



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Belfast City Council response to DSD's Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework for Northern Ireland
Date:	6 November 2012
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1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Department for Social Development (DSD) are running a public consultation on the Government's proposals for an Urban Regeneration and Community Development policy framework for Northern Ireland. The consultation ends on 25 October 2012.
1.2	DSD state that the new framework will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shape the strategic direction of urban regeneration and community development policy over the coming years, and - set out clear priorities for urban regeneration and community development programmes, both before and after the operational responsibility for these is transferred to councils under the reform of local government.
1.3	The Development Department led on the co-ordination of the council's response working with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) and the Chief Executive's Strategic Planning & Policy team. Given its obvious cross-departmental implications input was gathered from across the council via a number of methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A special meeting of the Development Committee was held in September, to which all Members of the Council were invited; - A facilitated workshop for relevant officers from all departments; and - A facilitated workshop for CMT
1.4	The three meetings all considered a series of questions which were used to frame the draft corporate response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What were the council's priorities for urban regeneration and community development? - How could the new framework contribute to these priorities? - How could the council best work with DSD post-RPA? - How could the council work strategically to support DSD to shape the final framework and its delivery.

2.0	Key Issues
2.1	The final draft council response (attached as Appendix One) broadly welcomes the new Framework and suggests that it has the potential to set a clear direction for the future in its stated intention to establish clear priorities for urban regeneration and community development.
2.2	The response also endorses the policy objectives that are set out within it, particularly those which outline the ongoing focus on tackling deprivation and on city competitiveness. The response suggests that these are central to the success of any framework for urban regeneration and community development.
2.3	<p>However, the council response also provides a series of challenging recommendations which would strengthen the final DSD framework. These are summarised below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The framework should act as a catalyst for discussions on the future source and allocation of resources for urban regeneration and community development; 2. The economic and social potential of Northern Ireland is dependent upon effective urban regeneration and community development in Belfast City; 3. It must support the future role of local government in place making, post local government reorganisation; 4. Urban regeneration and community development must be fully integrated within the Framework to achieve positive social and economic outcomes; 5. The language of urban regeneration and community development used in the Framework should consider using an asset based approach, which recognises the opportunities as well as the challenges; 6. The private sector must be included as a partner in the process of urban regeneration and community development if progress towards a more balanced economy is to be realised; 7. The Framework must acknowledge that urban regeneration and community development in Belfast and other parts of Northern Ireland is still affected by the context of post conflict and sectarianism and aim to work towards a shared future; 8. It must reflect the important role of culture in regeneration.
2.4	The response notes that Belfast City Council looks forward to engaging with the department in the on-going development of the model. It suggests there is the opportunity, through joint working on key regeneration projects in the city, to test out and enhance the framework further in advance of the transfer of functions post RPA.
2.5	The draft response was approved by SP&R committee and will now be forwarded to DSD with a note explaining that the response is subject to endorsement by Council in November.

3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	None.

4.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	None.

5.0	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to note the response to the consultation.

7.0	Key to Abbreviations
CD	Community Development
CLES	Centre for Local Economic Strategies
DSD	Department for Social Development
UR	Urban regeneration

8.0	Documents Attached
Appendix 1: Draft council response to the DSD Urban Regeneration and Community Development framework.	