



Community Support Plan

(Extended action plan 2010 to 2011)

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/communitysupportplan

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Community Services unit

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Contents

Contents	3
1. Background	4
Introduction	4
Consultation	4
Overview of activities.....	5
2. Values	6
3. Strategic themes	8
Development Department objectives.....	9
Supporting departmental themes.....	11
3. Changes in the environment	13
Key findings from the socio-economic analysis	13
External	14
Impact of the economic downturn	14
Child poverty research	14
Community development strategy.....	15
Internal environment	15
A new structure for the Community Services section	15
Local Area Working	16
Community Planning	16
A strategy to tackle poverty and inequality.....	16
4. Service structure	17
Community Facilities unit	17
Area Support unit.....	17
Community Resource unit.....	17
Children & Young People Unit.....	18
Travellers Liaison Unit.....	18
5. Key achievements from 2008-09	19
6. Key performance indicators 2010-2011	21
7. Financial information	22
Estimated expenditure for 2010/11	22
Community Support Plan budgets	22
Breakdown of contributions to Community Support Plan budget	22
Geographical breakdown expenditure for 2008/09	23
8. Monitoring and review arrangements	24
9. Committee membership	25
10. Appendix	26
Community Services Action Plan.....	26

1. Background

This document describes Belfast City Council's proposals to extend its current Community Support Plan to cover the period April 2010 to March 2011.

Introduction

Through its Community Support programme the Department for Social Development (DSD) part funds all of Northern Ireland's local authorities. The aim of the programme is: *"...to strengthen local communities, increase community participation and promote social inclusion through the stimulation and support of community groups, community activity and local advice services."*

To be eligible for funding a local authority must prepare a community support plan which details how it will deliver services in support of this aim.

For the period 2008 to 2010 DSD made **£3,258,171** available to support Belfast City Council's current Community Support Plan. This was from a total Northern Ireland budget of £10,803,661.

Due to a number of factors the council's programme does not currently run in sequence with other Northern Ireland local authorities (ie, their existing Community Support plans run from 2009 to 2011 while Belfast's runs from 2008 to 2010). Following discussions with DSD the council has agreed to extend its current programme until 2011 to bring it into sequence with the others.

This one-year extended plan does not therefore represent a comprehensive revision of the existing plan. Instead it is an updating of the plan that takes account of a number of changes within Belfast City Council and, in particular, the Community Services section. It has also been influenced by external changes in the city since the 2008/2010 plan was prepared.

Consultation

The council carried out a significant research and consultation programme while preparing the 2008/2010 plan. This included work internally with:

- Our Councillors
- Community Services staff
- Other internal council departments
- Community centre management committee members
- Other statutory organisations; and
- Community and voluntary sector organisations

The public consultation included:

- 19 public events
- Questionnaires to 2,000 households
- Online engagement
- Written responses from organisations such as: Belfast Community Sports Development Network, VSB, Belfast Area Partnerships, East Belfast Community Development Agency, Health Action Zone, NI Volunteer Development Agency, West Belfast Partnership Board and the Rainbow Project.

The findings for the consultation greatly influenced the final shape of the plan.

For this one-year extension of the plan the council has decided that it would not be appropriate to carry out a new consultation programme as this is not a substantive revision of the plan. However, the council will provide details of the extension to its stakeholders and make the contents of the extended plan available on the council's website. In developing the Plan for 2011 onwards, the council is committed to a full stakeholder engagement process.

Overview of activities

The Community Support Plan will be delivered by the council's Community Services section. The section works with community groups, organisations and citizens to build community capacity and to offer front line services and advice to the community sector. It sits within the Development Department and reports to the Development Committee.

The Service is led by a Community Development Manager who is supported by five Community Services Unit Managers and a Traveller Liaison Officer. The current establishment figure for the unit is 168.5 employees.

The section has three main resources which it uses to achieve its objectives:

1) Estate

- Provision of **22 community centres** and **one neighbourhood office**
- Provision of support to six independent **community-run centres**
- Provision of **six play centres** and **play development** across the city; and
- Provision of an **outreach support office** for the Traveller community and support for an **independent centre** managed by the Traveller support organisation.

2) Grants

- Provision of **grants** and **funding** including:
 - Advice services: **core funding** to cover revenue and other operating costs; **supplementary funding** (with DSD) for advice outreach costs
 - **Capacity building**
 - **Revenue** (financial support towards running costs of community buildings)
 - **Community development projects**
 - **Grants for Play schemes** appropriate for children & young people aged 5-14 years
 - **Community chest grant**

3) People

- Provision of **community development staff** and **community networks**
- Support of **Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships**
- Delivery of **community projects**
- **Youth Forum**
- **Volunteering**

A new structure for the section will be embedded in 2010 which will see the Service organised to deliver integrated area-based services. This new structure will be in operation for the period of the 2010/11 Community Support Plan. More details on the structure can be found in part four of this document, '**Service Structure**'.

2. Values

The purpose of the Community Services section is:

To support and energise communities to become stronger and more confident in order to develop an active, inclusive, safe, and welcoming city now and for future generations.

What this means is that we wish Belfast to be:

- a vibrant and dynamic community with lots to do;
- a rich tapestry of local community life, where people can be involved;
- a sustainable community looking to long term needs; and
- the community you want to belong to.

To be vibrant, dynamic and active, a city requires not just economic capital, but social capital. Social capital is the capacity of people in society to come together voluntarily to take leading and effective roles in the development and regeneration of their communities. Belfast City Council will work with community groups, organisations and citizens to build community capacity and to develop and sustain this vision of our community.

