

Belfast City Council



**Belfast
City Council**

**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties
Annual Progress Report 2019-2020**

Contact:

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality/annual-reports.aspx>

Signature:

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission. It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2019 and March 2020

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

- 1** In 2019-20, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

Please see Appendix 1 to Annual Progress Report 2019-2020 attached.

The actions included in the Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-2021 were approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 22nd September 2017. In addition, a number of strategic actions have been developed also and are currently being delivered including:

- Development of a Cultural Strategy for Belfast
- Local Development Plan
- City Deal
- Belfast Open Spaces Strategy
- Capital Projects
- City and Neighbourhood Transition and Improvement Programme
- Social Clauses
- Social Value Procurement Framework
- Urban Villages Programme
- Leisure Transformation Programme

- 2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2019-20 (or append the plan with progress/examples identified).

Please see Appendix 1 attached, which provides an update on all actions and gives insight into outcomes.

- 3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2019-20 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

X Yes No (go to Q.4) Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

The application of the Equality Scheme, specifically through the screening and consultation process resulted in changes and processes and service delivery with the following equality mitigation actions highlighted during the screening as follows:

Language Strategy Action Plan 2020-2021

The Council launched its Language Strategy in April 2018 and it will run until 2023. During 19-20 a new language action plan was developed for the year 2020-2021 incorporating the actions to be delivered. These actions and targets aimed at the Language Strategy implementation will enable the Council to provide a greater variety of services through languages other than English.

This action plan builds on that which ran from December 2018- March 2020 and will bring forward those actions which were not fully completed and new actions including:

- The development of new internal governance structures for monitoring how language issues impact on the Council
- The development of consultation groups involving relevant stakeholders
- The development of protocols governing what information is translated into languages other than English and the process for doing this
- Staff training and awareness courses in relation to language issues and procuring a translator
- Language classes for staff who wish to avail of them
- A range of external and internal events which promote the profile of the languages in the language strategy and develop links with the relevant language communities

The screening of the new Action Plan highlighted minor positive impacts on the section 75 categories of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, disability and dependants. These are outlined as follows:

Religious belief, political opinion and racial groups:

The Language Strategy Action Plan was developed and written with the intention of increasing equality of opportunity and access to services to people regardless of religious belief. There was extensive and lengthy consultation with various language communities including Irish, Ulster-Scots and ethnic minorities to assess their needs and to hear what level and types of service they would like to see from the council. Since their appointment, the Irish Language Officer and the Language Officer have engaged extensively within language communities on what support they needed from the council and the action plan is laid out in a way which reflects those opinions.

In the context of Northern Ireland, it is often perceived that political, religious and racial background are interrelated and the action plan will take positive steps to address this in the context of language.

Age:

There are a range of opportunities emanating from the Language Strategy Action Plan which can benefit users of various languages across differing age spans. The action plan has the potential to positively impact on young people who attend an Irish-medium

school or those who are learning a new language. In addition, it will also potentially impact positively on the following:

- The children of D/deaf adults
- The families of people with disabilities
- Older people who are experiencing hearing loss
- Older people learning another language

Disability:

As one of the strands of the Language Strategy focuses on languages and communications for people with disabilities, there are opportunities in the action plan to increase and make services more accessible for people with disabilities.

Dependants:

The Action Plan has the potential to raise awareness of the services that people who have a dependant who is D/deaf or disabled, or a child of a D/deaf adult, can use and impact on them positively. The Plan will also raise awareness of the barriers and challenges faced by families with dependants in terms of access to services.

3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

For examples and details, please see 3 above

3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

- As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*
- As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*
- As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*
- As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*

X Other (please specify and give details):

The Equality and Diversity Unit liaised with our Sign Language Users' Forum to provide feedback on our new Language Action Plan in relation to website accessibility and communications etc. The Language and Disability Action Plans are aligned in terms of achieving outcomes around disability and communications and we sought the views of the Disability Advisory Panel also. Feedback clearly demonstrated that more work was required in order to overcome barriers in respect of language and communication.

In addition, feedback was received from the Irish Language community, the Ulster-Scots community and elected members which demonstrated the need to progress those issues highlighted within the strategy such as communications, signage and website accessibility. Subject to ratification by the Council, the Action Plan will become operational at the earliest opportunity.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2019-20 reporting period? (tick one box only)

- Yes, organisation wide
- X Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Section 75 responsibilities for staff, managers and senior managers are outlined in our Achieving Through People Framework which sets out our organisational values and the behaviours that we expect our staff to demonstrate. Specific Section 75 responsibilities are considered when a job description is revised or a new job description is written. In this reporting year, one new senior job description (Governance and Compliance Manager) included specific section 75 responsibilities.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2019-20 reporting period? (tick one box only)

- X Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs

- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

We have ensured that equality and diversity were included in draft committee and departmental planning templates. The Director of City and Organisational Strategy has worked with the senior management team to refresh the corporate values and priorities and to ensure they are fully embedded across the organisation. This includes a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as indicated in our 'organisational wheel' (part of civic leadership) and reflected in our core values of Integrity and Responsibility. A new CMT Oversight Board has been established to monitor progress and help ensure that our corporate plan is delivered effectively.

