

Belfast City Council

DRAFT INTERIM

Corporate Plan 2011 – 2012



Draft Interim Plan as at 10 June 2011

Introduction

When developing this plan, we asked people what they thought about the Council and how it was performing – 80% of residents said that the Council played an important role in their everyday lives. This is a responsibility which we take seriously, especially in this time of economic uncertainty.

These are rapidly changing times for Belfast and its people. The confidence and optimism which provided the backdrop for our last corporate plan in 2008 have been replaced by a more cautious and restrained environment. Across the city we can see the signs that the economic downturn is having on local people and communities with increasing numbers of vacant properties on the city's key routes and in the city. Many people are concerned about the impact of the economic down-turn and reductions in public sector spending on local services and jobs.

However, there is still much to be positive about and build upon. The last decade was one of growth and success for the city. The next few years will witness the opening of a number of key cultural venues and tourist attractions that will make Belfast, which currently attracts 9.3million visitors per year, even more appealing. The city has a vibrant artistic and cultural life and key growth sectors such as the creative industries sector have the potential to bring an injection to our local economy.

This, more than ever, is a time for strong, collaborative, leadership to ensure that the city is able to build on its strengths whilst rising to the challenges ahead. This corporate plan sets out Belfast City Council's commitment to making that happen. It sets out how we will:

- Continue to invest in the city and local areas;
- Drive efficiencies and provide value for money services;
- Work in partnership to improve all aspects of quality of life across the city.

The plan has five themes they are:

Leadership – shaping, developing and managing the city and building good relations;

Environment – creating a sustainable, clean and healthy living space for all;

Economy – creating a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive economy;

People and communities – issues that matter most to local people, including community safety, health improvement and services for younger and older people;

Improving our services - delivering value for money, customer focused services

We look forward to working with our many partners and with local people and communities across the city to deliver this plan and make a real difference locally.

How our plan emerged

The Council is committed to engaging with local people about what is important to them and ensuring that this is reflected in our plans.

Over the course of the past year, we asked for feedback from residents about what the Council's priorities should be. We did this through household and on-line surveys and at local meetings. The top priorities identified, in descending order, were:

- Creating a safer city
- Making the city cleaner and greener
- Supporting children and young people
- Investing in improving local areas
- Helping to support and improve the city's economy
- Providing value for money services

The areas identified as most likely to improve quality of life were:

- Lower levels of anti-social behaviour
- Lower levels of crime
- More activities for children and young people
- Better employment opportunities
- Cleaner streets

Some of these priorities have remained the same since the last corporate plan was developed in 2008 such as creating a safer city, making the city cleaner and greener and more activities for children and young people. However, this time feedback placed an increased emphasis on supporting the economy and improving employment opportunities in the city. Throughout our plan you will see the ways in which we will try to address these priorities, through delivering vital local services, working in partnership with other organisations to address issues such as community safety and health improvement and by investing in the city in its neighbourhoods through building, improvement and regeneration programmes.

Our plan is also based upon an analysis of the type of city Belfast is now – from details about the profile of the population, through to the experience of people living here in terms of health, education, employment and feelings of safety. A summary of this information is also included in this plan.

About the Council

Belfast City Council is the local authority with responsibility for the city of Belfast, the capital and largest city of Northern Ireland. The Council is the largest of the 26 councils in Northern Ireland.

The Council has the following roles:

- **Direct provision of a number of services and facilities:** for example, street cleansing and waste collection; parks; leisure; cemeteries; Waterfront Hall; Zoo
- **Promotion of the Arts, Tourism and Community and Economic Development**
- **Regulation and licensing** of certain activities, such as, environmental health, building control and public entertainment licensing
- **Representative role** e.g. appointment by Council to the District Policing Partnership, Partnership Boards, Harbour Commissioners etc.
- **Consultative role** - Council's right to be consulted by other service providers – Planning, Roads, Water, Housing
- **Leadership and Advocacy role** – working on behalf of the City and its citizens, commissioning research, co-ordinating and scrutinizing public service provision, place shaping

Council – Key Facts and Figures

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Population Served | 268,000 |
| Gross Council Expenditure | £168.7m |
| Net Council Expenditure | £130.5m |

Our Operations

| | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| No. of Employees | 2,300+ |
| No. of Operational Locations | 101 |

Our Political Representatives

| | |
|---|----|
| Political Composition of Councillors (51) | |
| Sinn Féin | 16 |
| Democratic Unionist Party | 15 |
| Social, Democratic and Labour Party | 8 |
| Alliance Party | 6 |
| Ulster Unionist Party | 3 |
| Progressive Unionist Party | 2 |
| Independent | 1 |

Whilst the main focus of this Corporate Plan is on the delivery of our strategic priorities, it is important to remember that the Council is also responsible for delivering an extensive range of services which play a key role in improving the quality of life of our citizens.