Our role

In order to deliver this vision we will take a number of roles which shape our approach to community support and development. We will:

Know the strengths and concerns of our community
Provide venues for people to gather, meet, participate, share information and celebrate
Support community networking
Provide human and other resources
Create opportunities for participation
Enable opportunities for action

Communities in Belfast continue to face many challenges. The council wants to continue to support these communities and help to develop and regenerate our neighbourhoods.

To do this the Community Services section will act on two levels:

1) Take a lead role through a partnership approach:

- Coordination of council departments and projects which are community focused;
- Development of a partnership-based community development strategy for Belfast; and
- Evidence based policy responses.

2) Support groups and citizens through:

- Providing assistance to local groups to access grants and practical help;
- Helping local groups to cooperate with each other;
- Signposting residents and local groups to sources of support where it is available;
- Support for neighbourhood planning;
- Supporting effective communication within the sector; and
- Ensuring access to facilities such as community centres.

We will do this so that the value of neighbourhoods is clear and prioritised, so that people can live quality lives in a modern and vibrant city and so that our lessons and the lessons of others can lead to future success.

The council has also adopted a set of values that underpin our community development work:

Core values	What this means for Community Services
Open and accountable	We are open and honest in our communications, working co-operatively, ensuring both team and individual accountability for our actions and delivering sustainable results.
Inclusive	We ensure accessibility to council owned community activities and facilities for all. We will make sure that others' opinions and needs are reflected in all that we do. We demonstrate trust, respect and sensitivity in all that we do. We encourage and enable staff to work to their full potential.
Innovative	We will be forward looking and creative in how we develop and deliver our policies and programmes and will continually find new ways to improve. We will be inspirational and progressive.
Action oriented	We are civic leaders of our community, we value positive attitudes and actions that drive and deliver results. We will deliver on our commitments.
Collaborative working	We are committed to sharing responsibility with each other demonstrating trust, respect and sensitivity in our relationships. We will work closely with partners to make sure that our objectives are achieved.

3. Strategic themes

Belfast City Council is the largest of the 26 councils in Northern Ireland and serves approximately **277,000 people** within an urban environment. It is responsible for delivering key services such as refuse collection and disposal, street cleansing, building control, environmental health, community development, indoor and outdoor leisure, parks and recreational facilities and support for the arts, tourism and economic development. The council has taken a proactive approach in developing the city in partnership with other key stakeholders to improve the quality of life for people in Belfast.

To undertake the tasks allocated to it, council spends approximately **£140 million** each year and employs more than **2,600 people** at over **100 sites** across the city.

The work of the Community Services section forms part of Belfast City Council's over-arching **Corporate Plan** for 2008 to 2011. The key messages for the corporate plan are:

- **Better together** – working with others to create a shared vision of the future of Belfast and working together to deliver this vision.
- **Today's action, tomorrow's legacy** – investing in the city to improve the quality of life now and in the future.
- **Value for money** – minimising the rates burden and freeing up resources for increased delivery on the ground.
- **Better services** – continuing to enhance the level of services offered to citizens.

These key messages lead to the council's main priorities and objectives which in turn are arranged under six main themes:

- 1. City Leadership** – Strong, Fair, Together
- 2. Better opportunities for success** across the city
- 3. Better care for Belfast's environment** – a clean, green city now and for the future
- 4. Better support for people and communities**
- 5. Better Services** – listening and delivering
- 6. Better Value for Money** – a can-do, accountable, efficient council

To achieve these principles, council departments are being expected to ensure robust and efficient organisational structures, systems and processes; and to work together to deliver a joined-up, cohesive service to the public – 'a one council approach'.

This Community Support Plan forms a key element in allowing the council to deliver on these strategic objectives, in particular, '**Better support for people and communities**' element which will meet the needs of local people. The objective states that by 2011 the council will have led, supported and influenced others to ensure:

- **People enjoy living in a vibrant, shared and diverse city**
- **People feel safer**
- **People are healthier and more active**
- **Health and social inequalities are reduced**
- **People have, and avail of, opportunities to improve their well-being with a focus on children and young people and older people.**

Development Department objectives

The Community Services section is based within the Development Department which works towards these corporate themes but sets its objectives against nine departmental themes. These themes tally with the corporate ones but allow the particular contribution of the department's units (including Community Services) to be more easily differentiated. The strategic themes are:

1. Leadership and Governance
2. Economy
3. Physical Infrastructure
4. Environmental Sensitivity
5. Transport and Connectivity
6. Social and Cultural
7. Social Inclusion
8. Improved Services
9. People and Processes

How these corporate and departmental themes link together is shown in the following table:

Corporate Themes	Development Departmental Themes	Development Departmental Objectives
City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together	Leadership and Governance	Promote Belfast's position as the capital city and an engine of regional growth. Promote and enhance Belfast's unique proposition and experience. Lead and influence the development of the city. Develop effective partnerships.
Better care for Belfast's environment – a clean, green city now and for the future	Environmental Sensitivity Transport and Connectivity	Support and influence the creation of a modern transportation and electronic infrastructure. Protect and promote the city's built heritage. Reduce departmental carbon footprint.
Better opportunities for success across the city	Economy Social & Cultural Physical Infrastructure	Increase innovation and enterprise levels, skill levels and employment levels. Grow competitive sectors. Develop a strong cultural experience. Enhance the physical regeneration of the city. Promote & enhance design excellence in the city. Create opportunities for shared space in the city.
Better support for people and communities	Social and Cultural Social Inclusion	Increase the levels of confidence, participation and engagement of citizens. Increase the capacity of citizens to make informed decisions about their neighbourhoods. Reduce deprivation and poverty. Promote good relations and reduce division and polarisation of communities.