In addition, the Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-2021 is still being implemented and sits alongside corporate planning and supports the Belfast Agenda.

6 In the 2019-20 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? (*tick all that apply*)

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2019-20 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Within the new Corporate Plan 2020-2024, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion were agreed as corporate priorities and committed to the following:

"We will develop a new five-year Equality Scheme for the Council, implement a city-wide approach to linguistic diversity and develop a four-year Disability Strategy". Implementation of the Corporate Plan, including this priority, is undertaken through a monthly Oversight Board and will be reported to Committee on a six monthly basis.

In addition, the Equality and Diversity Framework outlines the main actions planned to address inequalities during the reporting period. Updates on outcomes are provided at the attached appendix. All of these actions were integrated into planning at the appropriate level. Equality and Inclusion is also a standard item on many departmental team agendas thus influencing operational planning.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2019-20 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

4

Actions ongoing:

39

Actions to commence:

1

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Appendix 1 provides an update on all of the actions included in our Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-2021. Thirty nine of these actions are on-going and will be reviewed in our Audit of Inequalities. In addition, number of strategic actions have been developed and are currently being delivered including:

Development of a Cultural Strategy

Local Development Plan

City Deal

Belfast Open Spaces Strategy

Capital Projects

City and Neighbourhood Transition and Improvement Programme

Social Clauses

Social Value Procurement Framework

Urban Villages Programme

Leisure Transformation Programme

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2019-20 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

A review of the Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-2021 was undertaken previously and issues were identified in a range of areas. These are now under review and will be addressed during 2020-2021.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2019-20 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality

Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way

Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities

Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

X All the time Sometimes Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2019-20 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

Flying of Rainbow Flag on 3rd August 2019

A Notice of Motion was agreed at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 22nd March to fly the Rainbow Flag on 3rd August (Pride Day), this decision was subsequently amended at the Council's meeting on 1st April 2019, with the removal of the statement in brackets.

“The Committee agreed to the motion to fly the rainbow flag over City Hall on 3rd August 2019, subject to and equality screening being undertaken and to a report being submitted to the Committee on those dates that are included (in the illuminate programme) where there is a festival or celebration also held in the city and how they could receive dual recognition of a flag and illuminate the building”.

Within the given timeframe, consultation with key stakeholders was undertaken to inform the assessment on paying due regard to the promotion of good relations. Information from previous consultees including the City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment and Flying the Union Flag were utilised.

A summary is outlined below:

- Consultation with the ECNI provided information in line with previously stated positions in their guidance notes including:
 - Promoting a Good and Harmonious Working Environment (2009)
 - Equality Commission advice on Good Relations in Local Councils (2015)
 - Guidance note on section 75, Northern Ireland Act 1998 and section 49A Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (2015)
- Community Relations Council considered the policy to be outside of the good relations grounds and therefore did not provide a response.
- A meeting was held with the Council network for LGBT+ staff and allies.
- A legal opinion was provided encompassing previous legal opinions back to 2000.

12 In the 2019-20 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

X Face to face meetings

- X Focus groups
- X Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- X Questionnaires
- X Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- X Internet discussions
- X Telephone consultations
- X Other (*please specify*): Citizenspace

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

The Council's Equality and Consultative Forum which is made up of a range of representatives from Section 75 groups has been consulted on various policies including:

- Boodles Dam – works to decommission the Dam
- Decision to erect bilingual/multi-lingual signage in citywide council leisure centres
- Draft Inclusive Growth Strategy
- Draft Corporate Plan 2019-2023
- Draft Consultation and Engagement Framework
- Putting You First, Transforming Customer Experience Vision

In addition, the Disability Advisory Panel, which comprises members with a range of disabilities, was consulted on a range of policies and adaptations to Council facilities and the Sign Language Video project.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2019-20 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- X Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

See question 12 above. In addition, screenings have accompanied policies, procedures and strategies which have been issued for consultation on the Council's Citizen Space platform. We are currently working on putting in place mechanisms which will encourage more use of this platform in relation to equality and diversity. In addition, we are currently reviewing our Equality Consultative Forum.

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2019-20 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- X Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality-and-diversity/equality-screening-reports>

15 Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

21

All our screenings can be accessed on our website at the following webpage:

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality/screening-outcome.aspx>

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2019-20:

9	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
1	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.
	Consultations for an EQIA alone.

17 Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

A range of consultation methods were employed for the above, including Citizen Space, a range of focus groups; staff consultations; information in City Matters; website and circulation to the council's equality list. In relation to the equality screening assessments each report highlights the consultation methodology. These are available on request. In addition, we conducted an EQIA in relation to the development of our Cultural Strategy for Belfast and consulted widely (both externally and internally) in relation to the Council's new Customer Focus Programme.

18 Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

Yes X No concerns were raised No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

X Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Language Strategy Action Plan 2020-2021

The Equality and Diversity Unit liaised with our Sign Language Users' Forum to provide feedback on our new Language Action Plan in relation to website accessibility and communications etc. The Language and Disability Action Plans are aligned in terms of achieving outcomes around disability and communications and we sought the views of the Disability Advisory Panel also. Feedback clearly demonstrated that more work was required in order to overcome barriers in respect of language and communication.

