of available Changing Places facilities across the city over the next 24 months.	City & Neighbourhood Services	This has not commenced, (although the time scale is 2021-24) as there has been internal discussion as to the cross departmental nature of the requirements. The CGIS action plan provides a framework to take some of this work forward.
3.7	Development of the new crematorium and our intention to acquire additional burial land, particularly for the north and west of the city.	These are medium to long term projects and time scales will be determined as the projects are developed	To be determined as the projects develop.	City & Neighbourhood Services	The planning application for the new crematorium has been submitted to Lisburn City & Castlereagh Borough Council. Two additional burial sites located at Dundrod and Moira are being investigated for suitability.
3.8	Develop a co-design approach to engage communities in Social & Community Recovery planning.	To be determined as the approach is developed	To be determined as the approach is developed.	City & Neighbourhood Services	Council continued to work closely with the area-based Strategic and Thematic Partners identified at the start of the pandemic during the recovery phase to identify and meet emerging needs.

					<p>Work aligned with the key priority actions also continued to be progressed under the leadership and guidance of the Boards under community planning and the VCSE Panel.</p> <p>Council also continued to administer a range of grants schemes and funding opportunities supporting communities and businesses to recover services, programmes and activities during the recovery phase.</p>
3.9	Cultural mapping and understanding barriers (research and engagement) to support the delivery of capacity building programme (with tailored strands inc S75)	2021-24	Publish research document	Place & Economy	<p>A cultural mapping of the city was completed including an infrastructure audit which will be published in the summer 2022. This Stage One report and is being developed in partnership with the Department for Communities. It focuses on venues, public spaces and infrastructure where culture and sports take place across the city. There are plans to present this research to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee by autumn 2022.</p> <p>The Stage Two report will be commissioned during 2022/23 and will focus on studying the soft infrastructure (cultural activity) that</p>

					takes place across the city. Together these studies will inform an online resource (for example, Dublin City Council's Culture Near You project) which shows people what activities and facilities are near them in the city, thus promoting access and participation.
3.10	Create an Audience Panel that contains a range of voices including those underrepresented in cultural engagement (proactively recruit those whose voices are not heard as often)	2021-24	4 focus group meetings held with Audience Panel per annum	Place & Economy	<p>A toolkit has been developed and is in draft form with a view to further revision, incorporating any changes arising from the pandemic. During 2021/22, the toolkit was developed using a co-design framework (a summary version was also created).</p> <p>Alongside the cultural mapping research, it will be presented to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee when completed.</p> <p>Engagement projects included LGBTQ+ research and the design of a subsequent action plan, Gig Buddies partner programme, support for BAME to grow audience and participants with different target audiences/participants.</p>

3.11	<p>To develop and deliver the next phases of the City Centre Connectivity Study (CCCS) ie to create a green, walkable, cyclable network of connected streets and places will improve the health and wellbeing for all, revitalise the city's economy and restore a sense of collective pride in the centre of Belfast among the communities within and around it.</p>	2021-24	<p>To be determined as part of the development of the next phases of the Study, which will include public consultation and Equality Screening exercise.</p>	Place & Economy	<p>The Bolder Vision Strategy and Action Plan are progressing, with the Public Consultation complete in January 2022, and a number of Ministerial engagements through quarter four to gain collaborative agreement on the emerging Key Moves within the strategy. It is proposed that the draft Strategy and Action Plan will be presented to City Growth and Regeneration Committee in summer 2022 and the final version will be presented in November following a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) consultation. DfC will carry out EQIAs on their own projects, as will DfI. Once BCC projects have been identified and agreed in respect of a ABV Action Plan, they will then be taken through the corporately agreed development processes. Work remains ongoing to finalise a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council, Department for Infrastructure and Department for Communities to bring forward an integrated approach to capital scheme delivery and prioritisation/attraction of funding in line with the Bolder Vision.</p>
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4. Cross-cutting

Our cross-cutting priorities will have a multitude of social, economic, and environmental benefits for the city.

These priorities include once in a lifetime opportunities to fundamentally change the city, culturally, physically and economically and help achieve the big ambitions of the Belfast Agenda.

Ref No	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator	Departmental Responsibility	Update/ Progress
4.1	Design, implement and pilot an Inclusive Growth Decisions Making Framework	2021-24	The BCC inclusive growth decision-making framework is agreed and rolled out.	City & Organisational Strategy	The Inclusive Growth Decision Making Framework is currently being updated to simplify the process to make it easier to embed across the organisation and to reflect the updated cohorts information following Covid 19. The new framework is anticipated to be completed by end August 22 and then will be piloted in two projects/programmes of work and any further change made on feedback received by Dec 22.
4.2	Co-design an Inclusive Growth City Charter in collaboration with our city partners which encourages/ offers recognition for those organisations who adopt business practices as employers, procurers or in	2021-24	A draft charter is finalised and publicly consulted on by April 2021. / A final charter programme is launched, and a range of businesses sign up by April 2022. / The charter actions/initiatives acknowledge the additional barriers many groups of citizens	City & Organisational Strategy	A final draft Charter has been agreed but it was decided that the formal public consultation should not take place until internal resources were agreed to take this forward to implementation with the appropriate support in place to meet our desired aims/objectives. At June SP&R 22 these resources were agreed.

	the delivery of services which have been proven to create more inclusive economic growth		face in employment and are designed to mitigate against these barriers. / A number of city partners/employers adopt more inclusive growth business practices. / There is an increase of awareness around the benefits of inclusive growth business practices amongst employers across Belfast, with sharing of best practice. / Economic growth opportunities across the city are more accessible to all residents.		The final stage of consultation and engagement is planned for September to October and an anticipated launch/pilot for March 23.
4.3	Design and deliver the Shared Spaces programme	2022-23	Delivery of physical programme under the PIV Shared Spaces and Services Theme	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>Support provided for delivery of the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 volunteer training projects, with the aim of training 60 local people (15 on each project) as volunteer, Walk & Cycle Leads, Local Ambassadors and Nature Guides. • Engagement with 300 local people and through facilitated discussions, gather local stories, memories and history, for drafting into narratives for inclusion on 17