Operating 10 leisure centres and 22 community centres across the city



Organising various sporting events including the Belfast City Marathon which takes place annually in May



Managing 2 city parks, 9 district parks, 5 country parks, 36 local parks, 8 playing field sites, 75 playgrounds and 4 allotment sites across the city covering an area of approximately 3,000 acres



Organising major civic events in the city including Halloween, Christmas and New Year celebrations, the Titanic 'Made in Belfast' Festival and the Belfast Maritime Festival



Carrying out all aspects of waste collection and disposal including operating 4 recycling centres, 2 civic amenity sites and 40 'bring' sites across the city. We also provide a free bulky household waste collection service



Providing grant aid to community groups, sports groups and community relations projects across Belfast



Managing the City Hall, Waterfront Hall, Ulster Hall, Belfast Castle, Malone House and Belfast Zoo



Registering births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships in the city



Cleaning over 444,000km of streets every year



Providing a range of support programmes for businesses in the city



Managing the Gasworks Business Park, St. George's Market, Smithfield Market, Duncrue and Balmoral Industrial Estates and various other sites in the city



Promoting culture, arts and tourism in Belfast



Providing a range of development programmes for communities in the city



Providing administrative support for the Belfast District Policing Partnership and its 4 area sub-groups



Operating a Consumer Advice Centre and Neighbourhood Development Office



Facilitating the Belfast City Council Youth Forum



Looking after 11,000 trees on streets across the city



Managing and maintaining 9 cemeteries and the City of Belfast Crematorium



Enforcing regulatory and licensing responsibilities, in line with the Government's Enforcement Concordat, in areas such as environmental health, building control, public health, pollution, street trading, shop opening hours, tattooing and ear piercing, health and safety at work and public entertainment licensing



Working in partnership with many agencies on joint initiatives including the Community Safety Partnership, ARC21 Waste Management Partnership, Belfast Healthy Cities, Investing for Health and the four Area Partnerships Boards



Considering planning applications within the city council area and submitting views to the Planning Service



Providing part-funding to the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB) and Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) in conjunction with private and public sector partners

Our Values

Our corporate values are integral to the way in which we work. These values underpin everything that our Councillors and employees do and the way we will deliver our objectives. We will:

Focus on the needs of customers, foster a 'can-do' attitude and be problem solvers -

providing first class services which are responsive to citizens needs and continuing to ensure that the council is a place where things happen

Provide value for money and improve services –delivering high quality, value for money services at all times and continually improving our services

Work together – working with our partners across Belfast to ensure that our combined efforts contribute to the continued success of our city

Respect each other, be fair, promote equality and good relations – improving access to our services; valuing diversity, ensuring that everyone shares in the city's success and tackling discrimination in all its forms by treating all communities and people equally

Act sustainably – using our resources effectively and efficiently and promoting the principle of sustainability in all our activities

Ensure the highest standards of health and safety –maintaining the highest possible standards of health and safety at all times to ensure we protect our employees and all those who use our services

Value our employees –continuing to support our employees to help them fulfil their potential

Our Vision and Strategic Themes

Our vision is to ensure that *'The Council, working with communities and stakeholders, takes a lead role in improving quality of life now and for future generations for the people of Belfast by making the city and its neighbourhoods better places to live in, work in, invest in, study in and visit'*.

To deliver on this vision our Corporate Plan sets out 5 strategic themes which have been agreed by the Council. We have chosen to focus on a number of specific themes to ensure that our activity is focused on real outcomes which will benefit everyone in the city.

Our strategic themes are:

| Strategic Theme | What they mean |
|------------------------|---|
| City leadership | Providing leadership and strategic direction for shaping, developing and managing the city |
| Environment | Caring for Belfast's environment and creating a sustainable, clean and healthy living space for all |
| Economy | Creating a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive economy |
| People and communities | Creating stronger neighbourhoods |
| Improving our Services | Delivering value for money, customer focused services with the right level of resources to deliver Council and ratepayer priorities |

Although this Plan sets out our strategic direction for the coming year we also recognise that it is important that it is flexible and can adapt to new challenges. Therefore we will review and update our plan in line with our new Council in 2011. This review will take place in the autumn of 2011 and will ensure we remain focused on the right issues.

