



## Belfast District Council (Shadow)

<b>Report to</b>	Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Taking forward the Belfast Agenda</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20 February 2015
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sharon McNicholl, Strategic Planning and Policy manager

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	This paper outlines for Members the programme of work for establishing the city's first community plan, the 'Belfast Agenda' including the proposed approach to strategic design and stakeholder inclusion. The paper outlines the likely engagement processes and interim governance structures that are required to meet the legislative requirements and to ensure formal endorsement of the Agenda by Members and our community planning partners by the end of 2015. (The Council's response to the Department's statutory guidance on community planning is also being presented to this Committee.)
1.2	The Belfast Agenda will set out the vision for our city in 2030 while also establishing a number of associated 'quality of life outcomes' for our citizens. The Agenda will identify medium term priorities for achieving these outcomes and set out a series of agreed actions for both the Council and our partners that will address these priorities over the next four years.
1.3	There already is a substantial body of evidence, including the feedback from Members and partner workshops, about what such outcomes and priorities might be. For example, initial work is beginning to identify areas of importance around the city's role as the regional magnet for inward investment; the need to secure long term economic growth; the importance of our city centre not only for the city but for the entire region; the issue of skills and employability; the need to continue to build on the potential of tourism; and the need to build a shared community.
1.4	A key aim of the strategic design process will be to turn such emerging consensus into a series of firm commitments by government departments, agencies, and other relevant stakeholders as a basis for ongoing

1.5	<p>accountability.</p> <p>As Members will be aware during 2015 the NI Executive and its departments will be working to establish the next Programme for Government. This is an important time for the Council to make the case for Belfast and to ensure that there is closer alignment between neighbourhood, city and regional priorities. The Belfast Agenda needs to articulate the challenges and opportunities facing the city and demonstrate the consensus amongst the city's stakeholders about what Belfast's priorities should be.</p>
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<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	<p>In order to quickly initiate the strategic planning process for the Agenda, Bernard Marr of Advanced Performance Institute was commissioned to create a Belfast 'Plan on a Page'. This work was undertaken based on the recognition that, as a city, we are not starting our planning process from a 'blank page'. A number of our partners, including the Council itself, have already undertaken (or are in the process of developing) significant strategic planning work that can inform the Belfast Agenda and give direction to its outcomes, priorities and actions.</p>
2.2	<p>Bernard Marr carried out a series of in-depth meetings with Members and a broad range of partners in the city. His emerging findings were re-drafted following workshops with Members and senior partners. The emerging focus on the economy, educational attainment, skills and employability were particularly welcomed by Members who also highlighted the need for the plan to emphasise further wellbeing outcomes associated with health, reducing inequality, poverty, sustainable development and creating shared space.</p>
2.3	<p>The final draft of the 'plan on a page' (see <b>Appendix 1</b>) attempts to bring clarity and focus around those outcomes, priorities and enablers for which there appears to be broad consensus amongst partners. Members should note that this plan on a page at this stage does not represent a draft Belfast Agenda. Instead it forms an initiation document for a further process of co-design and engagement with our stakeholders that will ultimately lead to a shared, agreed Belfast Agenda.</p>
2.4	<p>In January Transformation Committee agreed that our approach to this engagement and co-design process should be structured around two main components:</p> <p><i>(A) A long term city vision and a series of outcomes for residents (to 2030).</i> This will set the ambitious long term strategic direction for Belfast. Ideally, any future strategic planning process in the city will be able to use these broad outcomes as a reference point. (For example, it will help set the strategic context for the city's Local Development Plan.) As part of this process we would also agree a basket of 'population' indicators for these outcomes that would help all of partners measure the impact of their combined work over the</p>