In addition, feedback was received from the Irish Language community, the Ulster-Scots community and elected members which demonstrated the need to progress those issues highlighted within the strategy such as communications, signage and website accessibility. Subject to ratification by the Council, the Action Plan will become operational at the earliest opportunity.

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2019-20 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

None.

- 23** Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

Belfast City Council had identified the need to support Sign Language users; British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language in accessing their services. We recognised the barriers in telephone communication and face to face communication with council staff for Sign Language users. We are committed to removing these barriers and the provision of a Video Relay Service and Video Remote Interpreting service will pave the way in ensuring Sign Language users can communicate effectively with Council staff via Registered Sign Language Interpreters.

A pilot for a period of 12 months was delivered by the Council from May 2019, to provide a Video Relay Service and Video Remote Interpreting service for British Sign Language users. We wanted to be in a position to monitor the effectiveness of the service within a pilot timeframe before rolling it out on a long term contract.

The following was provided during the pilot:

- Video Relay Service – installed and in use via the Council's Contact Us webpage;
- Video Remote Interpreting – installed at reception desks at the following Council venues; Cecil Ward, Olympia Leisure Centre and Belfast Zoo

The scheme has been successful and further options to extend the scheme will be progressed during 20/21.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

- 24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2019-20, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

The Council has developed a suite of training courses to raise awareness of its section 75 statutory duties. Diversity and disability awareness training are mandatory whilst other courses are optional. Many courses have been developed in association with external organisations ie New Group; Employers for Disability NI; Signature (forwarding body for BSL Courses); 2000 Weeks.

In addition to this, the Council's Disability Staff Network provided input into the revision of the Disability Awareness training. Evaluation forms are completed at the end of each training session and feedback provided assists with the development/refreshing of the course content. Post training evaluation measures a number of areas including clarity of objectives, relevance of course content, knowledge of trainers etc.

Diversity training for employees (classroom based) – 78 employees attended

Employees must attend either classroom based or on-line refresher training every three years. The training content includes the benefits of diversity to individuals and the organisation; main pieces of NI equality legislation; significance of legislation on policies and procedures; identifying when discrimination/harassment occurs; knowing rights and responsibilities of employees, managers, sources of help and guidance; how BCC promotes good relations. Delivery is a mix of trainer delivery, group exercises, video clips and case studies. The total average evaluation score for this course was 9.6 out of 10.

Diversity training for Managers (classroom based) – 6 employees attended

In addition to the content contained within the employee course, the manager training also includes manager responsibilities, manager behaviours, tribunal information, dealing with inappropriate behaviours and developing good management practice.

On-line Diversity training employees and managers – 42 employees attended

Disability Awareness training – 51 employees attended

Training content covers the following areas of disability: physical/mobility; sensory (visual and hearing); learning; hidden (autism, dyslexia, mental health, cancer, epilepsy); speech. Topics covered include unlawful discrimination (employment and goods, facilities and services), reasonable adjustments; including health and wellbeing initiatives eg Every Customer Counts; Inclusive Events Guide. Delivery is a mix of trainer and case studies. The total average evaluation score for this was 9.7 out of 10. Manager training covers the above and includes additional information relating to their responsibilities in considering and facilitation reasonable adjustments,

Positive Mental Health – 50 employees attended

The total average evaluation score for this was 9.3 out of 10.

Stress Awareness for Managers – 31 employees attended. The total average evaluation score for this was 9.5 out of 10.

Mindfulness – 27 employees attended

Pilot Mental Health First Aid – 18 people attended

Neurodiversity – 18 people attended

Pilot British Sign Language – 10 employees attended

The total average score for this course was 9.9 out of 10.

The Equality and Diversity Unit also delivered the undernoted training during 19-20:

Communications Tactics – 11 employees attended

2 Equality and Diversity Framework Workshops - - 28 employees attended

Equality Screening Training – 11 employees attended

- 25** Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

Evaluations of courses revealed the following scores (scored out of 10) in terms of participants saying that they could use what they learned right away:

Diversity – 9.5

Diversity Awareness – 9.6

Positive Mental Health – 9.3

Stress Awareness 9.2

BSL - 9.7 (skills can be applied to the job). A member of staff had the opportunity to put her skills into use in the course of her work. A staff member was also able to deal with a customer using BSL. The customer was impressed that the Council was providing training to its frontline staff and was satisfied that her query could be dealt with quickly and efficiently and our staff member was delighted that she could put her learning into practice.

Feedback from Mental Health First Aid – “I can categorically state that this has been one of the most relevant, practical and helpful courses I have ever attended in BCC. From trainers to content and delivery, this course covered various mental health topics providing a multi-diverse audience with a safe space to talk and share personal life challenges but more importantly ask questions”.

The evaluation carried out has also generated ideas as to how we can do more to support staff with mental health issues and consideration of these is already being taken forward.

Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)

- 26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2019-20, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation to **access to information and services**:

Please see 23 above in relation to Video Relay Service

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2019-20?