The Corporate Plan is the Council's key strategic planning document but it should be read in conjunction with the Council's other relevant planning documents. These documents are available on the relevant sections on our website at www.belfastcity.gov.uk. Further information in relation to all the services we provide is available on our website at – www.belfastcity.gov.uk/atoz.

Many of the actions in this Plan cannot be delivered by the Council alone and we will work with our partners from across public, private, community and voluntary sectors to ensure that a difference is made to for local people on issues such as health improvement, community safety and good relations.

The remainder of this Plan focuses on our strategic themes. It sets out why they were chosen, what our key priorities under each area are, the actions we are going to take in 2011/2012 and how we will measure our success.

City Leadership

Contributing to the leadership and strategic direction for shaping, developing and managing the city

Our priorities

Place Shaping

- Using our capital programme and City Investment Fund to improve the city's economy and help regenerate local areas;
- Finding new ways of attracting funding to create sustainable investment across the city;
- Influencing the future development of the city and identifying the physical infrastructure needed to support the city's future economic competitiveness and growth;
- Preparing for the effective delivery of the new responsibilities that we will receive as a result of local government reform;
- Creating an effective Community Planning Framework.

Good Relations and Equality

- Creating better relationships with organisations locally, regionally and internationally to tackle poverty, address inequality and improve quality of life in the city
- Leading the development of good relations across the city, mainstreaming equality and respecting diversity
- Securing Peace III investment to create shared space and positive relations in the city.

What local people said about city leadership

- 96% of residents say they enjoy living in Belfast and more than four in five (84%) are satisfied with living in their local area
- In the last three years, more than half of residents think that the city has improved
- 80% of residents think that the council is important in their everyday lives
- 73% of residents think that the council makes Belfast a better place to live
- 66% of residents agree that the council is the organisation best placed to direct the future shape of the City
- 75% of residents feel that the council is helping to promote good relations in the city

What we are going to do in 2011/2012

- Develop the Belfast City Master plan which will provide a focus for continued investment in the city and its future development
- Continue development of, and deliver actions within the City Investment Strategy and Framework – including:
 - Titanic Signature Project
 - Lyric
 - Metropolitan Arts Centre (the MAC)
 - Connswater Community Greenway
- Commit £2.5 million to a Local Capital Investment Fund to allow investment in local areas
- Develop a Council Resourcing Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan to ensure key projects can be supported
- Deliver the Council's Capital Programme - including:
 - Upgrading and regenerating the Mary Peters Track in order to facilitate the 2013 police and fire fighter games
 - Progressing the Dunville and Woodvale park development programmes
 - Implementing the Pitches Strategy
- Develop a Community Planning Framework for the city
- Develop and deliver area based pilots which integrates proposed transferring functions (e.g. planning and regeneration) at the local level
- Identify, develop and deliver an External Relations Strategy
- Deliver actions within the Belfast Good Relations Plan
- Commence phase 2 of the £4 million PEACE III Plan for the city
- Revise the Council's Equality Scheme in line with the recommendations from the Equality Commission

How we will measure our success

- % residents who agree the Council is best placed to direct the future shape of the city
- % of residents who agree they can influence decisions that effect their area
- Number of sectarian and racist hate crimes recorded
- Amount of money leveraged from EU and UK funding streams
- Amount of money leveraged through the City Investment Strategy
- Number of community groups supported by the Good Relations Unit

Environment

Caring for Belfast's environment and helping to create a sustainable, clean and healthy place to live for everyone

Our priorities

Making the City Cleaner and Greener

- Keeping all parts of the city clean
- Improving the quality of parks and open spaces
- Promoting Belfast as a Sustainable City which looks after its environmental, social and economic future
- Improving the Council's energy efficiency and carry out services in a way which reduces our carbon footprint

Zero Waste Direct to Landfill

- Achieving our target of zero waste direct to landfill by 2015
- Increasing ways for households to recycle

High Quality Urban and Local Environment

- Improving the appearance of local areas across the city

What local people said about improving our environment

- Residents have stated that making the City cleaner and greener should be one of council's top three priorities
- Almost nine in ten feel that the council is working to make the City cleaner and more attractive
- 28% of residents felt that cleaner streets would most help to improve their quality of life
- 31% of residents felt that the streets need to be better maintained
- 25% of residents feel that there is a need to improve litter, bin collecting and recycling services