	<p>longer term.</p> <p>2.5 <i>(B) Our priorities, actions and commitments (to 2020).</i> The second component of the Agenda is about identifying the city's priorities over the next four year. What are the things that we and our partners need to focus on in our first four year plan in order to make the most impact on the longer term outcomes? What are the commitments that partners need to make in order to address these priorities? These commitments will include programmes, strategies and individual interventions. Alongside these commitments would be a basket of performance measures that would include targets.</p> <p>2.6 In order to develop <b>part (A)</b> the Council will lead a 'Belfast Conversation' – a broad citywide Member-led engagement programme with our residents and stakeholders. The engagement will be based around questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What's your vision for Belfast in 2030?</li> <li>✓ What outcomes do you want for the residents of our city (and your area) by 2030?</li> <li>✓ What do you think we need to do now to start achieving these outcomes?</li> </ul> <p>2.7 The main Belfast conversation will commence, following the establishment of the new Belfast City Council, in April and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated Member-led public events (including a City Hall launch in April and local area events). Details of these will be shared with Members once arrangements have been confirmed over the next few weeks.</li> <li>• A social media campaign using Twitter and Facebook</li> <li>• Use of the Council website – including online engagement</li> <li>• Online support for organisations that wish to stage their own 'Belfast Conversation' events</li> </ul> <p>2.8 The data gathered from all of these engagement strands will be analysed and continually inform the development of both outcomes and priorities in the Agenda.</p> <p>2.9 For <b>part (B)</b> Transformation Committee has agreed to use an Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) approach to determine priorities and actions over the medium term (to 2020). This work has already been initiated by the Bernard Marr piece; however, it is also begin informed by the findings of our residents' survey and an analysis of the city evidence base. Crucially, for this strand of work to be effective we need to work closely with planners and senior managers across relevant partner organisations to develop the ideas behind the plan on a page and turn these into practical, deliverable actions to which partners can be held to account.</p>
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2.10	<p>Members have already been introduced to the work of Mark Friedman and his OBA model. It provides a simple approach that any organisation can use to determine what it wants to achieve and how well it has gone about achieving it. It asks three simple questions: <i>How much have we done? How well have we done it? And, Is anyone better off?</i> It is this last question that public organisations often find very difficult to answer collectively.</p>								
2.11	<p>OBA encourages organisations to think much more clearly about the ultimate impact of their work on people and how it can be measured using proper data – which can then be used as the basis for ongoing planning, decision-making and evaluation. It’s an approach that’s already been successfully adopted by a number of cities including Cardiff and Leeds. It is also the approach that the Department of the Environment are encouraging all Councils to adopt in the development of their community plans.</p>								
2.12	<p>Working with OBA training expert, David Burnby, we will deliver a number of workshops over the next few weeks which will not only build the capacity of Members and partners in the OBA techniques but will also examine specific priorities in more detail. We will use the OBA approach to clarify the links between the outcomes we want for our residents and the actions that, collectively as organisations, we need to deliver on the ground. A specific OBA workshop is being arranged for Members at the end of March.</p>								
2.13	<p>During April and May partners will come together to ‘unpack’ emerging priority or clusters of priorities. These workshops will use OBA to ‘turn talk into action’ by answering the following questions:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are our priorities for 2020?</li> <li>2. What are the characteristics of each priority?</li> <li>3. What data indicator(s) would help us measure success?</li> <li>4. What’s the current story in Belfast? Are there trend curves that we need to turn? (ie, are things getting worse over time)</li> <li>5. Which partners could help in turning the curve?</li> <li>6. What works well now in turning the curve?</li> <li>7. What actions/programmes/strategies could deliver on these priorities that we’re not currently doing?</li> </ol> </div>								
2.14	<p><b>Timeline</b>  The target date for a first fully endorsed Belfast Agenda is December 2015. With this date in mind the following high level stages for the delivery of the programme as proposed:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Stages</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Key dates</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Train Members, officers and partners in the Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA)</td> <td>Feb to Mar 15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Develop draft vision and city outcomes</td> <td>Feb to Apr 15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The ‘Belfast conversation’ engagement programme</td> <td>Feb to Apr 15</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Stages	Key dates	Train Members, officers and partners in the Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA)	Feb to Mar 15	Develop draft vision and city outcomes	Feb to Apr 15	The ‘Belfast conversation’ engagement programme	Feb to Apr 15
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Train Members, officers and partners in the Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA)	Feb to Mar 15
Co-design process on city priorities and commitments with our partners	April to May 15
Partners agree a draft Belfast Agenda for consultation	From June 2015
Formal consultation and further refinement	June to Dec 15
Endorsement process	Jan to Mar 16
Publish the Belfast Agenda	Apr 2016

2.15 **Governance and support structures**

The DoE statutory guidance calls for some form of governance structure for the community planning process. Thinking on governance structures is at a very early stage and will be guided by Members using a ‘form follows function’ approach. The most effective and efficient governance arrangements will need to be influenced by the outcomes, priorities and commitments within the Belfast Agenda.