					<p>information panels along the 12 km Greenway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of a suitable governance model/s for the long-term goal of establishing the community led, cross community management of Forth Meadow Community Greenway.• A youth engagement & civic education project that will engage with a minimum of 400 young people, on a cross community basis, in programmes of activity that focus on civic education and contribute to sharing, mediation and anti-sectarianism/ racism. <p>Co-ordination of a programme of 20 public activities / events that brings people together on a cross community basis. The events aim to positively promoting the Forth Meadow Community Greenway to all the communities along its network of footpaths, cycle paths, parks and shared open spaces, doing justice to its good relations goals and the ethos of being Welcoming, Accessible, of Good quality and Safe.</p>
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					<p>Consultation on the usage and governance model for Forth Meadow Community Greenway (FMCG) involved liaising with the Disability Forum and other minority groups.</p>
4.4	<p>Build relationships across communities to increase confidence using and developing shared spaces and services</p>	2021-24	<p>% increase in the no of participants who feel safe attending event, activities, and facilities in areas associated with a different background.</p>	<p>City & Neighbourhood Services</p>	<p>Preliminary impact analysis of the SSS project indicate participants feel fairly more positive that open spaces are safe and welcoming to people from all communities. A moderate positive change 0.95).</p> <p>Feedback from a recent event in Springfield Dam (Luminate) attracted 37% of people who had not used the space before. 98% of attendees stated they would attend another Forth Meadow event which indicates that people feel safe using the space.</p> <p>On completion of training, the SSS Volunteers will be able to lead on walks, cycles and nature walks, with groups / individuals from the communities along Forth Meadow Community Greenway (FMCG), encourage people to move beyond their communities and local areas.</p> <p>Positive experiences through these activities will contribute to making people feel safe to</p>

					<p>attend / participate in similar events / activities and to move beyond their own communities and into one of a different background.</p> <p>Through the support of public activities / events and youth workshops, in different sites / communities along FMCG, and providing a positive experience, people will be encouraged to go beyond their communities and local areas to attend and will feel confident and safe to do so, especially in within a community perceived to be of a different cultural / ethnic / community background.</p>
4.5	Help address issues of demarcation and division including flags, murals and other symbols	2021-24	Delivery of actions within BCC Good Relations Plan working towards a Shared City vision.	City & Neighbourhood Services	All programmes within the Council's District Council's Good Relations Action Plan were delivered as planned. One particular intervention saw the creation of a new mural on the Ravenhill Road in East Belfast. This project sought to support the community to place an international world cultures mural on a wall as a response from a threat from a local paramilitary organisation to place a paramilitary mural on the same wall.

4.6	Design and deliver the Interfaces programme	2021-24	<p>% increase in the no of participants who feel safe attending event, activities, and facilities in areas associated with a different background. / Contributions towards physical works and programming that encourage attitudinal change and an even greater sense of belonging and social value.</p>	Cross - departmental	<p>A number of projects and events were supported within interfaces through the Good Relations Action Plan 21/22. These included projects focussing on dialogue, workshops on good relations issues and projects which supported women and young people involved in peacebuilding.</p>
4.7	Encourage a re-imagining of the cultural significance of upcoming commemorations under the Decade of Centenaries	2022-23	<p>Development of a Decade of Centenaries Programme based on the DOC principles on Shared perspectives. / % increase in the number of participants who feel comfortable socialising in a shared space they would not normally visit</p>	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>The full programme agreed at Council for 2021/22 was delivered and completed via a mixture of in-person and online activities. This performance indicator is somewhat irrelevant as a result of delivering virtual events. Some sample evaluation reports are enclosed and more can be made available on request.</p> <p><u>BCC Centenary Event Evaluation Report - 26 Mar 2021</u></p> <p><u>Evaluation Report - DOC Webinar - 24 Nov 2021</u></p>

4.8	Encourage cultural expression to be celebrated and undertaken within a culture of lawfulness	2021-24	% increase in the number of participants who think the culture and traditions of Catholics, Protestants and minority ethnic people add to the richness of and diversity of Northern Ireland society.	City & Neighbourhood Services	<p>We run a programme of ongoing DiverseCity initiatives to proudly celebrate and share our city stories of diversity.</p> <p>We use commemorations and themed events: including Refugee Week, Black History Month, Holocaust Memorial Day, Good Relations Week, International Day of Peace, International Mother Language Day, to organize civic events and promote messaging around inclusion and use them as an opportunity to promote contact and foster good relations between Communities</p>
4.9	Development, publication and full public consultation of draft Local Policies Plan (LPP) [to include an Equality Impact Assessment, as well as a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Appraisal and a Rural Needs Impact Assessment]	2021-23	Publication of finalised policies following independent examination	Place & Economy	Draft Plan Strategy has been found to be 'sound', subject to some modifications. Public consultation on strategic modification ongoing and anticipated Plan Strategy adoption autumn 2022. Following that, work will continue on LPP, including public consultation likely in 2023. EQIA/RNIA ongoing throughout.
4.10	Development, publication and full public consultation on	2021-23	Publication of finalised range of SPG policies	Place & Economy	Priority draft SPG (covering 17 policy themes) public consultation May-August

	Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) topic areas				2022. Likely finalisation of SPG autumn 2022 in tandem with adoption of Plan Strategy.
4.11	Build the capacity of disengaged and marginalised citizens and community leaders and changemakers to engage	2021-23	No. of engagement projects undertaken in collaboration with pre-engagement through the VCSE panel	City & Organisational Strategy	<p>2021-22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Belfast Agenda workshops • Issued 3 VCSE newsletters and also notified VCSE panel of relevant council consultations • VCSE Panel – involved in and co-chaired the Belfast Agenda engagement co-design group • 7 meetings of the co-design group • 2 Belfast Agenda briefings • VCSE reps on 14 BA working groups <p>The VCSE panel (VCSE Sectoral Advisory Panel) was not designed specifically for this purpose but rather to enhance the third sector's involvement in the city's community planning process. Establishing the VCSE Panel builds the capacity of the sector to engage and, by extension, helps widen participation and civic voice, particularly as many of our VCSE Network members represent people or communities who are</p>

				<p>disengaged and marginalised. Measuring the number of engagements through the VCSE panel is not a true reflection of the role of the Panel. Furthermore, due to the nature of engagements it is not be possible to compare year on year. For example, this past year, the VCSE Panel played a key role in helping to design the engagement associated with the refresh of the Belfast Agenda. This is a significant and ongoing engagement, with Panel members actively involved in the co-design group and in each of the 14 action-planning working groups, in addition to the public workshops.</p> <p>The Belfast Agenda refresh formally commenced in June 2021; however, the engagement and development process will continue into 2022-23. Recognising the VCSE Panel's unique role within community engagement, we established a co-design subgroup that was co-chaired by council and the chair of the VCSE Panel to develop and oversee the Belfast Agenda refresh engagement process. The co-design group met on 7 occasions and helped lead 6 public workshops (online due to covid).</p>
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					<p>In 2021, we created a dedicated hub for the VCSE sector on our Your Say Belfast platform, which we use to coordinate thematic workshops and provide newsletter updates. We have continued to develop the role of the Panel and also grow the VCSE Citywide Network in collaboration with Stratagem, an independent partner procured to support the Panel.</p> <p>As at 31 March 2022, we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 217 third sector participants registered on Your Say Belfast. • held a bespoke workshop with VCSE organisations working in the area of health and wellbeing <p>held 2 annual VCSE Community Conferences with the most recent focusing on 'Enabling Change: People and Communities at the heart of Community Planning' with 90 attendees.</p>
4.12	Produce a consultation and engagement toolkit for officers and provide ongoing advice and capacity building	2021-24	% of residents who agree that council consults with and listens to the views of local residents (survey in 2021 and 2023	City & Organisational Strategy	A new, wider engagement platform was launched in December 2020. Since then, we have trained over 100 officers and developed a new training manual (led by Digital