What we are going to do in 2011/2012

- Develop a long-term plan for the city's waste, which will increase recycling to over 32% in 2011/2012
- Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill and, through Arc21, procure new waste treatment technology and facilities
- Enforce the new clean neighbourhoods legislation
- Use refreshed campaigns and educational programmes to encourage local people to stop littering and dog fouling, minimise waste and recycle more
- Apply the Green Flag standard across all parks and open spaces and achieve formal Green Flag Award accreditation for 3 of the cities parks
- Make arrangements for the management and maintenance of phase 1 of the Connswater Community Greenway
- Develop and implement a new Sustainable Development Plan in line with European best practice which will:
 - Reduce the Council's energy use
 - Reduce the Council's carbon footprint
 - Reduce the amount of waste we produce
 - Promote the development of renewable energy and 'green' industries in the City
- Deliver environmental improvement schemes
- Develop a prioritised programme to deal with dilapidated and derelict buildings

How we will measure our success

- Street cleanliness index
- Recycling rate in the city
- Percentage of bins collected on the designated day
- Number of community clean ups facilitated
- Energy Usage from Council facilities
- Number of parks and green spaces that have attained green flag accreditation
- Tonnes of Biodegradable waste sent directly to landfill

Economy

Creating a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive economy

Our priorities

Cultural and Tourism Experience

- Maximising tourism potential and making best use of the city's cultural products to promote Belfast
- Delivering a programme of events which will enhance the vibrancy of and attract tourism to the city
- Expanding business tourism within the city

Contributing to regeneration and growing the rates base

- Developing relationships with those working to grow the local economy
- Supporting local regeneration activity
- Supporting growth of the city's rate base
- Developing the economic potential of the North Foreshore
- Promoting retail investment in the city

Supporting Economic Growth

- Helping to maximise employability
- Supporting job creation
- Supporting business growth and competitiveness
- Working with our partners to improve the overall city centre experience and vitality
- Ensuring our markets continue to provide a unique shopping experience for residents and visitors alike.

What local people said about improving the local economy

- 55% of residents feel that the council is helping to improve the local economy
- 33% of residents feel that better employment opportunities would most help to improve their quality of life
- A quarter of residents questioned stated that 'helping to support and improve the city's economy' should be one of the council's key priorities

What we are going to do in 2011/2012

- Develop Belfast as a leading European cultural and tourism destination and increasing the number of visitors to the city by:
 - implementing the Integrated Tourism Strategy;
 - delivering a vibrant programme of entertainment, arts and community events that support income generation and audience development
 - creating a development plan to enhance our visitor attraction portfolio
- Develop Belfast's tourism, cultural, arts and events product in advance of 2012 and in preparation of the World Games in 2013
- Facilitate the hosting of the MTV European Music Awards including promoting a music week across the city in the week preceding the event
- Consider further and liaise with key partners in regard to the provision of integrated conference and exhibition facilities in the city
- Implement the Renewing the Routes Programme which seeks to tackle problems of economic, social, physical and environmental decline of the main roads, and surrounding communities, in the city.
- Work to grow the property occupancy rates within the city centre to support the growth of the city's rates base
- Work to develop the economic potential of the North Foreshore
- Support local businesses in recovery from recession and focus on key growth sectors such as creative industries
- Deliver a programme of support to encourage business growth and competitiveness
- Invest £200K in an Independent Retail Support Programme
- Deliver employability and skills programmes and secure commitment to the Belfast employability and Skills Plan
- Support 100 long-term unemployed people into work through our HARTE programme and work on social clauses on publicly funded projects
- Develop the City's markets

How we will measure our success

- Number of city events
- Total number of visitors to Belfast
- Number of Business supported by Belfast City Council
- Added Economic Benefit from tourism
- Added Economic Benefit from events.
- Attendance at Events in the Waterfront and Ulster Hall
- Number of visitors to the zoo
- Number of visitors to City Hall

People and Communities

Improving quality of life across all neighbourhoods

Our priorities

People feel safer

- Helping to make people feel safer and addressing antisocial behaviour

People are Healthier

- Giving people opportunities to be more active
- Working with partners and communities to improve health and well-being in the city
- Provide high quality regulatory services to protect people's safety and health, such as building control and food safety