2.16 A pragmatic governance arrangement will also need to balance a need for inclusivity with effective and timely decision-making. Over time there may be the need for a number of ‘thematic’ sub-groups aligned to individual priorities (for example, around economic growth).

2.17 The final agreed governance structure will need to be agreed by Members and the city’s partners over the next year. Work has now begun to determine the logistical requirements of a community planning structure; accountability and decision-making mechanisms; roles and responsibilities; etc. A further paper will be brought to Committee for discussion in the coming months.

2.18 **Building the Belfast Agenda evidence base**

One the statutory requirements of the community planning process is for the council to set up and manage a shared ‘evidence base’ which would be available to community planning partners to inform ongoing decision-making on priorities, actions and as a basis for impact measurements. This evidence base would develop over time into a managed resource of ‘smart’ urban data that would be contributed to by different partners.

2.19 Officers are working to create the initial city baseline (which includes the results of our residents survey and strategic planning audit) and are also pursuing a number of possible routes with European and local ‘smart city’ partners towards developing such a source.

2.20 The Council has been approached by the Ulster University’s Economic Policy Centre which is currently working with the Department of Finance and Personnel on the development of regional measures of wellbeing. The Centre also produces bi-annual economic outlook reports; manages an economic forecasting database and dashboard; and undertakes bespoke research (for example, Annual Skills reports, Annual Export

	Reports, Local Government Economic Forecast).
2.21	There is an opportunity for the Council to become a sponsor of the Centre which would entitle the Council to sit on its Advisory Board and secure and influence research support. The work has the potential to contribute significantly to the Council's ongoing analysis and monitoring of the city economy and to support the underpinning evidence base for the Belfast Agenda. Members are asked to consider the proposal for Council to contribute to the work of the Centre at a cost of £25,000 per annum for two years.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	This development phase of the Belfast Agenda is included within current Council resources. The OBA capacity building programme is being supported from the Department of the Environment's LGR capacity fund.  The £25,000 per annum contribution to the UU Economic Policy Centre has been included in budget estimates from the Development Departments for next year.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b>
4.1	Equality and good relations implications, in relation to this policy, are still under consideration. Further updates will be sent to the Equality and Diversity Officer in due course. However, it is likely an EQIA will be carried out as part of the formal consultation process on the Belfast Agenda.

<b>5</b>	<b>Call In</b>
5.1	This decision is subject to call-in.

<b>6</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
6.1	Members are asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the latest version of the "Plan on a Page"</li> <li>2. Note the proposal for a 'Belfast Conversation' that includes five Member-led public events (details of which will be forwarded to Members once they are confirmed)</li> <li>3. Note the proposed OBA training programme, including a proposed Member workshop, details of which will be forwarded to Members once confirmed.</li> <li>4. Note the proposal from the Ulster University's Economic Policy Centre and agree to the Council contributing £25,000 per annum for a two year period to support their work.</li> </ol>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
Timeline:	Reporting Officer: Suzanne Wylie

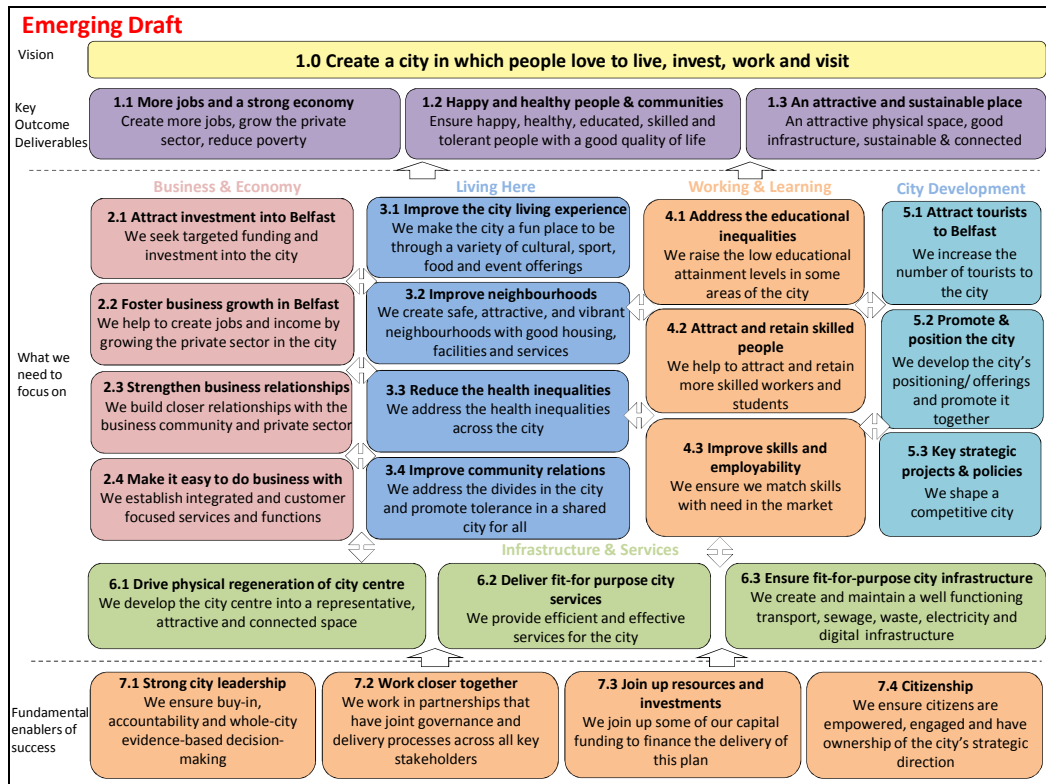
<b>7</b>	<b>Abbreviations</b>
	DoE – Department of the Environment OBA – Outcomes Based Accountability