					<p>Services) for the new platform. We have created guidance notes and checklists to ensure consistent practice and facilitated training on GDPR. Consultation leads have been established in each Department.</p> <p>An introductory video on consultation and engagement has been developed and uploaded to interlink. The strategy unit continues to provide advice and guidance to services as required.</p>
4.13	Work with community planning partners to improve how data is accessed and utilised to ensure the Belfast Agenda process understands and takes action to address inequalities	2021-24	Belfast Agenda Dashboard updated. / Consultation and engagement gives all people equal opportunity to participate	City & Organisational Strategy	This work is temporarily on hold pending the outcome of the Belfast Agenda refresh. It is intended that a new data platform will be launched following the approval in the refreshed Belfast Agenda that will provide live data updates against the measurements identified in the Belfast Agenda.
4.14	Promoting Inclusive Growth (IG) through the Belfast Region City Deal Action 1 (over 10 years) Develop clear and robust arrangements to monitor how well actions to promote IG through the BRCD are delivering. This	2021-24	Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements in place and communicated to partners	Finance & Resources	The BRCD Programme is underpinned by an agreed vision for “inclusive economic growth that delivers more and better jobs, a positive impact on the most deprived communities and a balanced spread of benefits across the region.” The BRCD Inclusive Growth Framework details how the Programme’s inclusive growth ambitions will be delivered

	will help us to report on progress at both a geographical and on a priority group basis to improve understanding of what types of interventions and policy changes work best in which circumstances and for which groups.				<p>through the programmes and projects that make up the investment pillars of the Deal. As projects are developed they will be required to consider how they might deliver benefits across the geographic region and across deprived communities.</p> <p>This IG Framework is intrinsically linked to the BRCD Benefits Management Framework which will be used to manage and monitor the full remit of benefits that will emerge. Work to support development of a Benefits Management Framework – the basis of this action – is currently being procured.</p> <p>In the meantime the BRCD will utilise SIB's online portal to monitor the social value that has been integrated within construction contracts.</p>
4.15	Promoting Inclusive Growth (IG) through the Belfast Region City Deal Action 2 (over 10 years) Deliver new and better jobs to the BRCD region and support the region's economic recovery efforts. This will be done in	2021-24	Establish an Employability and Skills programme to support the ambitions of the BRCD	Finance & Resources	<p>In the last year the E&S Programme/Proposition for the BRCD has been developed and approved by the BRCD Executive Board.</p> <p>It has been designed to make a significant contribution to the achievement of the IG ambition. It will continue to adapt to reflect changes within the employability and skills</p>

	<p>the context of IG and will include programmes and interventions to enable all groups, particularly those furthest from the labour market, to avail of the opportunities emerging through the capital investment.</p>				<p>environment and new intelligence, whilst retaining its central purpose of supporting the economic and social potential of city deal investment.</p> <p>As a high-level strategic plan of action, the specific programmes and interventions emerging from it will be designed to reach as wide an audience as possible and to target groups identified as in particular need of support.</p> <p>The programme was screened and screening checked by the BCC Equality Unit in September 2021.</p>
4.16	<p>Develop, roll out and deliver new physical programme: £8m Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund, through an open call process. The Fund will focus upon a number of key thematic areas and reflect the priorities agreed within the City Recovery Framework: environmental/sustainable</p>	2021-24	<p>Number of projects completed, number of consultation exercises encompassing Section 75 groups</p>	Physical Programmes	<p>The new £8m neighbourhood regeneration fund was developed in 2021 and opened to the public in February 2022. It closed for applications in May 2022.</p> <p>A webinar was held to provide information on the fund. It was published on the Council's website with subtitles to ensure accessibility. Advice through email, phone and one to one appointments was promoted and provided to potential applicants.</p>

	projects, neighbourhood tourism and social enterprise.				The fund was also promoted by placing adverts in local newspapers, information on Council's website, social media channels, a press release and through regular e-bulletins. Stage 1 is continuing into 2022/23 and successful projects will move onto Stage 2.
4.17	Delivery of Physical Programme including £180m Capital Programme for council assets. Also management, development and delivery of externally funded programmes such as the Executive Office's flagship good relations programme Urban Villages, approx £46m.	2021-24	Number of projects completed, number of consultation exercises encompassing Section 75 groups	Physical Programmes	Over 50 projects have been completed since 2021. Consultation exercises have been undertaken for six projects using the widely accessible YourSay including New Park in Colin Naming Survey, Forth Meadow Community Greenway, Black Mountain Shared Space, Pre application Roselawn, Ballysillan Playing Fields and Cathedral Gardens. Consultation has been promoted through PR, Council's website and social media channels.
4.18	Deliver Pandemic Recovery Plan	2021-23	Developed understanding of impact of Covid 19 on existing inequalities	Cross - departmental	CNS will implement any Corporate/Council approaches to this Pandemic recovery action within the CNS Department. <u>PP</u> : The new £8m neighbourhood regeneration fund was developed in 2021

				<p>and opened to the public in February 2022. It closed for applications in May 2022.</p> <p>A webinar was held to provide information on the fund. It was published on the Council's website with subtitles to ensure accessibility. Advice through email, phone and one to one appointments was promoted and provided to potential applicants.</p> <p>The fund was also promoted by placing adverts in local newspapers, information on Council's website, social media channels, a press release and through regular e-bulletins.</p> <p>Stage 1 is continuing into 2022/23 and successful projects will move onto Stage 2.</p>
				<p><u>PE</u>: As part of the Belfast: Our Recovery framework, the Skills and Employability team continued to deliver Employment Academies and other tailored employment interventions to support those most impacted by COVID-19 and those furthest from the labour market. Evidence from the labour market studies (ONS) suggest that young people have higher employment intensity in industries that were significantly affected by the coronavirus (for example retail and hospitality).</p>

5. Our organisational priorities

As our city becomes more ambitious so must we.

To do this, we can only succeed with the wholehearted support and enthusiastic contribution of our staff. To harness this energy, they need to feel valued and understand how they contribute. As an organisation, if we want to perform these capabilities to the best of our abilities, we must continuously look to improve how we do things. We have therefore agreed priorities that will help us improve our capability. For example, in order to provide the best customer experience possible, we have developed a customer focus programme that will enhance the experience felt by all our customers.