Insert number here:

None

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Section 3: Looking Forward

- 28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The Council's Equality Scheme is currently being reviewed.

- 29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

In line with the guidance received from the Equality Commission, the implementation of Section 75 will be an area of focus during 20/21. The Council continues to implement an ambitious transformation programme, which will impact on service provision and service re-design.

- 30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2020-21) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state): See question 29 above

Appendix 1: Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-21 (Equality Action Plan) - Update 2019/2020

This document is an update on actions delivered to address inequalities by Belfast City Council in the period between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. It is not a standalone document and should be read in conjunction with the Equality and Diversity Framework April 2017 – March 2021.

Priority A: Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment

We know that strategic leadership – both political and managerial – is key to improving equality and good relations outcomes, and promoting diversity. This organisational commitment goes hand in hand with working in partnership to make the best use of our resources in an ever challenging environment. Fairness in how we comply with legislation, procure goods and services and communicate with our rate payers will highlight Belfast’s growth as a diverse city.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A1 Address inequalities through the Belfast Agenda	COS	<p>The Belfast Agenda is a shared "city" framework aimed at improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all people living in Belfast. The Local Government Act places a duty on local councils to initiate, facilitate and maintain community planning in their area. However the council is only one of a number of statutory partner organisations responsible for delivering the Belfast Agenda.</p> <p>During 2019-20, community planning governance was further developed as two additional Boards (Growing the Economy and City Development; and Resilience and Sustainability) were established to drive the delivery of the agreed action plans for the medium term priorities.</p> <p>A Portfolio Office was also established within the City and Organisational Strategy department to programme manage planned activity. This involved a series of actions taking an evidence based approach to target both health inequalities and educational inequalities within the city.</p> <p>The Statement of Progress, assesses and provides many examples of the progress that has been made towards delivering the outcomes from the Belfast Agenda.</p>
A2 Embed Equality and Diversity in new Corporate Plan	COS / L&CS	<p>Within the new corporate plan (2020-24), Equality, Diversity and Inclusion was agreed as a corporate priority and committed to the following:</p> <p>“We will develop a new five-year Equality Scheme for the Council, implement a city-wide approach to linguistic diversity and develop a new four year disability strategy.” Implementation of the corporate plan, including this priority, is undertaken through a monthly Oversight Board and will be reported to Committee on a six monthly basis.</p>
A3 Develop and deliver an integrated plan	CNS	<p>An integrated plan to address health inequalities was developed and delivered in partnership with the Public Health Agency, Belfast HSC Trust and HSC Board. The plan included action on the thematic areas of physical activity and nutrition (Active Belfast), emotional wellbeing,</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
to tackle health inequalities across the city		<p>lifelong learning, injecting drug misuse and avoidable winter deaths. Work on healthy ageing (Age-Friendly Belfast) was also included within the integrated plan and is covered in a separate update.</p> <p>Lifelong learning:</p> <p>Key deliverables included organising the 2020 Belfast Festival of Learning which focused on the theme of ‘using learning to build resilience’ and supported the promotion of learning for life, for education, for work and for living together. 137 events were organised for the festival but Covid-19 meant that most events had to be postponed indefinitely. The March 10th festival launch event, with 110 attendees, promoted the festival and Belfast Learning City message of using learning to tackle inequalities. Belfast celebrated joining the Irish Network of Learning Cities and Belfast Lord Mayor signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the other 4 Learning Cities in Ireland to formalise the network.</p> <p>Active Belfast:</p> <p>Active Belfast through Physical Activity & Healthy Eating Programmes Grants, Physical Activity Referral and Jog Belfast supported over 7,700 people to get more active and eating healthily, working in partnership with primary and secondary healthcare and local communities.</p> <p>Emotional wellbeing:</p> <p>Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing</p> <p>Work continues in the delivery of the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing with a range of resources including literature being designed for use with young people. Awareness raising sessions continue to be delivered across the city to a range of organisations including Council, Sure Start, Healthy Living Centre’s Community Development and Youth Organisations. In 2019/20 over 100 people attended the awareness raising sessions.</p> <p>Workshop to Review Mental Health/ Suicide Prevention Structures in Belfast</p> <p>The workshop identified the need to streamline the range of activity and structures across the city within this area of work. A model for going forward was agreed and is being implemented currently. The model reduced the number of groups in the city to allow a strategic approach to the delivery of services. The following groups now deliver on this area of work. Belfast Protect Life Implementation Group (Strategic), Belfast Community of Interest (Operational) and Belfast Community Response Steering Group.</p> <p>Literature Review and Critical Appraisal: Alcohol and Drugs and Mental Health/Suicide Prevention</p> <p>This process undertook a critical review of a variety of related reports publicised over the last 7-year period and produced a report on key findings and conclusion.</p> <p>Avoidable Winter Deaths (working title Belfast Warm and Well):</p> <p>Available data was utilised to establish a risk map for Belfast and from this targeted interventions were launched in the areas with the highest levels of multiple risk (Shankill and surrounding area; Andersonstown and surrounding area). Included with the interventions was the mobilisation of local assets within each area to identify vulnerable households, the appointment of a single point of referral and the creation of a directory of support services. The targeted interventions were delivered between December 2019 and March 2020, before being reduced due to the Covid-19 outbreak. In total 91 households were supported by the interventions, with 49 households living within the 20% most deprived wards of the city.</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		<p>Injecting drug misuse:</p> <p>A collaborative workshop was convened by the Belfast Strategic Partnership and brought together all of the key service providers and stakeholders currently working to address the issue of injecting drug use in Belfast City. This included Council, BCCM, BHSCT, BIDs, HSCB, NIHE, PHA, PSNI, and voluntary organisations such as Addiction NI, Extern, Carlisle House, Welcome Centre, and Service User representatives.</p> <p>The purpose of the workshop was to agree how each agency/stakeholder could better collaborate to tackle the issue of injecting drug use in Belfast going forward. The report identified the following areas which continue to be progressed: the structures we want to enable collaboration (both strategic and operational); evidence of the need for collaboration and priority areas in the Injecting Drug User Field.</p>