Engaged and Active Communities

- Making sure the Council is better engaged with local people and is involving them in improving the city and their local areas
- Helping local people get the best use out of the Council's assets
- Supporting local community development
- Working to integrate service delivery at the local level

Younger and Older People

- Creating and co-ordinating opportunities for children and young people
- Working with partners to improve services to older people and reducing isolation

Dealing with Emergencies

- Supporting local people affected in a crisis such as during flooding or severe weather

What local people said about improving life for people and communities

- More than half of residents feel that there is a strong sense of community in their local area
- Safety is the top key priority for residents, especially in the City centre after dark.
- Almost half of residents questioned feel that lower levels of anti-social behaviour and crime would be most likely to improve their quality of life.
- Residents feel that investing in improving local areas is also a key priority for the Council.
- 37% of residents felt that more activities for children and young people would most help to improve their quality of life
- 56% of residents feel that the council is helping to create a better city for older people
- 75% of residents believe the council is helping to promote healthier and more active lifestyles
- Whilst 86% of residents are generally satisfied with our Parks and Open Spaces, some 21% of those questioned felt that more could be done to improve our parks and leisure facilities

What we are going to do in 2011/2012

- Work with other council departments to develop our integrated approach to neighbourhood working to maximise the impact of existing neighbourhood and community development work.
- Deliver actions within the Community Development Strategy
- Deliver Parks and Leisure Community programmes
- Build, lead and manage the new joint Policing and Community Safety partnership for the city
- Deploy community safety wardens across the city
- Deliver a programme of alley-gating
- Deliver "Safer City Plan 11-12" to address
 - anti-social behaviour
 - alcohol and substance misuse
 - hate crime
 - fear of crime
- Deliver PEACE III funded programmes to reduce fear of crime, including:
 - Youth engagement project to reduce anti –social behaviour and interface tensions in the city
 - Tension monitoring project which will enable rapid responses to community tensions
- Deliver actions within the Presence in Parks initiative / Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) in parks
- Agree and implement actions within Active Belfast and Open Spaces Strategy
- Deliver actions within the Interagency Active Belfast plan
- To build, lead and support a new citywide health and wellbeing partnership for Belfast which will aim to reduce the stark differences in peoples health across the city
- Develop a range of programmes in connection with the 2012 Olympics
- Deliver the Belfast City Council Framework on tackling poverty and inequalities
- Deliver actions within Older Peoples Action Plan and the Younger People Strategy
- Complete the new Urban sports park
- Maintain and manage multi-agency support centre to co-ordinate Emergency Planning in Belfast

How we will measure our success

- % of residents who feel safe in their area
- % residents who agree 'there is a strong sense of community in my local area'
- Community centre attendance.
- Number of volunteer hours in community centres
- No. of people who use our leisure facilities
- Number of people participating in health / outreach programmes
- No. of reported ASB incidents in our parks
- Number of participants at events held in our Parks

Improving our services

Delivering value for money, customer focused services

Our Priorities

- Enable value for money service delivery by ensuring efficient use of resources to achieve Council priorities
- Make best use of technology to deliver services when and where they are needed
- Providing adequate support to our services to ensure that resources are fully aligned to our corporate priorities
- Attracting and developing people who will work together to deliver our services and develop the organisation for the future
- Facilitating the effective planning, management and reporting of Council activities

What you told us

- 78% of residents are satisfied with the services which the council provide
- 64% of residents thought the council was efficient in the delivery of its services
- 53% of residents felt our services had got better over the past three years whilst just 4% felt that they had got worse
- 23% of residents felt that 'providing value for money services' should be one of the council's key priorities

What we are going to do in 2011/2012

- Improve customer focus, including making more of our services available online
- Implement the efficiency programme for the life of the corporate plan
- Improve service performance across all departments
- Implement a corporate framework for the effective management of employee costs associated with absence rates, agency workers, overtime and staff numbers.
- Develop and implement the HR capacity building and organisation redesign aspects of the council's emerging organisational development strategy.
- Commence live web streaming of Council meetings
- Review and update the Council's governance arrangements (including the development of a new council constitution)
- Develop and deliver an initial planned maintenance approach (repairs and renewals)
- Devise a long term Asset Management Strategy

How we will measure our success

- % overall satisfaction with Council services
- % residents who agree the Council is efficient in the delivery of its services
- Number of customer complaints received
- Efficiency savings achieved
- Number of transactional based services that are e-enabled
- Average number of working days per employees lost due to absence
- Number of Website Visitors
- Average telephone switchboard response time