Ref No	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator	Departmental Responsibility	Update/ Progress
5.1	Ensure that the council communicates effectively with its citizens, using assistive technology and maintaining standards such as Plain English and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines AA standards	2021-24	Website to provide assistive technology and follow new and current Plain English and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines AA Standards.	Cross-departmental	<p><u>CNS</u>: Web casting provision for crematorium services is moving towards implementation.</p> <p><u>CNS – Resources and Fleet</u>: Utilisation of Firetext communications with residents to increase collection rate of bulky waste from 65% to over 90% and further Apps will be introduced 22/23 to report and address missed collections and associated collection issues (missed bins/damaged bins etc.)</p> <p><u>COS – Corp Comms</u>: We aim to make our websites accessible, easy to understand and use, to enable our visitors to carry out transactions and fulfil their communications needs. We comply with the Web Content Accessibility Standards 2.1 Level AA to widen access to our information to all users,</p>

				<p>including people with disabilities, and have implemented a rigorous programme of automated and manual testing to ensure we maintain best practice in accessibility. In February 2022, we passed an external audit by the Cabinet Office with no further action required and are currently working with the Digital Accessibility Centre to have our site reassessed by real people with a range of disabilities, implementing any recommendations that are made.</p> <p>The Silktide Index https://index.silktide.com, which measures accessibility levels for all public sector sites in the UK, evaluates us at 90% - an 'excellent' score. Our closest competitors in Northern Ireland are Lisburn and Castlereagh (82% great) and Causeway and Glens (78% good). To achieve a higher score, we would need to make all PDFs machine readable (WCAG A 1.1.1) and ensure captions are provided for all pre-recorded audio and video (WCAG A 1.2.2). Our content is written according to the Plain English Campaign guidelines, so it can be widely and easily understood.</p>
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					<p>The website (https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/) includes the ReachDeck digital inclusion toolbar. ReachDeck provides speech, reading and translation support tools to help ensure information is easier and more accessible for people. The website is approved by Plain English Campaign (http://www.plainenglish.co.uk) on an annual basis.</p> <p>Belfast City Council is committed to making its website accessible, in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. This website is partially compliant with the WCAG 2.1 AA standard.</p>
5.2	Develop a new Customer Hub designed around customer needs	2021-24	New professional customer hub designed and implemented. Customer satisfaction with the HUB service.	Finance & Resources	<p>Customer Hub went live on 29 March 2021.</p> <p>An in-depth external review of the Customer Hub operation and supporting infrastructure was carried out in November 2021.</p> <p>Recommendations and planned improvements have been agreed to further optimise the Customer Hub operation including proposed measures and KPIs.</p>

					<p>An approach has been set out for transitioning further services into the Hub.</p> <p>Customer Hub In place for former Collections, Waste Management, Switchboard and General Enquiries across Phone contact and Website and email. Customer Satisfaction measurement at initial stages.</p>
5.3	Ensure that digital platforms benefit all customers and stakeholders, including through training and provision of computer facilities for public use	2021-24	Customers will have access to a point –of- service supported on-line resource within the hub and community centres. Number of customers moving to digital channels	Finance & Resources	<p>Transformation of services - further work is being undertaken to define how this approach may be implemented in line with the agreed corporate approach to service design and in line with corporate priorities. This work will include work around channel shift.</p> <p>Digital first not digital only in place in regards to completion of webforms on behalf of those who cannot do this. Enablement is remote as buildings are not currently open. Measurement of channel shift is in its initial stages.</p>
5.4	Improve engagement with customers across all S75 categories	2021-24	% of issues understood impacting on different groups of people leading to a better-informed decision-making process and improved customer service	Cross-departmental	<p><u>CNS</u>: The Council has an interactive Migrant Forum that provides a regular platform for engaging with BAME communities. Weekly emails are disseminated linking BAME communities with information on Council services.</p>

					<p>The Forum provides a regular consultative forum for information sharing on issues related to inclusion, access and service delivery for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities.</p> <p><u>FR</u>: Customer hub utilises tools such as sign video and Big Word to make customer communications accessible.</p>
5.5	Provide accessible channels of communication to reflect diverse customers' needs	2021-24	<p>Greater opportunities for two-way communication using a range of customer feedback tools and measures. An accessible online service</p> <p>Translated documents of interest available on request</p>	Cross-departmental	<p><u>CNS</u>: The public can continue to access Bereavement Services via information on the Council website, telephone and email.</p> <p><u>Our Resources & Fleet Service</u> have introduced a bulky waste App to optimise routes and improve customer service, and the utilisation of Firetext communications with residents has increased collection rates of bulky waste from 65% to over 90%. Further Apps will be introduced 2022/23 to facilitate improvements in customer service.</p> <p><u>FR</u>: Websites are written in plain English and adhere to WCAG 2.1 AA standards.</p> <p>Ukrainian Support Centre web page translated to Ukrainian and Russian April 2022.</p> <p>Promotion of translation tool on the website May 2022.</p>

				<p>The council's customer feedback policy provides all customers with an accessible, multi-channel platform to comment on and raise issues with services. This is corporately managed across the council and reported to CMT quarterly. The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman is currently planning a co-design approach to move all public sectors bodies to a two stage complaints process. This follows a public consultation undertaken by NIPSO during the summer 2021.</p> <p><u>P&E</u>: launched three public consultations and six online engagement exercises to communicate (two-way) with a range of stakeholders. We had over 2,000 visitors to our Your Say pages and in total of 967 online responses covering a range of Section 75 categories. Besides surveys, we used tools for 'idea sharing', storytelling, posing questions and interactive maps – all of which ensured meaningful dialogue and online engagement.</p>
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5.6	Deliver Disability Action Plan 2019-22 updating actions and developing a new action plan utilising key learning in relation to 'Encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life' and 'Promoting positive attitudes towards Disabled People'	2021-22	Analyse feedback and develop an action plan to improve disability initiatives, where appropriate	Legal & Civic Services	Consultation meetings are carried out with relevant departments to identify current actions to provide feedback on progress to date and to agree which actions will be carried forward to the new Disability Action Plan 2022 – 25. New actions were also proposed by relevant departments. Quarterly reporting is also provided to departments on progress to date and at quarterly meetings of the EDNO/S meetings. The draft Disability Action Plan 2022 – 25 is opened for public consultation from 6 th June – 26 th August 2022.
5.7	Develop and deliver Gender, Disability, LGBTQ+ and Minority and Inclusion workforce diversity action plans	2021-24	Activity in plans agreed, resourced and delivered.	City & Organisational Strategy	Gender Action Plan During 2021/2022, Covid- 19 impacted on the council's ability to deliver some of the actions contained within the GAP. Staff were involved in managing and planning for recovery from the pandemic and due to the restrictions in place some activity was not possible. Where feasible, virtual activity events and activity were progressed. Outstanding actions from 2021-22 have been included in Year 2 (2022/2023) of the three-year GAP (2021/22-2023/24)