**6 Documents Attached**

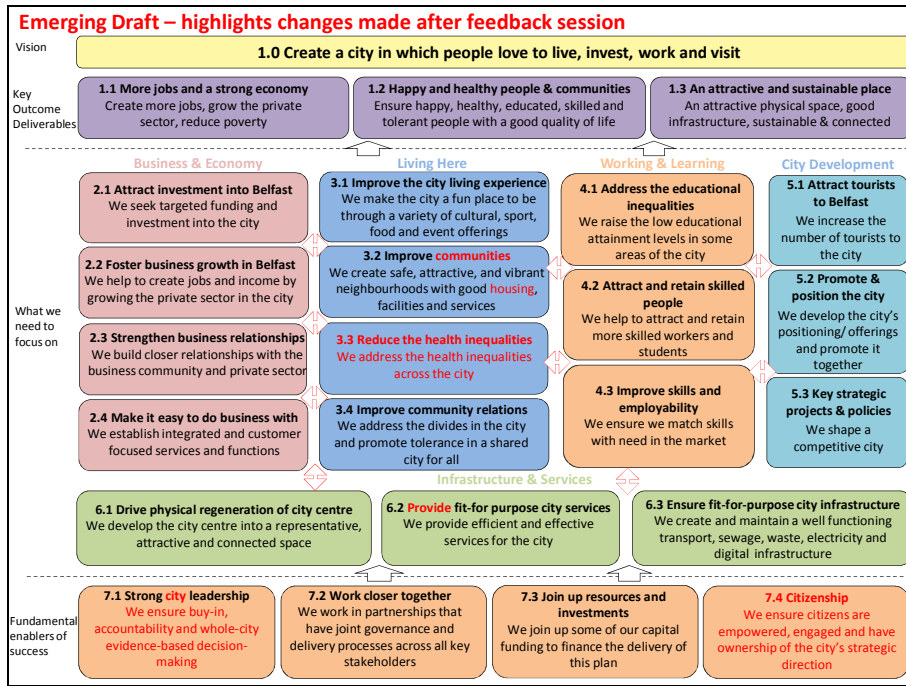
Appendix One: Emerging Plan on a Page

**Appendix 1: Emerging Plan on a Page**

Slide 1



Slide 2



This one-page plan outlines the strategic priorities for the city of Belfast over the next 3 years.

The purpose of the document is to create a common understanding and agenda of the priorities and deliverables for the city so that all stakeholders can work together to make Belfast a city in which people love to live, invest, work and visit.

The diagram depicts the strategic priorities for the city and is organised in 3 main sections:

- At the top are the vision and the key outcome deliverables for the city
- In the middle are the focus areas that have to be addressed to achieve the outcome deliverables and the vision. The key focus areas are grouped into 5 themes, namely Business & Economy, Living Here, Working and Learning, City Development and Infrastructure & Services. Each of these help to deliver the key outcome objectives (illustrated by the upward arrows) but at the same time each of the focus areas support each other (illustrated by the arrows between them).
- At the bottom of the diagram are the fundamental enablers of success. These have to be in place in order to deliver on anything, the key focus areas and the outcome deliverables.



