

Belfast City Council response to:

Active Ageing Strategy 2014-20
Consultation Questionnaire
April 2014

Belfast City Council welcomes the consultation and the opportunity to comment.

Belfast, like other communities across the world is facing the challenges of an ageing population. Currently 19% of the population of Belfast is over 60 and this is expected to rise to 36% by 2050.

Belfast City Council since 2007 has identified older people as a priority within its corporate plan and Belfast became the first area in Northern Ireland to join the World Health Organisation Global Network of Age -friendly Cities and Communities in 2012. At the Council's request Belfast Strategic Partnership has developed a 3 year Agefriendly Belfast Action Plan which it will implement 2014 -2017.

The Age-friendly Belfast vision is that "Belfast will be a city where older people live life to the full"

Within our action plan 3 Key themes have been identified:

- **Age-friendly Image** creating a positive view of ageing
- **Age-friendly Lives** reducing life inequalities and isolation
- **Age-friendly Neighbourhoods** creating friendly places to live

The Councils work programme in this area is directed and overseen by the All Party Reference Group on Older People, currently chaired by Councillor Bernie Kelly.

The aims of the Active Ageing Strategy are closely aligned to those within the Agefriendly Belfast Action Plan and it is anticipated its implementation will significantly contribute towards Belfast becoming a more Age-friendly City.

Belfast City Council would make the following comments for your consideration;

The strategy document is quite complicated and perhaps consideration could be given as to how to simplify the strategy so it is clearer, more concise, and easier to understand.

Outcome measures and key indicators

The strategy and action plan should adopt an outcomes based approach, establish a baseline of where we are now and have clear outcomes, milestones and indicators against which progress can be monitored and evaluated. There might be merit in considering the approach that OFMDFM adopted for its **Child Poverty Strategy** and the Cycle of WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities which seeks continual improvement.

Partnership Working

The Active Ageing Strategic Action Plan primarily focuses on the regional approach lead by individual government departments. Little reference is made to the importance of strong local and regional partnerships working collaboratively to tackle the complex multi factorial issues associated with Active Ageing.

Our experience in delivering Age-friendly Belfast is that strong local partnerships involving statutory, community, voluntary, and private sector organisations are essential to plan and deliver effective programmes.

The strategy and action plan should perhaps clearly identify the partners who can contribute to each aim and action to improve the situation.

Community Planning

In 2015 Councils will be given responsibility to lead statutory partners in the development of Community Plans, this process will give older people the opportunity to influence the shape of local services.

The Active Ageing Strategy should clearly recognise the essential roll of councils, particularly through leading the Community Planning process, to give older people influence and to deliver Age Friendly communities. The strategy should emphasis the important role which community planning has for the other Government Departments and agencies at the table who will need to develop and deliver targeted resources for agreed outcomes.

Your Details

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- 5. Are you responding as an individual or does this response represent the views of an organisation?

Organisation

6. If responding on behalf of an organisation, please state your organisation:

Belfast City Council

7. What is your role in your organisation?

Environmental Health Manager

Strategic Context

8. Page 9 of the consultation document outlines the United Nations Principles for Older Persons upon which the Strategy's strategic aims are based. Do you agree that the UN Principles for Older Persons are a good basis on which to develop the strategic aims?

Yes

Do you have any further comments on the UN Principles?

Belfast City Council agrees with the UN Principles and the five strategic aims. The Council has formally committed to these principles by signing The Dublin Declaration on Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in Europe in June 2013.

Vision Statement

The Active Ageing Strategy outlines a vision (page 12 of the consultation document and page 4 of the summary version):

"Northern Ireland is an age friendly region in which all people, as they get older, are valued and supported to live actively to their fullest potential; with their rights and dignity protected."

9. Do you agree with the vision outlined above?

Yes.

Do you have any additional comments on the vision?

Belfast City Council strongly supports the vision. In particular the Council welcomes the concept of a WHO Age-friendly Northern Ireland as this is consistent with the approach currently being implemented in the City.