				<p>Activity in Belfast City Council's Gender Action Plan is grouped under the following themes:</p> <p>Gender Equality in the Council</p> <p>Held several virtual development and awareness raising events and workshops to mark, and celebrate IWD</p> <p>Participated in the NI Gender Diversity Charter assessment- first public sector organisation in NI to achieve Silver level accreditation</p> <p>Women's Network Group ongoing</p> <p>Gender Identity and Expression Guidance developed and implemented</p> <p>Developed a Menopause Policy and Guidance- to be ratified by Council</p> <p>Onus Domestic Violence Charter – retained Platinum level</p> <p>Private room for nursing mothers or pregnant women wishing to rest provided made available- communicated to staff via staff intranet</p> <p>Gender Equality in the Community</p> <p>Funding provided for external IWD event</p>
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				<p>Information relating to the Women's and LGBT+ staff networks is included in the jobs section of the website.</p> <p>A number of staff and their family members participated in a guided Pride Walk and picnic organised by the Proud staff network.</p> <p>A Pride flag was displayed at City Hall to celebrate Pride.</p> <p>A Transgender flag was displayed at City Hall to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance in November and City Hall lit in colours of Trans flag to coincide with Transgender Day of Visibility on 31 March.</p> <p>Staff intranet and social media used to promote Transgender Awareness Week</p> <p>Advertised relevant roles on LGBT+ networks/ outlets</p> <p>Several LGBT+ awareness raising sessions delivered</p> <p>Gender Equality in the Economy</p> <p>The Employability & Skills team within Economic Development have:</p>
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Established a E&S Stakeholder Network to undertake targeted outreach on a monthly basis to promote opportunities such as Employment Academies for those furthest from the labour market (including women's sector organisations).• Targeted outreach to women's sector organisations for live Employment Academies in non-traditional sectors including haulage, bus driving, fibre optics and construction.• Ensured that barriers such as lack of childcare are removed for those accessing Employment Academies.• Designed and delivered upskilling academies targeting female-dominated sectors such as Health & Social Care and Childcare/Playwork where, in 2021/22, 125 people employed accessed Level 3-5 professional qualifications to gain a better job in these sectors. Implemented a CRM for Council Employability & Skills programmes which tracks and monitors
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					<p>uptake across section 75 groups as well as Inclusive Growth target groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The collaborate Programme between the 11 Local Councils, Invest NI and Women in Business NI (WIB) ended on 31 December 2021. From January 2022, each council is working with Women in Business to develop a programme of support for female entrepreneurs. Belfast City Council contributed to a networking and bootcamp events in March 2022 and is in discussions with Women in Business to agree a programme of support for female entrepreneurs for 2022-2023 financial year. <p>The 11 Council NIBSUP 'Go For It' Programme also supported the Women in Business Awards in 2022.</p> <p>A programme of work "Enterprise Awareness" began in Oct 2020 with aims to raise awareness of entrepreneurship to all individuals in the Belfast City Council area. It proactively targets individuals who have the potential to generate and refine business ideas that can be developed through the range</p>
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				<p>of support available through Belfast City Council.</p> <p>A 3rd Cohort of the Enterprise Pathways programme began in July 21 and will provide continued support to 27 separate new start businesses until Dec 22 and includes 19 female's new business owners.</p> <p>Gender Equality in the City</p> <p>Retained Platinum Status- Onus Charter</p> <p>Ongoing support for the Raise Your Voice Project to help address misogyny, sexual harassment and violence</p> <p>Provided £3000 external funding for training to raise awareness around sexual harassment.</p> <p>Proposals are being brought forward via City Regeneration & Development including strategic plans such as a Bolder Vision, lighting projects and public realm improvements. These have been considered in the context of female users to ensure that they feel safe and able to access services and amenities. As further specific projects are delivered under a Bolder Vision (which is a DfI/DfC/BCC initiative) an agreed key principle</p>
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					<p>is that there will be a codesign approach to placemaking that engages with women and girls of different ages in order to achieve an inclusive and connected city. This will include engagement with HerCity – which provides internationally recognised best practice to inclusive city design.</p> <p>The baselining process for assets has now been completed and the overall AMS project delivery is underway.</p> <p>The Council is supporting a number of projects which look at opportunities of how the needs of women can be better met across the city including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The development of the new Shankill Shared Women’s Centre with construction recently commencing.• Continued delivery of the partnership Urban Villages capital investment programme. Many of the projects benefit women through improved health & wellbeing, employment, training, creche and general community facilities.
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of the Social Investment Fund (SIF) – Completion of projects including Greenway Women’s Centre, Mornington and NBWisp which help to improve the needs of women in their local areas.• Completion of projects including St. Comgall’s and Avoniel Leisure Centre which have facilities and programmes designed to improve the needs of women in their local areas. <p>Launch of the new Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund which will create and improve capital projects across the city. There will be opportunities to ensure needs of women are considered as part of the Stage 2 process.</p> <p>Disability Action Plan</p> <p>(progress below relates to actions not already outlined elsewhere in this update relating to the Disability Action Plan)</p> <p>238 reasonable adjustment have been provided during 2021-2022. Of these, 139 were DDA related. 37 were permanent adjustments/ arrangements and 201 were</p>
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				<p>temporary. Examples of adjustments included redeployments; flexible working arrangements; non- requirement to attend meetings in the office or via Teams depending on numbers attending and current health; restricted duties; homeworking, phased return to work; attendance at medical appointments; DSE equipment; avoidance of time sensitive work</p> <p>One reasonable adjustment requested and provided at interview stage</p> <p>Race Action Plan</p> <p>Work started to develop a Race Action plan.</p> <p>However, seeking asylum has increased significantly over recent years and the arrival rate continues to be high with no sign of declining. It is anticipated that increased numbers of asylum seekers arriving in Belfast will be a regular occurrence.</p> <p>Examples of Current Work led by BCC</p> <p>City of Sanctuary Motion</p> <p>The Council passed a motion in April supporting the move to make Belfast a City of Sanctuary. This motion was positively welcomed within Black, Asian and Minority</p>
