1	To what extent do you agree with the Vision and underpinning desired headline outcomes? What else, if anything should be included in the Vision or underpinning desired headline outcomes? Is there anything that should not be included?	Council is supportive of both the vision and outcomes focussed approach and further agree with the headline outcomes identified. One area that might be more explicitly included in the sub-outcomes would be the need for good collaborative/partnership arrangements across the VCS.
2	To what extent do you agree with these priorities and proposals? Do these priorities and proposals address the main issues? What else, if anything should be included in the priorities and proposals? Is there anything that should not be included	Council agree with the priorities and proposals identified, however, DfC might consider the inclusion of other areas such as: Governance: to include the need for having good financial governance arrangements, including financial management, full cost recovery, sustainability/exit plans Organisational Capacity/Skills: agree with the development of a skills framework to identify skills needs and address gaps and associated development and leadership support to be provided. It is important that the support provided covers the range of groups that exist in the sector including those who are well established but also medium to smaller sized groups. Council agree with the need to support the sector with the on-going changes in charity law reform through training support and the delivery of road show events. Council agree with the development of a resource and toolkit on governance and self assessment guides which will assist VCS organisations. We further support the proposed document drafting service to ensure up to date constitutions. Given the significant level of engagement, service delivery and capacity support for the sector from local government, it is critical that DfC work closely with local Councils on the design and roll out of these resources. Belfast City Council have in place a capacity building support programme through the provision of training and officer support network already in place which provides capacity support to the sector; it is therefore crucial that support packages are not duplicative, are complimentary and add value, are easily accessible and they provide a consistent message.

		Additionally, a number of thematic work streams across BCC also provide capacity building support for the sector. For e.g. the Cultural Framework sets out a commitment to build the capacity of that sector, including supporting participation in voluntary and amateur arts activities through establishing key partnerships. This also includes building the capacity of the sector to measure and evaluate the impact and value of the arts, improving both knowledge of impact practice and outcomes based measurement. There is a need to ensure that provision is joined up at a central and local government level in order to ensure VFM, ease of access that there is not an oversupply of support offers to the sector. Policy/Advocacy and co-design of Public Services: Council agree that there is a need for facilitating a programme of engagement with MLA's, Assembly Committees, Permanent Secretaries etc and supporting joint structures such as the Joint Forum. Beyond this however, there is a need to ensure that there are further mechanisms in place to support effective engagement across the range of community groups and importantly to capture the voice of smaller groups so they are engaged and have the opportunity to influence policy. Impact Outcome Measurement: Council agree with the need to measure impact. This is in line with the approach taken by Council in developing the Belfast Agenda, and the Community Plan for Belfast. In order to maximise success, the Department should commit to providing further advice and guidance to the sector in developing appropriate project performance measures that reflect the desired population level impacts. Any guidance and support such be linked to the emerging outcomes and indicators in the PfG and related Implementation Plans.
3	To what extent do you agree with these priorities and proposals? Do these priorities and proposals address the main issues? What else, if anything should be included in the priorities and proposals? Is there anything that should not be included?	Strong, collaborative leadership is a supporting principle of the Council's Corporate Plan. We support the need for the development of a "Strategic Leadership for Change" training programme for VCS leaders. However, there is a need to ensure that there is a programme of support for smaller organisations so that they can effectively respond to the changing environment.

		Change Fund and Investment Readiness Programme
		Council agree with the need for a Change fund and investment readiness programme as support in managing change. This fund and programme should be outcomes focussed and be accessible in design and application to both larger and smaller organisations. We support the need for organisations to diversify their funding within the context of financial constraints in order to promote sustainability.
4	To what extent do you agree with these priorities and proposals? Do these priorities and proposals address the main issues? What else, if anything should be included in the priorities and proposals? Is there anything that should not be included?	Council support the commitment to facilitate an inclusive VCS. The specific priorities in relation to women and the faith based sector appear reasoned and welcome. However, as noted in the paper there will be emerging needs for other groups. No related arrangements however are detailed as to how further reviews will happen and appropriate arrangements put in place to address these emerging needs. Additionally, any support arrangements for women's groups should be based on an assessment of their capacity building needs such as skills development and issues of organisational sustainability. The skills audit proposed should include both the women's and faith based sector and any emerging groups. Council also welcome the proposal to facilitate a Community Faiths Forum that will provide a collective voice on areas of poverty, community development and other related issues. There is no detail on how the forum will be populated. The forum needs to have balanced representation and ensure that those organisations represented have in place adequate governance arrangements to support them to best represent the views of local people.
5	To what extent do you agree with these priorities and proposals? Do these priorities and proposals address the main issues? What else, if anything should be included in the priorities and proposals? Is there anything that should not be included? Should a new Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan be	Council is committed to active citizenship and Volunteering and have recently agreed a Volunteer Charter for the city. We therefore welcome the identified need for a regional strategy which would recognise volunteering as central to everything the sector is about in facilitating social action and in building communities and active citizenship. There is a need to provide more strategic support to organisations around promoting, involving and

developed?	managing volunteers. Additionally, there is a need to ensure that the VCS receive the appropriate level of support in order for volunteering to be able to contribute to the sector being healthy and sustainable.
	While council recognise that small grants are a valuable resource for groups who are reliant on volunteers to deliver their programmes and services, we are not sure that a small grants scheme is a priority on its own right. There is no evidence of the impact of the small grant programme to date and therefore there should perhaps be a more strategic approach to supporting organisations on volunteering based on collaborative/partnership working and based on need.
	Having an agreed approach to measuring the impact of volunteering across society would support volunteer involving organisations. It would also provide evidence to support DfC to help raise the value of volunteering generally in society and inform approaches across local government.
	There should be opportunities for all groupings to be involved as volunteers but we welcome the accepted need to specifically target under represented groupings.
	BCC welcome the proposals which, if appropriately delivered, will contribute to volunteering continuing as an integral element of the VCS and its future health and sustainable. There is, however, a need to re-examine the oversight and co-ordination of the implementation of this work in order to best ensure that current arrangements are adequate, representative and that the ongoing work programme is effective.
	Gap: an area that appears to be overlooked is the area of organisational governance and the reliance on volunteer trustees. The requirements placed on groups and organisations by the Charity Commission appear to be absent. Volunteers not only deliver services, but are responsible for governance in many community and voluntary sector groups