A4 Deliver Disability Strategy (encompassing DDA and DDO measures)	L&CS	<p>The Council is committed to complying with legislation related to disabled people. As part of this commitment we pay particular attention to our disability duties under Disability Legislation, this includes DDA and DDO legislation and section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.</p> <p>Disabled people should have freedom, dignity, choice and control over their lives. Our Disability Action Plan aims to remove the barriers that stop people from enjoying equal access to our services.</p> <p>As a Council we already have a strong reputation in respect of recognising the needs of disabled people. In general this addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting employment good practice and training our staff • Communicating, consulting and engaging with disabled people • Increasing our customer base and satisfaction • Deliver of language strategy (eg loop system, sign video) • Develop partnership and networks with key stakeholders • Ensure compliance with legislation and mainstreaming across all services <p>Equality and Diversity is mainstreamed across the Council. We produce an Equality and Diversity Framework which indicates our overall direction. During this period we have also developed a new three year Disability Action Plan 2019/2022.</p>
A5 Deliver an integrated plan to improve good relations	CNS	<p>The Council's new Good Relations Strategy was launched in September 2019 following a consultation on the Plan and associated equality impact assessment. Furthermore, as requested by The Executive Office which funds the District Council Good Relations programme, a good relations audit was undertaken from June 2019 – December 2019. The conclusions and recommendations were approved by Council in March 2020 and the Action Plan for 20/21 was based on the audit findings. Through the Strategy and Action Plan, Council aims to improve good relations by promoting good community and race relations between people of different religious, ethnic or political backgrounds.</p> <p>Examples of outcomes and / or impacts of key policy / service delivery development</p> <p>The Strategy has been identified as a corporate priority and contains 5 outcomes including transformational leadership, shared and connected spaces and an intercultural city.</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		<p>The audit identified the need for more strategic funding and in so doing has altered part of the way in which the Shared City Partnership will look at specific good relations issues impacting on the City.</p> <p>The DCGRP Action Plan, by its nature, is focused on promoting better relationships with groups and individuals with different religious, ethnic or political backgrounds.</p> <p>Examples and details of good practice in consultation</p> <p>A 12 week public consultation process was completed on 11th April 2019 which offered communities the opportunity to comment on what were the most important good relations issues within the City. This was accompanied by a draft equality screening which had specific questions on equality issues.</p> <p>In addition, the consultation on the good relations strategy and audit included a number of focus groups or stakeholder discussions including the equality consultation forum, the Migrant Forum, the NI Faith Forum and BCC Youth Forum.</p> <p>Examples where equality monitoring information has contributed to better informed service delivery planning/policy development</p> <p>As a result of the of the Audit, the recommendation for engagement and access to funding issues affecting some interface and BME communities or other minority communities was taken on board within the development of the 20/21 Action Plan. Council will review and update its criteria for Shared City funding to ensure a focus on strategic good relations issues including but beyond cross-community contact. The focus of such engagement and resource allocation should be targeted towards addressing behaviour and attitudes that reflect and reinforce segregation, and toward tackling visible manifestations of division.</p>
<p>A6 Develop an Age-Friendly Action Plan 2018-21 through HASP and deliver programmes of work supporting older people and encouraging Active Ageing</p>	<p>CNS</p>	<p>“An age-friendly city is one in which organisations work together to make sure the quality of life for people is enhanced as they age”.</p> <p>We are acutely aware of the challenges which may face many people and families within the city as they age including housing conditions, social isolation and poverty. Since publishing the Belfast Agenda, and as a member of the World Health Organisation’s global network of Age Friendly Cities, Belfast’s Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership has continued to engage and consult with older people in Belfast and are progressing our Age-friendly Belfast plan 2018- 2021. The partnership has been delivering a range of actions to address priorities including, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing loneliness and social isolation through public campaigns, training and development for key services • promoting the role of older people through Positive Ageing Month and recognising older volunteers through an annual awards programme • hosting series of local and citywide age-friendly tea dances, slipped discos and Be Prepared events • supporting the establishment of four dementia friendly neighbourhoods -(three more since 2017). There are 4,041 dementia friends and 33 dementia champions in Belfast. • addressing mental health issues through promotion of the Take 5 steps to wellbeing through sessions in six local older people’s forums and supporting Greater Belfast Seniors Forum and Libraries NI to host an older people’s mental health event in City Hall in May 2019 We are currently working to adapt our plan during COVID 19, we are getting IT out to older people, some refurbished BCC devices and looking at developing this further, and working regionally to develop an advice booklet to support older people at home over the next 6 months.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A7 Develop and deliver an integrated children and young people framework and work programme	CNS	<p>Young people play a vital role in the development of the city. The Youth Forum continues to facilitate and engage with young people across the city focusing on a range of campaigns including Mental Health (Elephant in the Room Campaign), Relationship and Sexual Education, Racism and Diversity, and Poverty.</p> <p>The Youth forum has produced a range of publications with recommendations from Young People about issues that affect their lives. These reports have been shared with Politicians, Permanent Secretaries, Government Departments and other agencies. Members of the Forum have met with Committees at Stormont and lobbied to have their voices heard.</p> <p>The Forum meets with the People and Communities Committee 3 times a year to present reports and discuss how Council can engage meaningfully with young people.</p> <p>In addition to its own campaigns the Youth Forum has engaged with Council Departments and been involved in consultations such as the Belfast Agenda and Resilience.</p> <p>The young people are also leading in the design and delivery of joint projects and campaigns with NI Children’s Commissioner and NI Youth Forum.</p>
A8 Deliver LGBT Action Plan	COS	<p>This workforce action plan has been developed to ensure that our organisational culture and working environment allows staff to feel comfortable to be their whole selves at work and that policies and practices empower talent development at all levels and the removal of any form of discrimination. It also aims to increase the understanding of the wider workforce of issues facing LGBT+ communities.</p> <p>Key deliverables and outcomes for 18/19 were as follows:</p> <p>Training</p> <p>Network members attended bias training in January 2020. Evaluation conducted.</p> <p>Diversity training is currently under review in conjunction with Corporate HR to ensure LGBT+ issues are covered.</p> <p>Mental Health first Aid training delivered for network members in February 2020.</p> <p>Policy</p> <p>Staff policies are currently under review to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are inclusive and use gender neutral language