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				<p>Ethnic Communities. Following on from this work is underway to Develop an internal Race Equality and Diversity Action Plan – that will review how we deliver our services and actions that we can take as an employer to create a more diverse workforce. In addition, members have more recently agreed that a Race Champion be appointed from within Corporate Management to oversee the development of this work.</p> <p>Support for Ukrainian Nationals</p> <p>Council is continuing to coordinate the Belfast - Ukrainian Advice Hub, we are represented at the Operational Planning Group, led by TEO as well as an integration group focused on supporting pathways to support integration.</p> <p>Migrant Forum</p> <p>We have a Council led Migrant Forum that has been operating for over 12 years that provides a regular consultative forum for debate and discussion on issues related to inclusion, access and service delivery for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, there are over 40 members represented on this Forum.</p>
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				<p>Diversity Initiatives</p> <p>For the past four years, we have been running a very popular Diversecity programme that provides monthly diversity initiatives for the public. The purpose of these initiatives is to encourage an increased awareness of issues around diversity and to provide participants with an opportunity to meet and engage with representatives from other faith, ethnic and political backgrounds. It also gives participants the opportunity to visit places and spaces that they would not traditionally go to. Initiatives within this programme include facilitated workshops at the Belfast Islamic Centre, the Jewish Synagogue, the Hindu Temple, the Chinese Resource Centre as well as training on Refugee Issues, Arabic Awareness, Roma and Traveller issues, opportunities to listen to the stories of Refugee and Asylum Seekers. The programme has been very well received and is always oversubscribed.</p> <p>Research</p> <p>Good Relations commissioned research looking at the lived experiences and</p>
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				<p>inequalities experienced by Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Traveller Communities in Belfast. This is due to complete in September 2022 and will be a useful resource for Council in understanding the lived experience of these communities and in providing recommendations.</p> <p>Advice and support for asylum seekers</p> <p>Currently we fund Red Cross to provide Orientation, advice and case work support to asylum seekers accommodated in the hotels, this contract is due to renew in June, however additional resources, through the District Council Good Relations Budget have not been identified to further extend this work to include Ukrainian Nationals.</p> <p>Advice for refugees – once granted asylum status</p> <p>Good Relations have funded the Law Centre to develop a Refugee Transition Guide, with key advice and information for asylum seekers transitioning to refugee status as well as key information for advice agencies.</p>
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				<p>Funding for integration and good relations projects</p> <p>Through our Good Relations Fund, we are funding many small-scale community led initiatives across the City that promote the integration and inclusion of new Communities.</p> <p>We use commemorations and themed events: including Refugee Week, Black History Month, Holocaust Memorial Day, Good Relations Week, International Day of Peace, International Mother Language Day, to organize civic events and promote messaging around inclusion and use them as an opportunity to promote contact between Communities.</p> <p>We also deliver training to encourage by-stander interruption of hate crime and to address anti-migrant, anti-refugee and anti-asylum narratives.</p> <p>Support for young Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic leaders</p> <p>We currently have a quotation out for a programme that will mentor and supports young Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic</p>
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				<p>leaders, building their confidence and familiarity with political and civic settings, building their future leadership potential and personal growth.</p> <p>Senior Director appointed as Race Champion</p> <p>Committee approval to sign up to the Business in the Community initiative "Race at Work Charter"</p> <p>LGBT+ Acton Plan</p> <p>This workforce action plan has been developed to ensure that our organisational culture and working environment allows staff to feel comfortable to be their whole selves at work and that policies and practices empower talent development at all levels and the removal of any form of discrimination. It also aims to increase the understanding of the wider workforce of issues facing the LGBT+ communities.</p> <p>Key deliverables and outcomes for 2021/2022 were as follows:</p> <p>Training and development</p> <p>Stonewall delivered a number of awareness raising sessions to staff:</p>
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LGBT+ inclusion and awareness training• Specific LGBT+ awareness training for senior leaders• Specific LGBT+ training relating to procurement• Trans awareness training• Bi identity awareness training• Mental Health First Aid for Proud network members• Participated in Mental Health Awareness week• Reviewed corporate induction process – explicit statements to LGBT+ inclusion from a senior leader <p>Policy</p> <p>Development and implementation of Gender Identity and Expression Guidance</p> <p>Promotion, Visibility and network growth</p> <p>A number of articles have been included on staff intranet to raise awareness of different LGBT+ events/ initiatives e.g. Pride; Transgender Day of Remembrance;</p>
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					<p>Transgender Day of Visibility; Trans Awareness Week; Lesbian Visibility Day; Bi Awareness Week; Implementation of Gender Identity and Expression Guidance; LGBT+ awareness raising sessions; participation in Stonewall's LGBTQ+ survey</p> <p>New senior champion identified– profiled on staff intranet</p> <p>Distribution of relevant posts and revised application information to NI LGBT+ organisations for wider circulation and dissemination</p> <p>Held a joint event with other staff networks</p> <p>Community engagement</p> <p>Information relating to the LGBT+ staff network is included in the jobs section of the website; promoted at induction, diversity and disability awareness training. (No in-person training has been delivered during the pandemic)</p> <p>A number of staff and their family members participated in a guided Pride Walk and picnic</p> <p>A Pride flag was displayed at City Hall to celebrate Pride.</p>
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					<p>A Transgender flag was displayed at City Hall to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance in November and City Hall lit in colours of Trans flag to coincide with Transgender Day of Visibility on 31 March.</p> <p>Staff intranet and social media used to promote Transgender Awareness Week</p> <p>Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Advertised relevant roles on LGBT+ networks/ outlets</p> <p>Organisational analysis/ continuous improvement</p> <p>Annual membership of Stonewall’s Diversity Champions programme</p> <p>Stonewall’s Workplace Equality Index- Awarded Gold Award; ranked 144 out of 403 organisations.</p>
5.8	Improve participation in employment among those furthest from the labour market through ring-fenced entry-level posts (where possible), pre-recruitment training	2021-24	Job opportunities ring fenced to the long term unemployed and targeted pre recruitment and training	City & Organisational Strategy	<p>No pre-recruitment and training programmes delivered during 2021/22.</p> <p>Work undertaken to identify suitable opportunities to ringfence places as part of the Open Spaces and Street Scene (OSS) Review. Up to nine posts will be ringfenced to</p>