Better Services – listening and delivering	Improved Services	Make sure local services can respond to local needs. Make sure citizens can easily and effectively access information and services.
Better Value for Money – a can-do, accountable, efficient council	People and Processes	Use financial and human resources in the most effective way. Improve departmental processes and systems. Increase departmental efficiencies.

The following diagram shows how the department’s work supports the overall aims of the council:

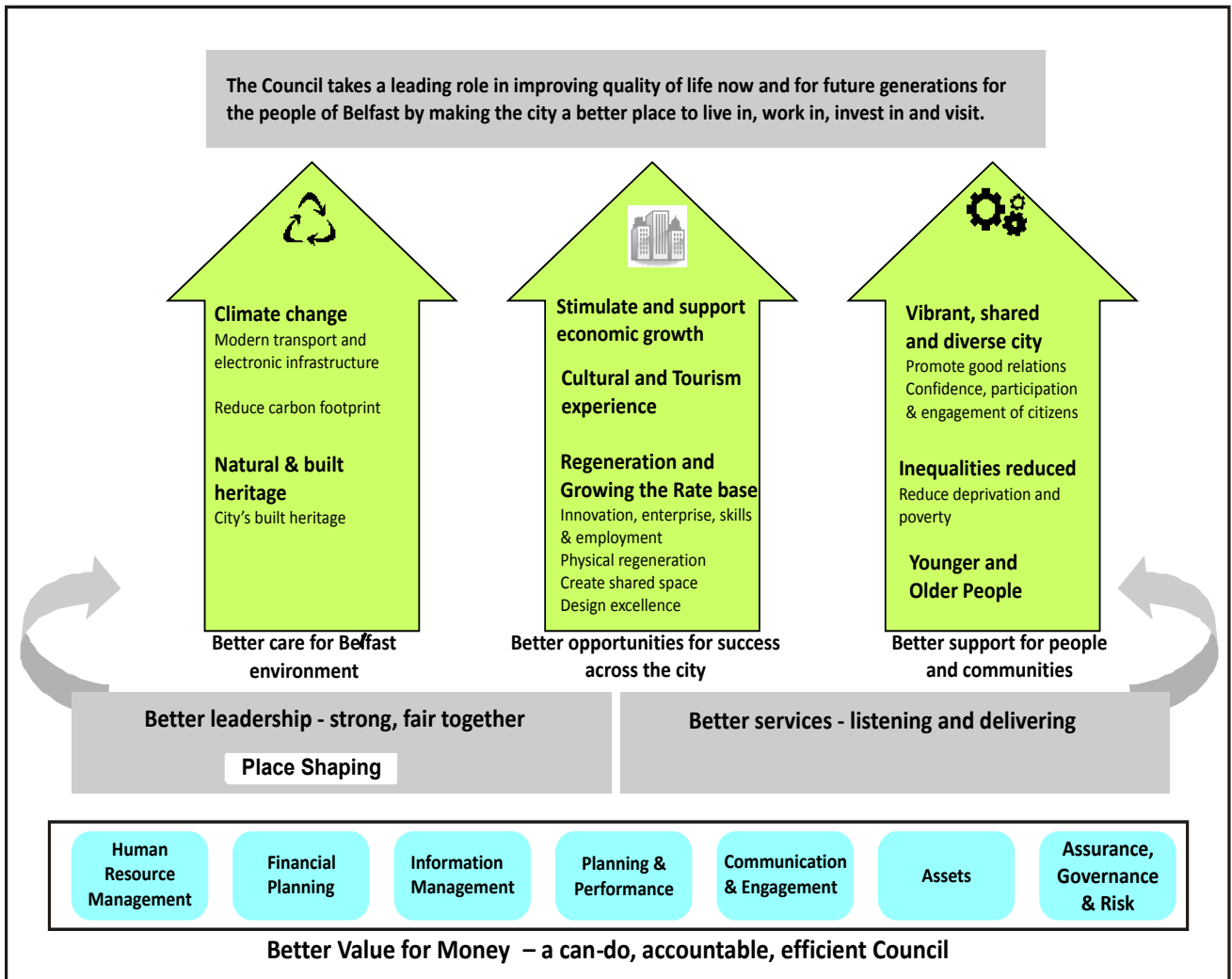


Figure 1: The Development Department Value Creation Map (VCM)

Supporting departmental themes

The Community Support Plan has been designed to support our departmental themes in a number of ways. Listed below are just some of the key objectives from our action plan and how they link to the departmental themes:

Leadership and Governance

- Support the development of a community development strategy for Belfast
- Ensure representation on key internal and external partnerships to inform key policy decisions with a community development perspective
- Represent the council on the city's key geographical and thematic networks
- Develop and deliver a full Equality Impact Assessment for the council-approved Children & Young People strategy
- Roll out a capacity building programme based on the model developed from the 2008-2010 capacity building pilots.
- Provide council representation on all Belfast Neighbourhood Renewal partnerships
- Work with stakeholders to review the implications of RPA related to the transfer of community development functions.
- To lead the council's Children & Young People thematic priority

Improved Services

- Research, recommend and adopt community facilities service quality standards
- Continue to implement the generic framework for community centre management plans
- Provide an in-house and external advice service on matters related to the Traveller community
- Lead the implementation recommendations across the council regarding the Child Protection Policy and Procedure to ensure best practice in statutory compliance and customer focus

Social and Cultural

- Continue implementation of a volunteer policy and related support programme
- Deliver and support high quality summer scheme programme across the city

Social Inclusion

- Provide 22 high quality and accessible venues and use them to develop and deliver city wide programmes and services
- Contribute to robust citizen engagement as part of the council's approach to Local Area Working
- Deliver a series of cross community programmes linked to the council's Good Relations and cultural diversity strategies
- Provide community venues and neighbourhood outreach to facilitate local Community Safety work
- Provide a high quality and inclusive play service
- Provide and develop a Traveller outreach office to assist both the Traveller community and relevant stakeholders

People and Processes

- Implement the Community Services re-structuring programme

Economy

- Ensure community venues and neighbourhood outreach facilitate the delivery of local employment and social economy opportunities

Environmental Sensitivity

- Support environmental projects at neighbourhood level (such as recycling, community clean ups, art and waste week) and agree associated SLA with the council's Waste Management service

3. Changes in the environment

Since the 2008/2010 plan was conceived, there have been a number of significant changes in the environment which have had an impact on the shape of this extended plan. These are outlined below.

