



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Healthier City Framework and Healthier City Plan 2010-2011</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> August 2010
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### Relevant Background Information

The Council's overall purpose is to improve quality of life but it is clear in Belfast, as in other cities, that health and illness follow a social gradient; the lower the socioeconomic position the worse the health. This 'health gap' and indeed the general health of the population of Belfast are worse than many other UK cities. For example, smoking levels remain high and smoking is still one of the main causes of preventable death; economic inactivity in Belfast is among the highest in the UK, and obesity is increasing. Misuse of alcohol continues to place an enormous burden on the health and wellbeing of the people of Belfast. Alcohol misuse kills more people directly than illegal drugs; it is closely linked to violence and crime and contributes to mental illness.

The Council has a key role to play in addressing these issues and has included the development of a healthier city as one of its key cross cutting priorities under the Supporting People and Communities theme of the current corporate plan.

In recognising the opportunities presented by the reform of the health service, including Councillor representation on the newly formed local health commissioning group the Council agreed to work with the Public Health Agency and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in establishing a joint health development unit for the city. The new unit was launched by the Minister for the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety in March this year. The Council also recognised the importance of incorporating health improvement in the development of significant council strategies such as leisure, community safety, anti poverty, and good relations, and an interdepartmental officer group was formed to take this work forward. An extensive mapping exercise was carried out to get an initial snapshot of the range of programmes and services that the Council is involved in to improve health and wellbeing in the city and a health and wellbeing coordinator was appointed to support cross council working and the development of a healthier city framework and plan.

The purpose of this report is to present the Healthier City Framework and Plan for 2010-2011.

## Key Issues

The purpose of the Healthier City Framework is to clearly set out how the Council will contribute to developing a healthier city. It describes the delivery, leadership and accountability mechanisms that will achieve an integrated and coordinated 'One Council' approach to improving the health and wellbeing of the people of Belfast.

In particular the framework provides a mechanism:

- To align health improvement work with the Corporate Plan enabling the Council to meet its obligations and responsibilities in a coordinated and integrated manner
- To develop, monitor and review the Healthier City Plan
- To inform the Health and Wellbeing Plan for Belfast currently being developed with our partners in the Belfast Health Development Unit.

Central to the Healthier City Framework is the internal Healthier City Plan, which will shape our approach. The plan was produced after widespread mapping of current internal and external areas of work and strategies. The plan focuses on programmes and services that really add value to improving health and wellbeing; in particular:

- Programmes and services where there is potential to extend and work better across the Council, for example, tackling alcohol misuse and obesity in young people
- Innovative, high profile programmes, for example 'Healthier Families'
- Areas of work where we can share and learn from good practice, for example work on healthy ageing.
- Localised working within communities to improve health and wellbeing, for example the development of community gardens.
- Improving services and programmes for older people.

The plan is organised around a number of key areas of work, which are healthier communities, policy and strategic planning, capacity building and communication, promotion and marketing. The actions contained in the plan are aligned to external priorities and in particular to the themes that have been identified by the Belfast Health Development Unit. These include mental health, improved outcomes for children and young people; improving outcomes in disadvantaged neighbourhoods; healthy ageing; improved physical activity for all, alcohol; and the health needs of black and minority ethnic groups.

The Council's action plan for older people is now also included under the umbrella of the Healthier City Framework, which will improve coordination, monitoring and accountability. Reporting performance against this aspect of the plan will continue to be to the cross party reference group on older people.

Improving health and wellbeing is a significant challenge as it cuts across many different aspects of life in the city from housing to education to delivery of services by the Council, the police, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and others. It is essential therefore that we work together to coordinate what we do and make better use of the staff and money we have to do this work. The Healthier City Plan and Framework enable us to do this.

The strong links between the Healthier City Framework and Plan and the recently formed Belfast Health Development Unit will enable the Council to carry out its health improvement work and programmes in a way which will have much more impact in communities and in a context where there is an agreed strategic direction and priority work programmes between all of the key agencies.

This is particularly important given that the Unit's role will be to identify priority actions that can address some of the key problems which lead to ill health in the city and to ensure that the key agencies (represented on a wider partnership) re-align or combine resources behind delivering programmes that are known to work. This is a forerunner for community planning and, given the current financial climate, it is important for the Council to work closely with organisations such as the Public Health Agency and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to maximise its impact on improving the health and wellbeing of the people in Belfast.

### **Resource Implications**

At a meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2010 thematic budgets of £100,000 for Health and Wellbeing and £85,000 for Older People were agreed (this was a similar allocation to the previous year). Both of these budgets are to be used in the effective implementation of the Healthier City Plan in the following ways:

#### **Health and Wellbeing**

The budget allocation of £100,000 is to be used to support the work of the Belfast Health Development Unit and Council led projects to improve health inequalities.

Last year the Committee approved the appointment of three jointly funded posts with the Health Trust and the Public Health Agency to manage the Belfast Health Development Unit and deliver projects focusing on the health and wellbeing of children and young people, alcohol and obesity and specific work within more deprived neighbourhoods. £59,000 is needed to support these posts this year

The remainder of the Health and Wellbeing thematic budget, £41,000 is to be used to contribute to the costs of high profile programme work within the Healthier City Plan, such as suicide prevention; 'Healthy Families' (a whole family intervention approach combining weight management, education and physical activity); a family focused alcohol programme; and Community Gardens.

#### **Older People**

The budget of £82,000 is allocated as follows:

£45,000 – Oil stamps saving scheme (this was agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March 2010);

£37,000 – to support Council led local neighbourhood and community

programmes and events for older people specifically aimed at combating social isolation, including the annual Senior Citizens Convention.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to agree the Healthier City Framework and Healthier City Plan for 2010-2011, recognising that both are living documents that will be subject to continuous development and improvement.

### **Decision Tracking**

The Director of Health and Environmental Services will bring back reports on the work of the Belfast Health Development Unit and report progress on the implementation of the Healthier City Plan.

### **Documents Attached :**

Healthier City Framework and Plan