	programmes, work experience, guaranteed interview scheme and reasonable adjustments				<p>long term unemployed, including disabled people.</p> <p>A pre -recruitment and training programme for unemployed people is scheduled from 11-15 April for OSS General Operative roles. 16 places will be made available on the programme, four of which are ringfenced for people with disabilities.</p> <p>There has been engagement with the disability organisations regarding these opportunities.</p> <p>Twelve paid placement opportunities were offered through the DfC's JobStart Programme- nine people were appointed, four of whom had a disability. They will be offered an extended placement opportunity for nine months.</p>
5.9	Encourage participation of disabled people in the workforce, Sign Language Users Forum and Disability Staff Network (DA)	2021-24	Three disability staff network meetings held each year	City & Organisational Strategy	<p>Employees with a disability have input into action planning.</p> <p>3 staff network meetings held.</p>

Ref No	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator	Departmental Responsibility	Update/ Progress
5.10	Encourage participation of LGBT+ people in the workforce and LGBT+ staff network 'Proud'	2021-24	Improved promotion of our commitment to equality and diversity both internally and externally	Cross-departmental	<p>A number of articles have been included on staff intranet to raise awareness of different LGBT+ events/ initiatives e.g., Pride; Transgender Day of Remembrance; Transgender Day of Visibility; Trans Awareness Week; Lesbian Visibility Day; Bi Awareness Week; Implementation of Gender Identity and Expression Guidance; LGBT+ awareness raising sessions; participation in Stonewall's LGBTQ+ survey</p> <p>New senior champion identified– profiled on staff intranet</p> <p>Distribution of relevant posts and revised application information to NI LGBT+ organisations for wider circulation and dissemination</p> <p>Held a joint event with other staff networks</p> <p>Community engagement</p> <p>Information relating to the LGBT+ staff network is included in the jobs section of the website; promoted at induction, diversity and disability awareness training.</p>

					<p>(No in-person training has been delivered during the pandemic)</p> <p>A number of staff and their family members participated in a guided Pride Walk and picnic</p> <p>A Pride flag was displayed at City Hall to celebrate Pride.</p> <p>A Transgender flag was displayed at City Hall to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance in November and City Hall lit in colours of Trans flag to coincide with Transgender Day of Visibility on 31 March.</p> <p>Staff intranet and social media used to promote Transgender Awareness Week.</p>
5.11	Encourage participation of all staff in the workplace	2021-24	Hold event/ workshop for both male/ female staff to jointly explore/ discuss diversity and gender issues and identify any areas/ issues to be addressed.	Cross-departmental	We will implement any Corporate approaches to this action throughout the Council.
5.12	Review and amend workforce monitoring form	2021-24	Monitoring form reviewed and revised to capture additional information including: - reasonable adjustments required by applicants as part of the recruitment and	City & Organisational Strategy	Completed 2020-21.

			selection process; Gender identity; Sexual orientation		
5.13	Carry out a voluntary monitoring exercise for all staff	2021-24	Voluntary monitoring exercise conducted and up to date information available	City & Organisational Strategy	The planned voluntary monitoring survey, which was due to be carried out was delayed due to Covid-19 A significant number of staff do not have access to PC's. These employees would be required to complete a paper-based survey which was not viable due to the restrictions.
5.14	Work to achieve Diversity Charter Mark Silver Award	2021-24	Silver Diversity Charter Mark Achieved	City & Organisational Strategy	Silver Diversity Charter Mark achieved
5.15	Develop opportunities for Equality and Diversity Champions both at SMT and Elected Member level	2021-24	Equality and Diversity Champions appointed	Cross-departmental	A new LGBT+ senior Champion was appointed. A Race senior Champion has been appointed Three elected member LGBT+ Champions are already in place.
5.16	Continue to deliver a suite of equality and diversity awareness training to all staff including diversity, general disability awareness, targeted	2021-24	No/ of sessions delivered; Training evaluation indicators: Quality of training; Increased understanding; Increase in skills levels	City & Organisational Strategy	3 disability awareness sessions delivered virtually, 2 employee sessions and 1 manager session.

	<p>disability awareness, bi and trans awareness training (classroom based and on - line)</p>				<p>No diversity sessions have been delivered in person during the pandemic.</p> <p>The e-learning programme is being rolled out to include new starts, and refresher training as face-to-face training is not yet possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One Mental Health First Aid training programme was delivered (3x half day sessions)• Stress Awareness for Managers session on 26th Jan 2022 - 148 managers attended.• A new Health and Wellbeing Hub, 'Staywell', was launched providing advice and guidance on a range of health and wellbeing and disability issues.• A number of personal stories outlining how hobbies and interests help to protect and improve mental health have been included on Interlink.• Delivery of awareness raising sessions - prostate cancer; ovarian and cervical;
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					<p>dementia awareness, breast and bowel screening awareness; men's mental; health webinar (delivered by Aware NI to celebrate International Men's Day); nutrition and the menopause; Promoting personal health and wellbeing sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heart health information included on Interlink• Shared content on Interlink from EFDNI's Five Days to a new You campaign• Yoga/ mindfulness sessions delivered. <p>LGBT training</p> <p>Stonewall delivered a number of awareness raising sessions to staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LGBT+ inclusion and awareness training- 3 sessions• Specific LGBT+ awareness training for senior leaders – 2 sessions• Specific LGBT+ training relating to procurement – 1 session• Trans awareness training- 1 session
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi identity awareness training- 1 session • Mental Health First Aid for Proud network members - 5 spaces allocated for Proud members.
5.17	Strategic Leaders and Elected members attend leadership equality training	2021-24	No/ of sessions delivered; Training evaluation indicators: Quality of training; Increased understanding; Increase in skills levels	Cross-departmental	A specific session for senior leaders on LGBT+ leadership was delivered.
5.18	Review participation in council's new engagement framework to identify participation gaps or areas for improvement	2021	Participation rates by gender, age, disability, race and community background. (Registrations on new platform). / Assess seldom heard or other s.75 participation rates as applicable. / Consultation and engagement gives all people equal opportunity to participate	City & Organisational Strategy	<p>Residents must be registered to participate in open or deliberative tools on our engagement platform; they do not have to register to complete a survey. Participation in surveys and traditional consultations is open to all and is monitored at each individual consultation level as required. Registration also enables us to inform participants of current engagements via newsletters and gives us an indication of who is engaging with us at a broad level. (individual consultations will attract a different demographic depending on the nature and issue)</p> <p>As of June 2022, we have 2476 citizens registered on the Your Say Belfast</p>

				<p>platform. As part of the registration, participants have the option of providing demographic data. Based on the registrations to date with completed monitoring (baselines vary and range from 1221 to 1781) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9% are aged 24 and under and 9% aged 65 and over• 71% were female and 27% were male• 14% indicated that they had a disability or long-standing illness, with 9% choosing 'prefer not to say' (as opposed to not answering). 77% had no disability.• 47% had caring responsibilities and 53% did not• 97% were white, 3% were from all other ethnic groups, including Irish Traveller and mixed ethnic groups.• 81% were heterosexual, 6% were gay or lesbian, 1% were questioning/ unsure or used a different term and 12% 'preferred not to say' (as opposed to not answering).
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 58% were from the Roman Catholic community, 18% were from the Protestant community and 24% were from neither community. <p>During the first phase of the Belfast Agenda refresh engagement, we went to youth groups, sporting clubs and events for older people to ensure the views of these target groups were heard. We also held an equalities workshop and 4 local area themed workshops to help ensure we were as inclusive as possible.</p> <p>We are currently exploring how we can improve outreach and engagement with new communities coming to Belfast in collaboration with the Good Relations Unit.</p>
5.19	Research best practice and assess council's engagement and participation of young people and develop best practice guidance for council officers	2021	Production of guidance and case studies. / Evidence of improved or innovative approaches to engaging young people. / % of young people who agree that council consults with and listens to the views of local residents (survey in 2021 and 2023)	City & Organisational Strategy	As of June 2022, we have 2476 citizens registered on the Your Say Belfast platform, of which only 108 are aged 24 and under. (Note, you do not have to register complete a survey but you must be registered to participate in open or deliberative tools). Improving engagement with young people has been prioritised in the council's statutory Improvement Plan.