Key findings from the socio-economic analysis

The council carried out extensive research for the 2008 to 2010 Community Support Plan. Alongside our consultation programme we carried out a review of the **external policies and strategies** which impact on the work of the unit. We also developed comprehensive **socio-economic profiles** for Belfast and a more detailed **area-based analysis** of the city's four quarters. (The results of this work remain available for reference on our website).

The socio-economic analysis has highlighted a range of needs and differences across the city. These can be summarised as follows:

Demographics

- Belfast has a young population
- North and west Belfast have the highest percentage of young people (under 16)
- East and north Belfast have significant percentages of older residents
- South Belfast is home to the highest number of migrants

Crime

- Racial incidents are increasing in all areas (except South), however the highest number of incidents are in South Belfast
- Anti-social behaviour is the main problematic issue for residents in all areas.

Deprivation

- Deprivation is an issue in all of Belfast; while north and west are the most deprived, both east and south Belfast have pockets of deprivation

Economic activity

- Both north and west Belfast have high unemployment and low economic activity levels
- North and west Belfast have lower levels of educational attainment

Health

- North Belfast has the highest percentage of people with limiting long-term illness; and
- East and west Belfast have the highest percentage of people providing unpaid care to family and friends

Housing

- East and north Belfast have the largest percentage of households with lone pensioners
- North and west Belfast have the highest percentage of rented houses

External

Impact of the economic downturn

The major external change since the publication of the 2008/10 Community Support Plan has been the severe global economic downturn which is likely to have a significant and prolonged local effect on communities and neighbourhoods across Belfast.

Commentators differ over whether Northern Ireland will suffer more or less from other UK regions as a result of the economic crisis. Views vary from NI being one of the least vulnerable regions in the UK because of its public sector strength, to NI being affected most as a result of steeper house price declines and the end to the rapid regional expansion of the retail sector and large-scale property development since the mid 1990s.

The predicted 10 per cent contraction of the local private sector and the rapid fall in house prices after the rapid boom of the past few years have worrying implications. While falling house prices may give better access to first time buyers, long term unemployment is predicted to rise during 2009 to seven per cent.

The UK's Local Government Minister has stated that "*the new frontline is local with councils leading the response*" and that the recession is a "*big opportunity for local government to show local leadership*".

Belfast City Council established an Economic Downturn Task group to co-ordinate the council's response to the situation. It has drawn up an action plan to support local business, offer support and advice to communities and find ways in which our services can best support a move to recovery.

The work of the Community Services section is pivotal to the council's local response and ensuring that it is responsive and well-targeted within communities. Its staff will provide important 'early warning' indicators of issues arising from the downturn and are working, in partnership with local advice consortia, to ensure that people have access to advice and information services. Our facilities act as a sign-post where people can get advice, support and help in this time of uncertainty.

Child poverty research

Important recent research¹ on child poverty in Northern Ireland has updated and confirmed much of the socio-economic data that the council gathered for the 2008/10 Plan.

The report from the University of Ulster and Save the Children (Northern Ireland) explored the challenges faced by the Northern Ireland Assembly in meeting its target of eradicating child poverty. It found that persistent poverty in Northern Ireland (21% before housing costs based on Households Below Average Incomes figures) is more than double that in Great Britain (9% before housing costs).

The report points to four main reasons for higher persistent poverty in Northern Ireland:

- **High levels of worklessness:** 31 per cent of the working-age population is not in paid work, higher than any GB region and six per cent higher than the GB average.
- **High rates of disability and limiting long-term illness,** especially mental ill-health.
- **Low wages:** the median wage for men working full-time is 85 per cent of that for British men.
- **Poor-quality part-time jobs and obstacles to mothers working.**

¹ *What can we do to tackle child poverty in Northern Ireland?* Goretta Horgan, University of Ulster, and Marina Monteith, Save the Children (NI), Joseph Rowntree Foundation, November 2009

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/child-poverty-in-northern-ireland>

They recommend that the Assembly works on six key areas:

1. Increasing the supply of well-paid, good quality jobs
2. Supporting those already in work to increase their qualification levels
3. Alleviating the worst impacts of poverty on children
4. Addressing the lack of quality affordable childcare
5. Increasing educational attainment
6. Providing access to leisure and social activities for poorer young people

While aimed at the regional Assembly the results will influence the development of the council's own anti-poverty strategy for Belfast and this will impact on the work of the Community Services section from 2010 onwards.

Community development strategy

There is no strategic framework for community development in Northern Ireland to match the growing requirements for community engagement in governance and public services. In preparation for the transfer of functions under the Review of Public Administration, however, DSD have commissioned the development of '*A Strategy and Policy Framework for Urban Regeneration and Community Development in Northern Ireland*'. This work, which is due to commence in May 2010, will have three main themes:

1. Regenerating towns and cities
2. Tackling deprivation
3. Building strong, cohesive and welcoming communities

Theme two and three will have particular implications for the work of the Community Services section. The council is committed to working in partnership with DSD to address these policy areas and to allow us to develop a framework for our own activities which also takes account of the roles of our partners in the field.