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are clear processes in place for staff to raise issues around discrimination/ harassment/ Bullying based on gender/ sexual orientation. <p>Transgender guidance drafted.</p> <p>Promotion/ visibility</p> <p>Agreed name for network- "PROUD". This was promoted via staff intranet. Membership of the network has increased from 30 to 46 members over the past year.</p> <p>Eight articles have been included on staff intranet to raise awareness of different LGBT+ events/ initiatives e.g. Pride fundraisers; Transgender Day of Remembrance; participation in Stonewall Diversity event; LGBT awareness week, profiling of an LGBT senior champion and ally.</p> <p>Promotional material has been procured- lanyards, pens and cups. A significant number of staff across the organisation have requested these items.</p> <p>Information relating to the LGBT+ staff network is included in the jobs section of the website; promoted at induction, diversity and disability awareness training.</p> <p>Community Engagement</p> <p>A number of staff participated in Belfast Pride. More BCC vehicles utilised.</p> <p>A family friendly event was held internally to help build participation between network members and staff and to increase attendance at Pride.</p> <p>A Pride flag was displayed at City Hall to celebrate Pride.</p> <p>Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance was held in City Hall in November and City Hall lit in colours of Trans flag to coincide with Transgender Day of Visibility every year on 31 March.</p> <p>Networking</p> <p>BCC co- sponsored and attended the Stonewall Diversity event held in February 2020.</p> <p>Organisational analysis</p> <p>Circulated the Stonewall survey to all staff and completed the Stonewall Workforce Equality Index. Feedback will be incorporated into future action planning as appropriate.</p> <p>Feedback from internal staff survey in 2018 will also be considered for future action plans.</p> <p>Communications and monitoring form for voluntary monitoring survey drafted. The application monitoring form will be amended to capture sexual orientation and gender identity data, once wording finalised.</p> <p>Gender-neutral toilets in City Hall have been provided.</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A9 Deliver Gender Action Plan	COS	<p>Activity in Belfast City Council's Gender Action Plan is grouped under the following themes</p> <p>Women in the Council</p> <p>Held annual IWD event for staff.</p> <p>Participated in the NI Gender Diversity Charter assessment- bronze level retained.</p> <p>Piloted unconscious bias training to staff. This will be incorporated into general diversity training going forward. Suitable deliverer for CMT still to be sourced.</p> <p>Women's Network Group Women in Tech Group ongoing.</p> <p>Transgender guidance drafted.</p> <p>Work undertaken to improve the promotion of BCC as an employer that values and supports equality and diversity (external websites, job information to potential applicants, press releases etc).</p> <p>A workshop had been scheduled (30 March) for both male/ female staff to jointly explore/discuss gender issues and identify any issues to be addressed -postponed due to Covid- 19 and will be rescheduled asap.</p> <p>Women in the Community</p> <p>Funded annual external IWD event.</p> <p>Held event to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance</p> <p>Women in the Economy</p> <p>Work is ongoing with all employability partners to ensure appropriate levels of female representation across all S75 categories. This includes exploring potential targeted female initiatives linked to the emerging City Deal projects.</p> <p>The first female enterprise programme to be delivered across Northern Ireland between the 11 Local Councils, Invest NI and Women in Business.was launched in 2019 It engaged with 230 females in the first year of delivery with over 100 women within Belfast attending events.</p> <p>The Enterprise Pathways programme has had 10 participants to date, five of which were female.</p> <p>The Go for It programme supported 197 females to develop a business plan.</p> <p>Women in the City</p> <p>The baselining process for assets has commenced and well underway via the Asset Management System project - it is planned to be fully rolled out by September 2020, however this date may be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic (external contractor; resource availability).</p> <p>It is intended that an Asset Management Board will be created, to oversee the management on council assets going forward including needs of all stakeholders with the opportunity identify issued/needs.</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		<p>Council is currently supporting a number of projects which will look at opportunities of how the needs of women can be better met across the city including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided funding (Belfast Investment Fund) for a new Grace Centre • Development of a new Shankill Women's Centre- funding secured and procurement of a design team ongoing • Involvements in the delivery of Urban Villages capital investment programme e.g. completion of Footprints Women's Centre. <p>Retained Platinum Status- ONUS Charter.</p> <p>Ongoing work to achieve Safe City status.</p>
A10 Deliver Race Action Plan	CNS	See A5 Deliver an integrated plan to improve good relations. This work will be carried out in 20/21.
A11 Deliver a city and neighbourhood community safety programme	CNS	<p>Belfast (D)PCSP Equality Schemes and Disability Action Plans developed with support from NI Equality Commission and other PCSPs across NI. The Belfast PCSP and DPCSPs developed a Strategic Assessment and Action Plan for 2019/2020 during the reporting period in preparation for the development of a Strategic Direction for 2019- 2023. The PCSP, through this Action Plan, aims to improve community safety by tackling actual and perceived crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as supporting community confidence in policing.</p> <p>Examples of outcomes and / or impacts of key policy / service delivery development</p> <p>Christmas Safety Event utilised Council's guidance to ensure the day was accessible to everyone. It included translators, the hearing loop targeted groups who usually don't attend, particularly people with disabilities.</p> <p>Examples and details of good practice in consultation</p> <p>A 12 week public consultation process was launched on 4th March 2019 to offer communities the opportunity to comment on whether we were addressing important issues in the right way. The following specific equality considerations were included as questions within the consultation;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Action Plan will be equality screened. Are there any equality issues you would like to comment on in relation to any Section 75 groups? 2. Do you believe that the Strategic Assessment and Action Plan provide opportunity to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people? 3. Do you feel that the Strategic Assessment and Action Plan provide an opportunity to actively increase the participation by disabled people in public life? <p>Examples where equality monitoring information has contributed to better informed service delivery planning/policy development</p> <p>Interrogation of NISRA data and completion of our PCSP Strategic Assessment has informed the 2019/2020 PCSP Action Plan process e.g. we were able to identify that people who are disabled or have a long standing illness are more likely to be fearful of burglary</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A12 Develop the Equality & Diversity Network	L&CS / COS	<p>On 3rd October 2018, the Council's Corporate Management Team approved the re-establishment of the Equality and Diversity Network. Previously an EDN was established during 2015 to bring together all equality and diversity work strands across the Council.