					<p>In 2021, we created a youth facing COP26 engagement including a climate crisis youth survey and quick poll, attracting over 1200 responses from young people.</p> <p>In collaboration with the Youth Council and Climate Teams, we are continuing to explore options for enhancing engagement with young people. A new Youth Council has recently been established and as they develop in their role, we will work with them to identify ways to maximise engagement via the youth council and the YoursayBelfast platform.</p>
5.20	Support platforms, networks and forums, such as the Older People's Forum, Disability Advisory Panel and Migrant Workers' Forum, that widen engagement, targeting in particular those most at risk of being "seldom heard"	2021-24	% attendance at each meeting from cross section of organisations/individuals; % of staff/members who understand purpose of these networks and forums and find it useful; Effective feedback mechanism established, and used by members	Cross-departmental	<p><u>CNS</u>: The Council has an interactive Migrant Forum that provides a regular platform for engaging with BAME communities. Weekly emails are disseminated linking BAME communities with information on Council services.</p> <p><u>FR</u>: Customer focus programme director and staff consult and engage with forums as required.</p> <p><u>PE</u>: Bolder Vision held six workshops, of which two were specific for older people and people with disabilities.</p>

					<p>As part of the development of the 10-year Tourism Plan: Make Yourself at Home, approximately 300 public, private and community sector stakeholders were engaged.</p> <p>As part of the consultation process, presentations and Q&A sessions were offered to the council's Equality Consultative Forum, Youth Forum, Migrant Forum, Disability Advisory Panel and Older Peoples' Forum. All S75 consultees were invited to engagement workshops and were encouraged to visit the Your Say Belfast engagement platform. Nearly 200 people attended the five online workshops included representatives from community tourism organisations, tourism businesses and partners; artists and cultural organisations.</p>
5.21	Use our engagement platform to encourage and build capacity within communities to engage with council using dialogue and qualitative mechanisms	2021-23	No. of standing panels. / No. of project specific panels and forums. / No. and type of panels involving targeted Section 75 or seldom heard groups (per year)	Cross-departmental	<u>FR</u> : Stakeholder consultation and engagement is a principal feature of the customer focus programme. In particular to inform the service redesign process from transition, transformation and onboarding.

				<p><u>PE</u>: launched three public consultations and undertook six online engagement exercises as part of the Bolder Vision engagement. Over 2,000 people visited the council's Your Say Belfast engagement platform and there were 967 online responses covering a range of Section 75 categories. A range of engagement tools were utilised for 'idea sharing', storytelling, posing questions and interactive maps – all of which ensured meaningful dialogue and online engagement.</p> <p>As part of the City Centre Living Engagement, we developed a housing surveyed which received 317 responses, 284 of which agreed to provide section 75 monitoring information. Of this total,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 55% were male, 43% female and 2% transgender.• 6 % were aged 18-24 and 5% were aged 65+• 12% reported that their day-to-day activities were limited because of a health problem or disability
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 98% were white, 1% were from a mixed ethnic group and 1% was Indian.• 37% had caring responsibilities, the majority of which were for children. <p><u>COS</u>: Our new engagement platform offers a range of interactive mechanisms to engage with residents and other stakeholders. Whilst uptake of the 1 million trees initiative has been very good, the use and participation of other mechanisms remains is lower than what we would like. It is hoped that with covid restrictions easing, a hybrid approach to participation will make enable us to widen participation and enhance online activity.</p> <p>To date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are 2,476 active participants registered on the platform, which were achieved through a combination of proactive outreach to existing community planning contacts and new engagements. (Figures excludes Belfast city council emails)
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have issued 11 newsletters from the Your Say Belfast Platform to inform participants of current consultations – our open rate averages around 50% which is significantly higher than industry average.• During 2021-22 alone we received 5,194 survey responses, 1,607 new ideas posted (attracting over 34,400 likes or comments), 488 quick poll responses, 119 pins placed on a map 38 online questions, forum or guest book posts
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Ref No	Actions	Timescale	Performance Indicator	Departmental Responsibility	Update/ Progress
5.22	Deliver Equality Scheme Implementation Plan	2021-24	Annual compliance report to EDNS/ No. of complaints	Legal & Civic Services	The EDNS has met regularly during the 2021-22 year. However, due to organisational changes during 22-23, the annual compliance report is combined with the annual report, which is reported to all Chief Officers and the Council. No complaints were received during this reporting year.
5.23	Deliver Rural Needs Action Plan	2021-24	Annual compliance report to EDNS / No. of complaints	Legal & Civic Services	This has commenced and Council officers will be contacting NISRA to enquire whether there has been any updated information on rural areas in Belfast since 2017 as it is possible that some areas could be reclassified due to new housing being built.
5.24	Effective Leadership in S75 demonstrated through the Equality and Diversity Network	2021-24	At least 3 meetings of both Operational and Strategic levels of Equality and Diversity Network. / Completed audit of S75 processes	Legal & Civic Services	The EDNO/s continued to meet during 2021/2022. This will be progressed further next year when new strategic directors have been appointed and training will be delivered by the Equality and Diversity Unit.

5.25	Explore development of baseline of equality related information for use by staff in all aspects of the council business	2022-24	Information of relevant equality data communicated to all staff available to all staff. / Access to equality data sets	Cross-departmental	<p><u>CNS</u>: We will implement any Corporate approaches to this action within the CNS Department.</p> <p><u>PE</u>: Economic development is currently embedding the tracking of section 75 and Inclusive Growth priority groups within a bespoke CRM that has been developed for the department. This will provide more detailed equality monitoring data going forward.</p>
5.26	Deliver Language Strategy 2019-2023 and related action plans	2021-23	Analyse feedback and develop action plans as appropriate	Legal & Civic Services	The Language Strategy Action Plan has been developed and the unit is currently seeking feedback through the Language Strategy Working Group, Party Group Leaders and CMT before submission to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Glossary

CNS – City and Neighbourhood Services

P&E – Place and Economy

FR – Finance and Resources

COS - City and Organisational Strategy

IG – Inclusive Growth

SP&R – Strategic Policy and Resources Group

SPG – Supplementary Planning Guidance

EDNO – Equality and Diversity Network (Operational)

EDNS – Equality and Diversity Network (Strategic)
Corp Comms – Corporate Communications

BRCD – Belfast Region and City Deal