Strategic Aims

In order to achieve this stated vision, the Active Ageing Strategy has identified five strategic aims, based on the UN Principles (page 14 of the consultation document and pages 6 and 7 of the summary version):

- 1. **Independence:** To promote active independent living by older people giving them choice and control in their lives through the co-ordinated delivery of good warm housing in safe neighbourhoods, accessible transport, adequate income and standard of living, access to social networks and good user friendly information and equal access to participation in the workplace.
- 2. **Participation:** To promote the active participation of older people in all aspects of life, including social participation which helps address isolation and loneliness

- and ensures that older people are properly integrated, valued and included in society; to promote the active participation and citizenship of older people in decision making on policies, the provision of services and volunteering opportunities.
- 3. **Care:** To promote equal access to high quality health and social care services, which promote and maintain physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing, and support those with long-term conditions. Health and social care services should conform to best practice and be informed by continuous professional development, research, individual preference and need.
- 4. **Self-fulfilment:** To support older people to develop to the fullest of their potential through promoting education, training, leisure and arts opportunities which will support the development of life skills, positive mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing.
- 5. **Dignity:** To promote and protect the human rights of older people here; to uphold dignity and respect for older people in all areas of life; to promote equality, address inequality, challenge ageism and outlaw discrimination, recognising the additional challenges faced by older people with multiple identities such as gender, age, religion, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and the locality that they grew up in.

10. For each of the strategic aims please tell us to what extent you agree that these are appropriate to a Strategy aimed at active ageing?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Independence	X				
2. Participation	X				
3. Care	X				
4. Self-fulfilment	Х				
5. Dignity	X				

Do you have any additional comments on these strategic aims? (Please state which strategic aim your comments apply to).

The consultation and research carried out by Belfast City Council and the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership showed that respect and social inclusion was particularly important to older people in the City. Therefore we welcome the strategic aims and in particular the aim to promote Dignity.

The aims align to our Age-friendly Belfast key themes Age-friendly Lives, Neighbourhoods, and Image.

11. Are there any other areas or themes that you think the strategic aims should cover/address in the Active Ageing Strategy?

No

If yes, please outline these below.

Signature Programmes - Strategic Aim 1 (Independence)

Delivery on these strategic aims will be supported by a number of Signature Programmes, details of which are included in the Strategy's Action Plan (see Annex C of the consultation document, pages 83-107) and pages 8 to 11 of the summary version. These will be taken forward in phases. Phase 1 will involve programmes for which resources have already been identified. For the remaining project proposals (Phase 2), additional resources will be required. This section will examine Signature Programmes 1-8 which relate to Strategic Aim 1 (Independence).

Independence: To promote active independent living by older people giving them choice and control in their lives through the co-ordinated delivery of good warm housing in safe neighbourhoods, accessible transport, adequate income and standard of living, access to social networks and good user friendly information and equal access to participation in the workplace.

12. For each of the Signature Programmes please tell us to what extent you agree that these are appropriate to achieving the 'Independence' strategic aim?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. *Active Ageing (Age Friendly Environments): To promote physical and social environments that support healthy and active ageing and a good quality of life for older people through assisting the eleven new councils to become Age Friendly Environments working towards the longer term goal of making Northern Ireland an Age Friendly region.	X				
2. Poverty (Benefit uptake): To annually target up to 10,000 older people, older people living with a disability / care needs, older people as carers themselves and working age people caring for older people with the aim of increasing the uptake of benefits.		х			
3. *Fuel Poverty/Affordable Warmth: To enable Councils to implement energy efficiency measures, using local installers, for households facing fuel poverty in the Mid-Ulster (Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon) and Newtownabbey council areas.				X	

4.	Housing - (Accessible Homes - Private Sector): To assist older and disabled people to find suitable, accessible property by developing and piloting a voluntary code of good practice for those renting or selling property.		x		
5.	Housing – (Accessible Homes – Public Sector): To meet the housing needs of older people and those with disabilities by implementing an Accessible Housing Register for social housing to identify and support the allocation of suitably accessible and adapted properties.		х		
6.	Transport - (Improved Rural Transport): To improve access to health and welfare services and reduce social isolation. This may be through increasing the flexibility of the Rural Community Transport Partnerships and other transport service providers and by extending rural bus services provided by Translink where demand proves to exist.	Х			
7.	Transport - (Easier Travel): To make the use of public transport easier through use of technology to provide information for example through audiovisual displays on bus fleets.	X			
8.	*Fear of Crime: To address fear of crime and promote community safety by engaging with and understanding the concerns of older people and addressing these through community safety initiatives and intergenerational approaches.	Х			

Do you have any additional comments on these Signature Programmes? (Please state which Programme your comment refers to.)

Active Ageing (age-friendly environments)

In order to assist Councils creating Age-friendly communities OFMDFM should consider:

- Establishing a regional Age-friendly forum including OFMDFM, the Public Health Agency and the eleven new Councils to collaborate, share information and resources.
- Through the Northern Ireland Statistical and Research Agency developing appropriate and robust statistical data, indicators and targets to plan and evaluate the Councils Age-friendly Programmes and Action Plans. Data should be available as appropriate at regional, Council, electoral ward and super output areas.
- Developing a regional positive ageing campaign, involving local Age-friendly Partnerships, to promote the value of older people, to encourage respect and improve intergenerational relationships,
- Developing further research to support Active Ageing and Age-friendly Communities in Northern Ireland

Poverty

Belfast City Council agrees that poverty including fuel poverty must be robustly tackled to ensure independence. Poverty is a major challenge in significant parts of Belfast and older people are disproportionately affected. It is also recognised that older people even in more affluent areas can live in large houses but not have the money to heat them and feed themselves.