</p> <p>The Council is recognised as a leader in best practice in the delivery of the equality and diversity agenda and, given the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda in addressing inequalities and developing inclusive communities, the network was re-established to incorporate a comprehensive equality and diversity agenda related to both workforce and service delivery. The Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-21 sets out our actions to be delivered and how the council will respond to new thinking on equality outcomes and the new challenges as reflected in our corporate and improvement plans. The new network will aim to ensure that resources are identified and in place in each Department to ensure compliance with our statutory duties and that we act on our commitments to promoting equality and diversity in all areas of the work we do. To ensure a "one council" approach, effective communication, reporting and governance structures will be implemented.</p> <p>Inaugural meetings of both the strategic and operational levels were held during 19/20, governance was developed including the reporting to the corporate management team, led by the Chief Executive. The work plan for the EDN is informed by best practice and includes the ECNI's S75 Demonstrating Effective Leadership guidance. It was agreed that the strategic level will be chaired by the City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services and corporate direction will come from Nigel Grimshaw (Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services), John Tully (Strategic Director, City and Organisational Strategy) and Alistair Reid (Strategic Director Place and Economy). Meetings of the strategic tier took place on 10/4/19 and 16/9/19.</p> <p>The operational level will be jointly chaired by the Equality and Diversity Officers and HR Manager and will provide an operational management process to implement equality and diversity related activities and report to the strategic level. A schedule of meetings coinciding with equality and diversity planning and event cycles eg Equality Screening Outcome Reports, Annual Reports and the Equality Consultative Forum will operate. Departments have nominated other relevant officers to participate at the operational level and budgets have been identified. Throughout 19-20 the operational tier met on 30/5/19, 05/09/19 and 12/02/20.</p>
A13 Implementation of Equality Scheme	L&CS	<p>Our current Equality Scheme was approved in 2015 and will run until 2020. Training was provided to 70 staff in key areas during 18/19 and queries are monitored to determine themes where further action is required. The Scheme has impacted on key areas throughout Council including the introduction of the Equality and Diversity Network. We have developed our project plan for the five year review of our Equality Scheme to examine how our arrangements have been applied and assess our effectiveness in complying with section 75 duties.</p> <p>Our Equality and Diversity Network Operational, which comprises key departmental representatives will assist together with staff from our Equality and Diversity Unit and any findings will be progressed through the Strategic tier of the Network which comprises the City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services and Strategic Directors. In addition, we are currently reviewing the operation, role and remit of our Equality Consultative Forum in conjunction with our consultees, ECNI and key officers within the organisation. It is envisaged that this review will enable better alignment with the new governance arrangements in respect of the Belfast Agenda. Recommendations arising from the review will be presented to the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and Consultative Forum members for consideration and approval.</p>
A14 Review and develop new Equality	L&CS	The Audit of Inequalities and the development of the 5 year action plan commenced in January 2020 and it is likely that this will be completed during by the next reporting period.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
Scheme 2020-25		
A15 Hold bi-annual meetings of Equality Consultative Forum	L&CS	<p>One meeting was held during the period 2019-20, the topics presented at the meeting held on 10 December 2019 are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boodles Dam – works to decommission the Dam - Decision to erect bilingual/multi-lingual signage in citywide council leisure centres - Draft Inclusive Growth Strategy - Draft Corporate Plan 2019-2023 - Draft Consultation and Engagement Framework - Putting You First, Transforming Customer Experience Vision <p>It should be noted that the role of the Equality Consultative Forum is currently under review and it is anticipated that this review will be completed during the next reporting period and, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, it has not been possible to schedule a further meeting. The next meeting which will be held remotely is planned for November 2020.</p>
A16 Review the role of the council's external Equality Consultative Forum	L&CS	<p>In light of the significant reorganisation of structures and services, we commissioned an independent review of its current equality consultation mechanisms, including distribution lists and consultative forum. The review included an evaluation of our current practices related to the inclusion of marginalised voices as defined by section 75 and working in partnership with key stakeholders internally and externally. The scope of this included detailed interviews with key stakeholders, with a view to improving relationship between the BCC Equality Forum and the Belfast Agenda and the effectiveness of the existing dialogue.</p> <p>Recommendations on the outcome of this review will be progressed during 2020/2021.</p>
A17 Scope option to develop an internal and external Equality Forum within the emerging Community Planning Partnership	COS	<p>As part of the selection process to appoint a Sectoral Advisory Panel for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, we ensured that there was broad representation of gender, background, geographic areas and minority groups. Equality issues and needs will form part of the future engagement programme with the VCSE panel.</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A18 Develop and deliver a communications plan to promote equality and diversity in the organisation internally and externally	COS	<p>The Marketing and Corporate Communication team (Internal Communications, Brand and Marketing, Campaigns: Press and Social and Online Customer Experience) worked with the Equality and Diversity team around key projects, initiatives and events managed by them and ensured that these initiatives were supported internally via promotion on Interlink and externally via City Matters, Social media, Council website and PR.</p> <p>Examples include the promotion of the Sign Video facility for the Deaf.</p> <p>Internally, the team has promoted learning around the accessibility legislation for public sector website.</p>