Community development poses a number of challenges:

- Creating a framework that meets the needs of each local area;
- Funding that is adequate to achieve and maintain a major step change in the level of community strengths and empowerment;
- Community development that is managed and delivered to the highest standards;
- Community development work should be promoted as a nationally recognised occupation with a clear basis in values, methods and outcomes;
- High-quality training should be available at all levels and in different ways to suit the needs of both new and experienced practitioners; and
- Supporting the highly complex and diverse community and voluntary sector in this era of diminishing funding streams.

Internal environment

A new structure for the Community Services section

Belfast City Council is currently going through a period of reorganisation and efficiency improvements in preparation for the demands of the Review of Public Administration. As a result of this, the Community Services section joined with the Development department in 2007. This has placed a greater emphasis within council on using community development approaches to gain a wider, strategic focus for its service delivery.

During 2009 the unit has been making preparations for re-structuring which are due to be finalised by April 2010. This will change the operational emphasis of the unit from that of 'centre-based' community service delivery to an integrated area-based approach.

Local Area Working

The council remains committed to the development of a Local Area Working model. Its Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme (SNAP) team have been developing a series of approaches which will provide the council with the necessary tools and processes to allow it to better adapt its local service provision to meet the particular needs and priorities of individual neighbourhoods across the city.

SNAP have been exploring three main strands of work: developing an area intelligence system that can effectively inform council decision-making; a citywide engagement programme that can provide detail on the neighbourhood issues and priorities of our citizens; and testing ways in which the council can adapt its local service provision to better fit the individual circumstances of each neighbourhood.

The Local Area Working (LAW) approach has already proved fruitful in supporting the council's contribution to the delivery of Belfast's 12 Neighbourhood Renewal plans.

The work of Community Services is intimately linked to the LAW model and, as the unit adopts an integrated area-based approach, it will play an increasingly important role in both informing the model and using its findings and toolkit to deliver the Community Support plan.

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/snap

Community Planning

As part of the Review of Public Administration the council will become responsible for the creation of an over-arching 'Community Plan' for Belfast. The current framework proposes that the council will have powers to convene partners from the statutory, business, voluntary and community sectors to address the wellbeing of our citizens.

In addition the framework also proposes the development of local community plans to address local concerns in a way that cannot be achieved at a council-wide level alone. As communities will vary considerably between different areas, the challenge facing the council and its Community Planning partners will be to develop approaches that best suit local circumstances.

Community Planning raises a number of capacity and resource challenges for the council. The ideas emerging from the Local Area Working model described above may provide some of the tools required to deliver a Plan. Certainly, Community Planning will have major implications for the work of Community Services and its new integrated area-based approach.

A strategy to tackle poverty and inequality

The council has begun work on a corporate strategy to tackle poverty and inequality to mainstream our anti-poverty activity. The strategy is likely to focus on four key elements:

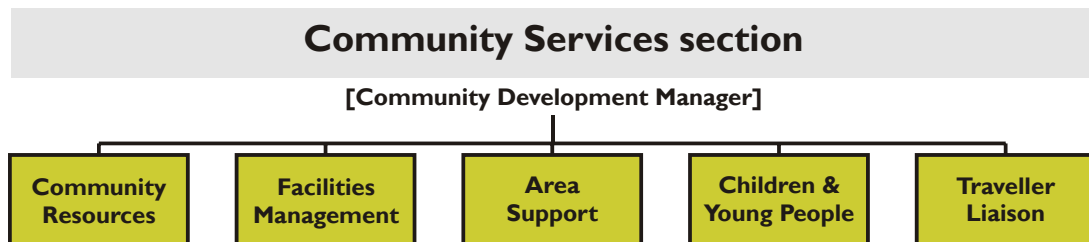
1. Using our civic leadership role to promote anti-poverty work among our partners in order to challenge social inequalities;
2. Improving access to, and delivery of, our services for people in poverty;
3. Finding ways to better target our existing budgets to tackle issues of poverty; and
4. Monitoring and research: Creating more detailed intelligence on poverty at a neighbourhood level (drawing on Local Area Working, our small area statistics system, Belfast Citystats, and the Corporate Performance Management system).

The current aim is to prepare a draft strategy for March 2010 with a public consultation in May and a launch in October 2010.

The Community Services section has traditionally been at the forefront of anti-poverty activity in the council and its experience and expertise in this area will be important in the development, consultation and implementation of the strategy.

4. Service structure

The Community Services section is being re-structured as part of a wider improvement agenda across the council.



Community Facilities unit

The unit is responsible for the provision of accessible and well co-ordinated services to people in local neighbourhoods by providing access to a range of high quality venues where people can gather, meet, participate, share information and celebrate.

The unit will specifically market and manage council-owned community centres, play centres and the neighbourhood office. It will also oversee community-managed council centres and provide support for community sector provision across the city via grant assistance programmes and access to advice and information.

Area Support unit

The unit will work in partnership with the community sector to improve social assets in order to increase the levels of confidence, participation and engagement of citizens. The unit will work to increase the capacity of citizens to make informed decisions about their neighbourhoods in order to improve the conditions or quality of life within local communities across the city.

This will include delivery of capacity building support, including related grant aid, to the community sector. The unit will also offer community development support to internal and external partners in the delivery of the council's key thematic priorities at a neighbourhood level including supporting the delivery of local Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships action plans.

The unit will also support other sections within council to adopt community development approaches.