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2010 provides a relative measure of deprivation in small areas across Northern Ireland. Results are presented at the Super Output Area (SOA) geography which contains an average of 2,000 people. There are 890 Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland which are ranked from most deprived (rank 1) to least deprived (rank 890). It is constructed from 52 different indicators relating to seven types or 'domains' of deprivation: Income, Employment, Health, Education, Proximity to Services, Living Environment and Crime & Disorder.

There are 150 SOAs in Belfast, 51 (34%) of which are in the top 10% most deprived SOAs in Northern Ireland. An analysis of the distribution of older residents across Belfast shows that:

one third of Belfast's resident population aged 60+ (17,752)live within the 10% most deprived SOAs

- an additional 13% (7,004) live within the top 20% most deprived SOAs in NI
- 14% (7,328) live within the 10% least deprived SOAs in NI
- an additional 12% (6,161) live within the 20% least deprived SOAs in NI
- The council welcomes the proposal to increase benefit uptake among older people and carers.
- Belfast City Council recognises that a strategic and inclusive approach is essential
 to maximise the level of impact and resources required to tackle elements of
 poverty. It also recognises the importance of local authorities in supporting this
 approach.
- This approach was endorsed at a Civic Forum on Tackling Poverty hosted by the city's Lord Mayor in January 2014. Delegates identified key issues associated with poverty including fuel poverty, finance, advice services, food poverty and access to services. While the forum acknowledged the importance of tackling these symptoms of poverty, delegates also identified the need for greater coordination amongst organisations in terms of simplifying approaches, shared learning, and working together to achieve joint outcomes.
- The feedback from this forum is currently being analysed to inform the way forward and provides the opportunity to revisit the Council's existing Framework on Tackling Poverty and Social Inequalities.
- Belfast City Council is funding the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service for two years. It is managed and delivered by the Belfast Advice Group, a new consortium of advice providers from across Belfast. Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service represents clients who wish to appeal Social Security Agency (SSA) decisions on benefits, including Employment Support Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independent Payment and Universal Credit.

Fuel Poverty

Belfast City Council feel this is a very important issue given the statistics quoted in the document of 52% of people aged 60-74 and 66% of people aged 75 and over are living in fuel poverty.

• With respect to fuel poverty the proposed action does not reflect the proposals released by the DSD in February 2014 to roll out the affordable warmth scheme across Northern Ireland and to work with all Councils to target the 33,000 households who are spending more than 25% of their income on fuel. The Action Plan should seek to clarify the full extent of actions planned to tackle fuel poverty over the next 6 years.

Signature Programmes - Strategic Aim 2 (Participation)

This section will examine Signature Programmes 9 to 10 which relate to Strategic Aim 2 (Participation). Again, please refer to the Strategy's Action Plan (Annex C of the consultation document) and pages 8 to 11 of the summary version for further details of these Signature Programmes.

Participation: To promote the active participation of older people in all aspects of life, including social participation which helps address isolation and loneliness and ensures that older people are properly integrated, valued and included in society; to promote the active participation and citizenship of older people in decision making on policies, the provision of services and volunteering opportunities.

13. For each of the Signature Programmes please tell us to what extent you agree that these are appropriate to achieving the 'Participation' strategic aim?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9. *Engagement (Having a Say): To enable older people to inform policies that affect them through their engagement in development, delivery and review of the Active Ageing Strategy and Action Plan.	х				
10. *Digital Inclusion: To ensure older people are not excluded from accessing information and services: by promoting digital inclusion through the Go ON NI programme which works with various organisations to recruit digital champions, provide tuition and detail the help that is available to assist older people and people with disabilities access online	X				

government, services, and by providing information in			
alternative formats.			

^{*} Programmes for which resources are already available Aim 2 (Participation)

Do you have any additional comments on these Signature Programmes? (Please state which Programme your comment refers to.)

No

Signature Programmes - Strategic Aim 3 (Care)

This section will examine Signature Programmes 11 to 15 which relate to Strategic Aim 3 (Care). Again, please refer to the Strategy's Action Plan (Annex C of the consultation document) and pages 8 to 11 of the summary version for further details of these Signature Programmes.