### **1.0 Create a city in which people love to live, invest, work and visit**

This vision sits as place-holder until a new vision has been created based on the current work on re-visioning the city

#### **1.1 More jobs and a strong economy**

One of the key outcome deliverables for the city is to create more jobs and reduce poverty. The key to this is to grow the private sector and re-balance the economy. A particular focus would be to grow entrepreneurship and the growth of small and medium sized businesses. Key outcome indicators need to be developed, such as job growth, business growth, poverty stats, unemployment figures, etc.

#### **1.2 Happy and healthy people & communities**

In order to be successful, Belfast needs happy, healthy, educated, skilled and tolerant people that experience a good quality of life. Key to this are the reduced health and education inequalities as well as good relations between citizens.

Key outcome indicators need to be developed, such as health metrics, education and skills metrics, quality of life measures, etc.

#### **1.3 An attractive and sustainable place**

The third outcome objective is to create an attractive physical space with good and fit-for-purpose infrastructure. We also need a sustainable city with well connected transport links. Key outcome indicators need to be developed, such as infrastructure measures, space assessments, sustainability metrics, etc.

### **2.1 Attract investment into Belfast**

In order to grow our economy we have to seek more targeted funding and investment into the city.

In particular, we have to:

- Attract more Foreign Direct Investment
- Incentivise investments (especially in key sectors)
- Identify key sectors for the city and create industry and business clusters
- Secure more funding from Westminster
- Secure more funding from the EU

Key enablers to do that are:

- Identify the key sectors to support and grow in the city

## **2.2 Foster business growth in Belfast**

In order to grow the economy and reduce poverty we have create jobs and income. The main focus here is growing the private sector in the city (relative to the public sector) and focus on small and medium (SME) business growth and entrepreneurship.

In particular, we have to:

- Grow businesses in Belfast to start and rebalance the economy
- Focus on the SME market and start up companies as they represent the engine of growth
- Focus on key industry clusters
- Provide business incubators
- Provide mentoring and support for entrepreneurs and business start-ups

Key enablers to do that are:

- Identify the key sectors to support and grow in the city

## **2.3 Strengthen business relationships**

We build closer relationships with the business community and private sector. This is something the city has not traditionally been good at. Real engagement and collaboration is required here.

In particular, we have to:

- Proactively engage with the private sector and with the business community
- Create trust and demonstrate relevance to the business community
- Build business networks in key industries and sectors
- Engage the SME sector and entrepreneurs

Key enablers to do that are:

- Identify the key sectors to support and grow in the city

#### **2.4 Make it easy to do business with**

We establish integrated and customer focused services and functions. Traditionally the city has not been easy to do business with. Many processes are disjointed and different agencies and stakeholders are not always working together well enough to provide a seamless service.

In particular, we have to:

- Create one-stop shop business service functions
- Create a developer-friendly and business friendly planning function
- Making fast decisions based on clear strategies

Key enablers to do that are:

- Identify key functions and services delivered across the city
- Have in place a clear development strategy

#### **3.1 Improve the city living experience**

We make the city a fun place to be through a variety of cultural, sport, food and event offerings. Especially the city centre needs to be attractive to visit and requires more attention to ensure it offers something in the evenings and has a broad offering of restaurants and cultural events.

In particular, we have to:

- Boost the night time economy in the city centre
- Improve the retail offering
- Increase the events held in the city centre (e.g. food festivals, etc.)
- Create cultural events that welcome everyone

### **3.2 Improve Communities**

We create safe, attractive, and vibrant neighbourhoods with good housing, facilities and services. It is vital that communities are connected with each other and to the city centre. Communities also require good housing and facilities to thrive.

In particular, we have to:

- Improve and integrate local services
- Connect local people to the benefits of economic growth
- Ensure people feel safe
- Ensure the right housing is delivered across the city

### **3.3 Reduce the health inequalities**

We address the health inequalities across the city. There are some parts of the city with poor health records compared to other parts. In order to make the city an overall success, these issues need to be addressed.

In particular, we have to:

- Ensure people have access to opportunity to improve their health and well-being
- [here I am waiting for more input from the health people]

### **3.4 Improve community relations**

We address the divides in the city and promote tolerance in a shared city for all. Belfast remains a divided city and political and social troubles will stall the growth and prosperity of the city. Fostering community relations is therefore a critical building block of the city's future.

