



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Health and Environmental Services Committee
Subject:	Public Health Framework - 'Fit and Well – Changing Lives'
Date:	5 th September, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Head of Environmental Health, ext 3281
Contact Officer:	Valerie Brown, Environmental Health Manager, ext 3301

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware of the ten-year cross-departmental public health strategy 'Investing for Health', which recognised that health and well-being is largely determined by our social, economic, physical and cultural environment. The strategy aimed to improve health and reduce health inequalities. The purpose of this report is to draw Members attention to the successor to 'Investing for Health', a proposed new 10 year public health framework for 2012-22, 'Fit and Well – Changing Lives' http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/fit-and-well-consultation-document.pdf
1.2	The new framework is designed to be strategic and to provide direction for policies and actions to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Northern Ireland. It builds on the aims of the previous strategy <i>"To improve the health and well-being status of all our people, and to reduce inequalities in health"</i> and it is proposed that the new framework will move Northern Ireland towards a vision, "Where all people are enabled and supported in achieving their full health potential and well-being." This vision seeks to create the conditions for individuals and communities to take control of their own lives.
1.3	The proposed framework provides an opportunity to address existing and some emerging issues since 'Investing for Health' was first published. Proposed policy aims for the new strategic framework includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• giving every child the best start• enabling all children and young people to develop the skills and capacity to reach their full potential and have control over their lives• enabling young adults to grow, manage change and maximise their potential• enabling working age adults to have a full and satisfying life and social wellbeing• enabling people in later years to have a satisfying and active life• promoting healthy safe, sustainable places and thriving

communities

- ensuring health is a consideration in the development of public policies.

The framework aims relate to a 'life course' approach, where action to reduce health inequalities starts before birth and follows through the life of the child into adulthood and old age. There are five life stages in total and two underlying themes. The framework encourages interventions to achieve outcomes to meet specific needs of each life stage and to assist transition between them. Underpinning and supporting interventions will run along the life course which will promote 'sustainable communities' and 'build healthy public policy'.

1.4 The outcomes framework in part two of the document sets out for each life stage and underpinning theme the policy aims, and long and short term outcomes. The 3 long term outcomes leading to 2022 are:

- Securing safe and supportive environments
- Seeking to maximise potential
- Promoting good physical and mental health and wellbeing

1.5 The responsibilities to achieve the actions cut across government departments and are designed to interconnect in a cohesive reinforcing framework. They are based on encouraging action around the key factors which impact on health and are supported by numerous short term outcomes up to 2015.

1.6 The framework promotes partnership working to address the wider socio-economic and environmental influences on health and wellbeing and it advocates a 'whole government approach' where the public health framework sits at the heart of government and informs other policies and strategies under development.

1.7 The mechanism for achieving the 'health and health equity in all policies' approach will be via a cross departmental Ministerial Group on Public Health led by the Minister for Health using a policy based outcomes framework contained in part two of the strategy. The public health framework also embodies the principle of 'proportionate universalism', where action must be universal but with a scale and intensity proportionate to the level of disadvantage.

1.8 It identifies two strategic priorities;

- early years, and
- supporting Vulnerable People and Communities

1.9 The framework also proposes six cross cutting areas for prioritisation:

- Support for families and children
- Equipped for life
- Employability
- Volunteering / giving back
- Use of space and assets
- Using arts, sports and culture
-

1.10 Through these areas the framework aims to provide a focus for partnership working at a strategic and local level on issues that have population wide

benefits. They are designed to add value to work already underway or planned with the benefits cutting across the various life stages. The cross cutting areas are still at a developmental stage and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is seeking views on how these can be taken forward and if there are other areas that should be considered.
--

2	Key Issues
2.1	The proposed framework is very detailed and all encompassing and it highlights the importance of coordination at regional level and also between regional and local levels in addressing public health issues. There is a strong emphasis on partnership working, including working with local government and across sectors, and in influencing the incorporation of health and health equity across government policy and programmes.
2.2	The priorities and themes for tackling health inequalities identified by the Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) in its Framework for Action are reflected in the policy aims and strategic priorities of the public health framework, particularly the focus on early years, life stages, healthy, safe and sustainable places, and health in all policies. Many of the interventions being developed under the BSP Framework for Action and also the projects in the Council's Investment Programme support the six cross cutting areas for prioritisation identified within the new public health framework.
2.3	The consultation on the proposed public health framework closes on 31 st October and a full response is being prepared. The Council's response will consider the cross cutting areas for prioritisation and the short term outcomes under part two of the framework in more detail and also in relation to the BSP and Council investment priorities to ensure there are no gaps or additional areas that should be included.
2.4	The role of local government and other sectors in taking forward the various interventions in achieving the long term outcomes also needs to be more clearly expressed.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	This report is for information only and there are no resource implications at this stage.

4	Recommendation
4.1	The Committee is requested to note the proposed ten-year public health framework and its potential for shaping policy across government in addressing health inequalities in Northern Ireland.

5	Decision Tracking
5.1	Siobhan Toland to bring the full consultation response to the October Committee.