Care: To promote equal access to high quality health and social care services, which promote and maintain physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing, and support those with long-term conditions. Health and social care services should conform to best practice and be informed by continuous professional development, research, individual preference and need.

14. For each of the Signature Programmes please tell us to what extent you agree that these are appropriate to achieving the 'Care' strategic aim?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
11. Care - Dementia Services: To improve the services and support arrangements currently available for people with dementia, their families and their carers through actions to complement recommendations in the Northern Ireland Dementia Strategy, November 2011.	X				
12. Care - My Home Life: To improve the quality of life of care home residents by implementing the "My Home Life" programme aimed at empowering and enabling older people to have more control over their lives.	Х				
13. Care - Healthy Homes: To promote the health and wellbeing of older people and reduce accidents through a home visit scheme which will also make small home improvements and fit equipment with a view to making the home environment safer.	X				
14. Care – Carers Support (Short Breaks): To improve the health and well being of carers and their	Х				

choice and control over respite provision by establishing a Short Break Bureau and influencing change in traditional models of respite.				
15. Care - Co-ordination (Single Assessment Tool): To enable older people with a disability to continue living at home, with appropriate home care support, or to make a decision regarding the need for nursing or residential home care by coordinating and charing information to improve	X			
sharing information to improve decision making and risk management. This will be achieved by rolling out the Single Assessment Tool for Northern Ireland into physical and sensory disability care programmes.				

Programmes

Do you have any additional comments on these Signature Programmes? (Please state which Programme your comment refers to.)

Care - Healthy Homes:

The Council welcomes the proposal for the DHSSP/Public Health Agency to extend the current home safety check scheme to promote the health and wellbeing of older people and reduce accidents through a home visitation scheme which will also make small home improvements and fit equipment with a view to making the home environment safer. As Councils currently deliver the home safety check scheme and work to promote health and wellbeing they may be ideally placed to manage the scheme locally. Such a scheme would however have to be fully funded by DHSSP/PHA.

Signature Programmes - Strategic Aim 4 (Self-fulfilment)

This section will examine Signature Programmes 16 and 17 which relate to Strategic Aim 4 (Self-fulfilment). Again, please refer to the Strategy's Action Plan (Annex C of the consultation document) and pages 8 to 11 of the summary version for further details of these Signature Programmes.

Self-fulfilment: To support older people to develop to the fullest of their potential through promoting education, training, leisure and arts opportunities which will support the development of life skills, positive mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing.

15. For each of the Signature Programmes please tell us to what extent you agree that these are appropriate to achieving the 'Self-fulfilment' strategic aim?

	Strongl y agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
16. Self-fulfilment - Employment Opportunities (Working Life): To develop a proposal, as part of the new strategy to tackle economic activity in NI, to increase the employment prospects of economically inactive older people, particularly those with a work- limiting health condition or disability and those with family or caring commitments.	X				
17. Self-fulfilment - Education and Leisure: To explore how to better promote the benefits of further education opportunities amongst older workers.	X				

Do you have any additional comments on these Signature Programmes? (Please state which Programme your comment refers to.)

In the Age-friendly Belfast plan Business in the Community have committed to support employers to plan better for age diverse workforces and encourage businesses to support older workers to remain in work if they wish and support employment opportunities for older people.

Signature Programmes - Strategic Aim 5 (Dignity)

This section will examine Signature Programmes 18 and 19 which relate to Strategic Aim 5 (Dignity). Again, please refer to the Strategy's Action Plan (Annex C of the consultation document) and pages 8 to 11 of the summary version for further details of these Signature Programmes.

Dignity: To promote and protect the human rights of older people here; to uphold dignity and respect for older people in all areas of life; to promote equality, address inequality, challenge ageism and outlaw discrimination, recognising the additional challenges faced by older people with multiple identities such as gender, age, religion, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and the locality that they grew up in.

16. For each of the Signature Programmes please tell us to what extent you agree that these are appropriate to achieving the 'Dignity' strategic aim?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
18. *Dignity – Discrimination: To end unfair age-related discrimination through developing and consulting on proposals to extend age discrimination legislation on the provision of goods, facilities and services.	х				
19. *Dignity - Decision making (Mental Capacity): To uphold the right of people to make decisions in respect of their healthcare, welfare or financial affairs; and to provide support and protection to those who do not have capacity to do so. This will be achieved by progressing the draft Mental Capacity Bill which will introduce a new, single statutory framework governing all decision making in relation to the care, treatment or personal welfare of a person aged 16 or over, who lacks capacity to make a specific decision for themselves.	X				

Do you have any additional comments on these Signature Programmes? (Please state which Programme your comment refers to.)