Community Resource unit

The unit will support the service to identify more sustainable ways to meet local need. It will lead on the development of citywide activity and resources to support our work to develop communities and the sector including the provision of advice & information, support for volunteering and the service grant aid programme. This will include ways to protect and improve the quality of existing provision including business improvement, performance management and communications.

The unit will maximise the service contribution to corporate thematic priorities including good relations, community safety, health & well being and sustainable development. It will also ensure we effectively meet the needs of harder to target sections of the community such as older citizens and minority ethnic communities.

Children & Young People Unit

Children and Young People (C&YP) has been identified as a priority thematic area of work for the council. While we have traditionally provided a range of services for C&YP, no single department or service has been allocated overall responsibility for internal and external co-ordination. The latter is becoming more significant if the council is to work in partnership with other key agencies in order to fully identify opportunities to extend service provision within the changing landscape of RPA.

The creation of this unit will join up and focus the management of C&YP service delivery within the service and the department. This new unit will manage the children and young people team within Community Services including the play development team and the council's Youth Forum. The unit will also have operational responsibility to ensure best practice in relation to child protection policy and practice.

It will also provide a single reference point for the development and management of a corporate strategy and related planning framework in order to ensure a clear council wide vision regarding our aspirations for our young citizens. The strategy will provide a coherent and principled approach to developing services which will meet the needs of all children and young people living in the city and will include the identification of appropriate performance indicators and targets. The unit will also be the key interface for external stakeholders particularly in relation to changing roles and responsibilities within RPA.

Travellers Liaison Unit

The unit works to support the development of the Traveller community to influence and take informed decisions on matters which impact on their lives. It works across the council to deliver and support services which will improve the quality of life of all the Traveller community in Belfast.

The unit provides an internal and external advice service regarding the Traveller community. It is also responsible for the delivery and development of the successful outreach office on the Glen Road.

In partnership with An Munia Tober, the unit has developed and will continue to promote a Traveller Awareness / Anti Racism training programme both internally and for external partners.

5. Key achievements from 2008-09

- The throughput figures for our Community Centres demonstrated a 19% increase on the same time last year. The **total usage count of 559,092** is almost 90,000 more than previous year.
- Volunteers supported the delivery of our Community Centres and programmes by giving up a staggering **75,000 hours** of their time this year. This represents an increase of 14% on the support received in 2007/08.
- We distributed **£2.3million of grant aid to 339 community projects** delivering a range of services including support for community buildings, advice & information services, community support networks, summer play schemes, and small project funding.
- This grant total includes **£792,000** distributed to **five Advice Consortia** across the city.

Other significant achievements

- The official opening of **new and improved community centre facilities** at Ardoyne (April 2008) and Woodvale (May 2008) which has reinvigorated community programmes and are visible indicators of the council's commitment to supporting local communities.
- Work is nearing completion on **increased community and leisure amenities** at the council-owned facilities at Roden Street and Lower Ormeau where the managing community organisations have secured over **£3 million of external leverage** to further develop and extend services.
- Delivery of a **citywide programme for children and young people** including **27 summer schemes** engaging children in social, educational and physical activities and the delivery of a series of central events attended by over **2,000 children**. The summer scheme programmes included new and innovative approaches. Our play team worked to support the inclusion of **children with disabilities** within our mainstream services and the staff team at Concorde community centre put a new twist to the traditional summer scheme model by running a successful scheme for the **50+ age group**. This was developed in direct response to needs identified by the **Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership** for the wider Ballysillan area.
- An **information and training initiative for our Community Development assistants** to improve and extend centre services for older people. This included specific training in relation to the new website and information packs for senior citizens which will improve our ability to signpost local people to services.
- A **Good Relations programme across all community centres** with activities to support the city's new and more established migrant population (for example, community capacity support around education for the Polish community, events to promote good relations such as African/ Irish event in Concorde community centre and training programmes to reduce hate crime in south Belfast). Funding has also been secured for a '**Connections Festival**' involving centres across the city working with young people in order to improve their understanding of, and celebration of, cultural diversity.
- The **extension of community support into four disadvantaged areas in east Belfast** through a partnership programme between the council and East Belfast Community Development Agency. The programme is designed to target weak community infrastructure in order to improve the area, develop services and work towards community sustainability and cohesion.

- A programme of **volunteer celebration events** across the city to recognise effort and provide training opportunities for those volunteers who support the delivery of council community services.
- A series of **themed information events across the city**. For example, Ardoyne community centre hosted a day to improve awareness of all council services which was organised in response to the Neighbourhood Action Plan and involved key services across council. Whiterock community centre hosted a **Women's Health and Information event** in partnership with statutory providers where over 600 women benefited from a range of information and advice, themed workshops, family and support services and therapy sessions.
- The official launch during **Traveller Focus Week of an information DVD and associated training programme**. This project was developed in partnership with An Munia Tober, the regional traveller support organisation. To date the programme has been successfully delivered to a number of organisations including internal Council staff in community services, good relations and community safety teams.
- We successfully recruited **32 young people** from right across the city to the second term of the council Youth Forum. The group have completed an induction programme and have agreed priority work areas and an action plan. Examples of work undertaken include completing **ASSIST suicide awareness training** and project work on drugs and alcohol awareness. The young people have just started work with Belfast City Centre Management on a **community engagement initiative**.