In particular, we have to:

- Foster community relations
- Create more joint physical spaces
- Create a vibrant and neutral inner city area

### **4.1 Address the educational inequalities**

In terms of educational attainment levels, Belfast is a divided city. Some parts of the city achieve great results that as benchmarked across the UK, while some communities have extremely low educational attainment levels. A city can't fully thrive if the poor educational results in some parts of the city mean that a part of the city is excluded from future growth and employment opportunities. The city has to raise the low educational attainment levels in some areas of the city

In particular, we have to:

- Provide more rounded and joined-up support for affected families
- Give families and in particular young children hope and raise their aspirations
- Need to develop joint metrics and monitor progress

#### **4.2 Attract and retain skilled people**

Belfast is experiencing a brain-drain. People receive an excellent education in the city but then decide to leave to work elsewhere. The city has to retain more skilled workers and students. Also, in order to grow the city has to attract in people with the right skills.

In particular, we have to:

- Improve the retention of skilled people
- Attract skilled people to move to Belfast
- Increase the number of students

#### **4.3 Improve skills and employability**

We ensure we match skills with needs in the market. Skills are the life-blood of a city and it is vital that Belfast ensures the right skills and learning programmes are offered to match the needs in the job market, today and in the future.

In particular, we have to:

- Better link the skills and training provision to the economic needs
- Identify the key skills required and key skills gaps for the city and ensure those skills are being promoted and appropriate training delivered.
- Track the impact of training on employability (Make sure we educate for work)

Key enablers to do that are:

- Need a key skills assessment / gap analysis

### **5.1 Attract tourists to Belfast**

Belfast has to potential to become a big tourist destination. With tourists come new business and job opportunities as well as income. We increase the number of tourists to the city

In particular, we have to:

- Increase leisure and business tourism
- Build another major tourist attraction in Belfast

Key enablers to do that are:

- Develop a tourism strategy
- Create a clear narrative for the city

### **5.2 Jointly promote the city**

In order to attract investment, skilled people and tourists, the city has to a clear positioning / offerings and promote jointly across all stakeholders reinforcing the same messages.

In particular, we have to:

- Promote the city using the same narrative and focus
- Create synergies

Key enablers to do that are:

- Create a city narrative everyone buys into
- Closer collaboration between stakeholders

## **5.2 Key strategic projects and policies**

We shape a competitive city [needs expansion]

[needs to be completed]

## **6.1 Drive physical regeneration of city centre**

We develop the city centre into a representative, attractive and connected space.

In particular, we have to:

- Enable the university to move into the city and regenerate the area around it
- Build more inner-city housing
- Build more grade A office buildings
- Improve the retail offering
- Optimise traffic flow and transport infrastructure
- Connect the Titanic Quarter
- Foster industry clusters



### **6.2 Provide fit-for purpose city services**

A successful and thriving city has offers efficient and effective services across all key providers

In particular, we have to:

- Focus on service excellence
- Improve service efficiency
- Increase service effectiveness

### **6.3 Ensure fit-for-purpose city infrastructure**

We create and maintain a well functioning transport, sewage, waste, electricity and digital infrastructure

In particular, we have to:

- Upgrade the sewage system
- Create a well functioning transport system
- Ensure the waste management system is fit for purpose
- Ensure the electricity system is fit for purpose
- Invest in the digital infrastructure

### **7.1 Strong city leadership**

We ensure buy-in, accountability and whole-city evidence-based decision-making

In particular, we have to:

- Ensure political will and capacity to make city-wide decisions
- Put in place evidence-based political processes
- Ensure we hold people accountable for unprofessional behaviour

Key enablers to do that are:

- Build trust
- Build buy-in
- Create city-wide accountability for poor behaviour

### **7.2 Work closer together**

We put in place joint governance and delivery processes across all key stakeholders

In particular, we have to:

- Address the fragmented nature of government and decision-making
- Create effective working groups and forums for governance

Key enablers to do that are:

- Council could take a facilitator / catalyst role

### **7.3 Join up resources and investments**

We join up some of our capital funding to finance the delivery of this plan

In particular, we have to:

- Ensure capital funding is made available to deliver this plan
- Create joint investment opportunities

### **7.4 Citizenship**

We ensure citizens are empowered, engaged and have ownership of the city's strategic direction.

In particular, we have to:

- [needs to be completed]