• The strategy highlights the need to challenge the stereotypes of ageing and particularly the need to ensure older people are seen as an asset rather than a burden to society, to recognise the active role they play in their communities and in the economy. This has been identified as one of the key priorities within the Age-friendly Belfast plan. Consideration should be given to develop a regional positive ageing campaign, involving local Age-friendly Partnerships, to promote the value of older people, to encourage respect and improve intergenerational relationships.

Signature Programmes - Phase 2

As mentioned, the Signature Programmes will be taken forward in two phases. Phase 1 will involve programmes for which resources have already been identified. For the remaining project proposals (Phase 2), additional resources will be required. This section seeks to prioritise the 12 Phase 2 Signature Programmes.

Again, please refer to the Strategy's Action Plan (Annex C of the consultation document) and pages 8 to 11 of the summary version for further details of these Signature Programmes.

17. If you had to select six Phase 2 Signature Programmes to go ahead first, which six would you select? (Please tick SIX ONLY)

Please note: This is designed to gauge what level of priority respondents place on each proposed Phase 2 Signature Programme. It should not be read as a suggestion that only six programmes will go ahead. (Continued overleaf)

Signature Programme	
Poverty (Benefit uptake): To annually target up to 10,000 older people, older people living with a disability / care needs, older people as carers themselves and working age people caring for older people with the aim of increasing the uptake of benefits. Housing – (Accessible Homes – Private Sector): To assist older and disabled	X
people to find suitable, accessible property by developing and piloting a voluntary code of good practice for those renting or selling property.	
Housing – (Accessible Homes – Public Sector): To meet the housing needs of older people and those with disabilities by implementing an Accessible Housing Register for social housing to identify and support the allocation of suitably accessible and adapted properties.	
Transport – (Improved Rural Transport): To improve access to health and welfare services and reduce social isolation. This may be through increasing the flexibility of the Rural Community Transport Partnerships and other transport service providers and by extending rural bus services provided by Translink where demand proves to exist.	
Transport – (Easier Travel): To make the use of public transport easier through use of technology to provide information for example through audiovisual displays on bus fleets.	
Care - Dementia Services: To improve the services and support arrangements currently available for people with dementia, their families and their carers through actions to complement recommendations in the Northern Ireland Dementia Strategy, November 2011.	x
Care - My Home Life: To improve the quality of life of care home residents by implementing the "My Home Life" programme aimed at empowering and enabling older people to have more control over their lives.	
Care - Healthy Homes: To promote the health and wellbeing of older people and reduce accidents through a home visit scheme which will also make small home improvements and fit equipment with a view to making the home	x

environment safer.	
Care – Carers Support (Short Breaks): To improve the health and well being of carers and their choice and control over respite provision by establishing a Short Break Bureau and influencing change in traditional models of respite.	x
Care - Co-ordination (Single Assessment Tool): To enable older people with a disability to continue living at home, with appropriate home care support, or to make a decision regarding the need for nursing or residential home care by coordinating and sharing information to improve decision making and risk management. This will be achieved by rolling out the Single Assessment Tool for Northern Ireland into physical and sensory disability care programmes.	
Self-fulfilment - Employment Opportunities (Working Life): To develop a proposal, as part of the new strategy to tackle economic activity in NI, to increase the employment prospects of economically inactive older people, particularly those with a work-limiting health condition or disability and those with family or caring commitments.	X
Self-fulfilment - Education and Leisure: To explore how to better promote the benefits of further education opportunities amongst older workers.	X

Equality Impact

Any Strategy is likely to have impacts beyond the specific areas and issues it may be targeting. As such we would welcome views on how delivering this Strategy and the contents within it may affect other groups in society.

18. Please describe the effect that you think delivery of the Strategy may have on the nine groups contained within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act.

	Strongly positive	Mainly positive	No effect	Mainly negative	Strongly negative
Religious beliefs	X				
Political opinion	X				
Racial groups	X				
Age	X				
Marital status	X				
Sexual orientation	х				
Gender	X				
Persons with a disability and persons without	x				
Persons with dependants and persons without	х				

Please provide any further detail as to why you feel the Strategy will have negative/positive effects.

Further comments

19. Do you have any further comments/suggestions regarding the proposed Active Ageing Strategy?

Confidentiality and Access to Information Legislation

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with access to information legislation: these are chiefly the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice (section 45) with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office on 028 9026 9380 or email ni@ico.gsi.gov.uk (or see their website at www.ico.gov.uk).

Please circle below if you wish your response to be treated as anonymous.