6. Key performance indicators 2010-2011

	Indicator	Definition
1	Community support grants	Amount (and proportion of total grants) of community support grants
2	Volunteers and volunteer hours	Volunteer hours and numbers in organisations funded through community support grant aid
3	Profile and usage of community centres	Yearly profile and usage of community centres per 1,000 population
4	List of community organisations	Organisations represented on council led forums and support networks with which council engage
5	Number of advice enquiries	Enquiries addressed through funded advice and information agencies (by type of enquiry) and the amount of additional benefit entitlement successfully claimed
6	Resources leveraged	Private, community and other public sector resources leveraged by community support funding
7	Spending on community support (including community centres)	Per capita spending on actual provision of community support (inc. community centres)
8	Spending on community support (excluding community centres)	Per capita spending on actual provision of community support (excluding community centres)

7. Financial information

Estimated expenditure for 2010/11

A budget will be approved each year for the Community Services section so that it can implement its responsibilities. It is estimated that for the year 2010/11 the net expenditure for Community Services Unit will be **£8,141,273**.

Community Support Plan budgets

Area of work	Gross budget 2008/9	Gross budget 2009/10	Gross budget 2010/11 (estimate)
Community Services management	£748,019	£949,630	£829,870
Community centres	£3,736,748	£3,789,812	£3,781,990
Travellers	£63,684	£64,785	£60,736
Community grants	£2,366,865	£2,550,491	£2,683,038
Play centres	£599,611	£634,637	£650,525
Children and young people	£141,422	£178,257	£135,114
Total	£7,656,349	£8,167,611	£8,141,273

Source: Development Department budget estimates

Breakdown of contributions to Community Support Plan budget

	Belfast City Council	%	DSD contribution	%	Total
2008/9 budget	£6,337,451	82.8	£1,318,898	17.2	£7,656,349
2009/10 budget	£6,694,352	82.0	£1,473,259	18.0	£8,167,611
2010/11 budget (estimate)	£6,606,067	81.1	£1,535,206	18.9	£8,141,273
Overall	£19,637,870		£4,327,363		£23,965,233

Source: Development Department budget estimates

Geographical breakdown expenditure for 2008/09

Geographical breakdown of expenditure for the section for the 2009/10 period will not be available until later in 2010. However, geographically expenditure for 2008/09 is now available. The expenditure was as follows:

	North	South	East	West	Citywide
Council community centres & neighbourhood office (23 sites) and Community Support	£872,222	£1,053,542	£601,132	£1,059,474	n/a
Community-managed community centres	£31,827	£335,336	£84,811	£238,303	n/a
Play centres & Play Development	£139,713	£102,419	£136,001	£53,633	£164,977
Grant schemes					
Revenue grants	£129,343	£28,512	£133,116	£208,553	n/a
Capacity	£111,394	£182,738	£81,954	£143,221	n/a
Play scheme	£37,100	£25,900	£35,100	£64,800	n/a
Community chest	£3,600	£1,200	£1,800	£5,090	n/a
Advice and information standard grant	£90,172	£44,575	£55,496	£106,702	£32,994
Advice supplementary grant	£126,387	£62,477	£77,784	£149,556	£46,245
Projects	£17,986	£3,500	£8,500	£19,450	n/a

Source: Development Department budget estimates

8. Monitoring and review arrangements

The Community Services section has the responsibility of coordinating, monitoring, reviewing, appraising and evaluating the future Community Support Plan against the vision, strategic themes and sub-objectives to be achieved in 2010 to 2011.

The section reports regularly on the progress of all objectives and key performance indicators, using the information gathered to feedback into service delivery and policy decisions.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Community Support Plan will be carried out using the following channels:

- **Annual business plans** –The Community Support Plan will be implemented through a series of annual service operational plans. The section and its units will develop plans by the March of each year which detail their programme of activities. These will feed into the department's overall annual plan. The performance of the support plan will be measured against the targets and performance indicators specified within the support plan. The results of this will be reported to Development Committee in line with the council's performance management policy.
- **Progress reports and annual returns to Department for Social Development (DSD)** – The Community Services section will be monitoring progress made against the output measures on a quarterly basis and will produce returns and yearly reports to DSD. Yearly reports will chart progress made on the plan including the identification of any proposed changes.
- **Annual Review** - Each year the department will provide the Development Committee with an annual report which will highlight the key achievements and progress made to date with the support plan.
- **Ongoing Review** - The Development Department Management Team will review performance on implementation of the plan on a quarterly basis with necessary improvements implemented using the traffic light flagging system. The Community Services Management Team will meet fortnightly to discuss strategic and operational elements of the Community Support Plan. Progress will be monitored and reviewed against sub-objectives during these meetings.

9. Committee membership

Belfast City Council's Development Committee as of November 2009

- Councillor William Humphrey (Chairman)
- Councillor Michael Browne (Deputy Chair)
- Councillor May Campbell
- Councillor Patrick Convery
- Councillor Ian Crozier
- Councillor Tom Ekin
- Councillor Niall Kelly
- Councillor Jim Kirkpatrick
- Councillor John Kyle
- The Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor Danny Lavery
- Councillor Alex Maskey
- Councillor Conor Maskey
- Councillor Nelson McCausland
- Councillor Caoimhín Mac Giolla Mhín
- Councillor Christine Mhic Giolla Mhín
- Councillor Cathal Mullaghan
- Councillor Peter O'Reilly
- Councillor David Rodway
- Councillor Jim Rodgers
- Councillor Bob Stoker

10. Appendix

Community Services Action Plan

Objectives	Proposed action(s)		Team resource
1. A community development strategy for Belfast	1.1	Following initial development work with key stakeholders, agree a project plan, associated time-frame, resources and responsibilities	Community Development Manager (CDM)
	1.2	Initiate research on necessary infrastructure, practice, resources, standards, etc	CDM
2. Children and Young People	2.1	Develop and deliver a full Equality Impact Assessment for the council-approved Children & Young People strategy process	Children and Young People Unit (CYPU)
	2.2	Deliver a full external consultation programme on the Children & Young People strategy	CYPU
	2.3	Seek committee approval and publish the Children & Young People strategy	CYPU
	2.4	Lead the council's Children & Young People thematic priority	CYPU
	2.5	Lead the implementation recommendations across the council regarding the Child Protection Policy and Procedure to ensure best practice in statutory compliance and customer focus	CYPU
	2.6	Develop and coordinate an inter-agency group for provision of services to children and young people	CYPU
	2.7	Continue to improve consultation and engagement with youth (including supporting the work of the Youth Forum and coordination of the Youth Champions Group)	CYPU
	2.8	Develop and deliver a branded council citywide children and young people's summer programme	CYPU
	2.9	Provide a high quality and inclusive play service	CYPU
	2.10	Deliver and support high quality summer scheme programmes across the city	CYPU
	2.11	Support the Children & Young People Action Plans in local Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships	Area Support Unit (ASU)
3. Provision of a capacity building and practical skills programme to community sector organisations	3.1	Rollout a capacity building programme based on the model developed from the 2008-2010 capacity building pilots.	Area Support unit (ASU)
	3.2	Identify areas in which to deliver the programme and then design and implement it	ASU
	3.3	Evaluate programmes and recommend future activity	ASU
4. Develop network support within and between communities	4.1	Provide council representation on all Belfast Neighbourhood Renewal partnerships	Community Services Unit Managers (CSUMs) and Community Development Officers (CDOs)
	4.2	Represent the council on the city's key geographical and thematic networks	CSUMs/CDOs

Objectives	Proposed action(s)		Team resource
	4.3	Contribute to robust citizen engagement as part of the council's approach to Local Area Working	CSUMs/COWs
5. Support internal and external partnerships and initiatives	5.1	Ensure representation on key internal and external partnerships to inform key policy decisions with a community development perspective	CSUMs/CDOs
	5.2	Ensuring Community Services expertise and resources are leveraged into external partnership projects	CSUMs/CDOs
6. Traveller community liaison	6.1	In partnership with LGP / NILGA and other key stakeholders seek to influence best practice and equality issues on Traveller related matters	Traveller Liaison unit (TLU)
	6.2	Review the structure of the Inter-departmental Traveller Liaison Group and make recommendations	TLU
	6.3	Explore options for the council to facilitate the formation of an Inter-agency Traveller Liaison Group	TLU
	6.4	Provide an in-house and external advice service on matters related to the Traveller community	TLU
	6.5	Provide and develop a Traveller outreach office to assist both the Traveller community and relevant stakeholders	TLU
	6.6	Deliver a Traveller Awareness /Anti Racism training programme and promote the 'Think Traveller' DVD training resource	TLU
	6.7	Review the legislative 'Caravan sites' licence requirements and work with other departments to ensure the council's compliance	TLU
7. Maximise government funding	7.1	Secure DSD grant leverage for the Community Support Plan in 2010/11	Community Development Manager (CDM)
8. Maximise neighbourhood outreach to support the delivery of the corporate thematic priorities	8.1	Ensure community venues and neighbourhood outreach facilitate the delivery of local employment and social economy opportunities	Facilities Management Unit (FMU)/ Area Support Unit (ASU)
	8.2	Support environmental projects at neighbourhood level (such as recycling, community clean ups, art and waste week)	FMU/ASU
	8.3	Provide community venues and neighbourhood outreach to facilitate local Community Safety work	FMU/ASU
	8.4	Deliver a series of cross community programmes linked to the council's Good Relations and cultural diversity strategies	FMU/ASU
	8.5	Support the delivery of local Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Action Plans	Area Support Unit (ASU)
	8.6	Support corporate health and wellbeing projects at neighbourhood level	FMU/ASU
9. Review community centre management roles and responsibilities	9.1	Present community centre think piece to Chief Officers and Councillors for consideration	Facilities Management Unit (FMU)

Belfast City Council Community Support Plan 2010 to 2011

Objectives	Proposed action(s)		Team resource
	9.2	Review the roles and responsibilities of community centre committees	FMU
10. Increase the participation of communities	10.1	Continue to implement the current framework for community centre management plans	FMU
	10.2	Deliver grant programmes to community organisations	Facilities Management Unit (FMU)/ Area Support Unit (ASU)/ Community Resources Unit (CRU)
11. Research standards of service delivery	11.1	Research, recommend and adopt facilities service quality standards	FMU
12. Provide venues for people to gather, meet, participate, share information and celebrate	12.1	Provide 22 high quality and accessible venues to develop and deliver city wide programmes and services	FMU
	12.2	Deliver grant support to community-managed centres	FMU
13. Encourage and support voluntary activity	13.1	Continue implementation of a volunteer policy and related support programme	Community Resources Unit (CRU)/ Area Support Unit (ASU)
	13.2	Support citywide and area volunteer celebration events	CRU/ASU
14. Community Services re-structuring	14.1	Finalise the new Community Services structures	Community Development Manager (CDM)
	14.2	Implement the proposed re-structuring programme	CDM
	14.3	Deliver an associated internal and external communications plan	CDM
15. Financial management	15. 1	Manage, monitor and review monthly expenditure	All managers
16. Absence management	16.1	Implement and manage the corporate attendance policy to reduce unit absence by agreed targets	All managers
17. Asset management	17. 1	Develop an asset management plan for all Community Services buildings	Facilities Management Unit (FMU)
18. Performance management	18.1	Implement agreed interim business improvements to Community Services performance management framework	Community Development Manager (CDM)
19. Dept environmental management system	19.1	Support and encourage environmentally friendly practices and adhere to the Council environmental statement.	All Community Services

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