The actions listed above were included in the Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-21 approved by the Strategic and Policy Resources Committee on 22 September 2017. In addition a number of strategic actions have also been developed and are under delivery, these are summarised below:

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A19 - Develop a Cultural Strategy	P&E	<p>The Council is developing 'A City Imagining' which is the new 10 year cultural strategy for Belfast. This is a new strategic framework for the city and is set firmly within the context of the Belfast Agenda and the Local Development Plan to create a vision and coherent framework for Belfast that will fully embed culture in the wider city agenda and to enable Belfast's vision to be a 'culturally vibrant city'. The ten year Cultural Strategy for Belfast recognises that over the years, the Council has made a commitment to strengthening and promoting the cultural scene in Belfast.</p> <p>The Cultural Strategy sets out priorities on how we will deliver on the Belfast Agenda's vision for Belfast to be a culturally vibrant city. It was adopted by Council in October 2019 following a significant programme of engagement, and was subject to an equality impact assessment at a strategic level.</p> <p>The draft strategy expresses an agreed cultural statement for the city which has been shaped by the significant programme of public engagement over an 18 month period. This statement and vision will be taken forward through four crosscutting themes and 16 priorities. Implementation Plans were developed in 2019/20 for each of the priorities. The Strategy also includes a number of key strategic milestones that outlines the significant steps the Council will work towards over 10 year lifespan of the strategy.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment on the Ten Year Cultural Strategy for Belfast including the review of all relevant research was prepared for the purposes of consultation (the public consultation closed on 10th July 2019). This consultation informed the final EQIA report and the further development of a future investment model which was produced to resource and support the delivery of the strategy in 2019/20.</p> <p>During the development of the strategy, a specialist consultant was appointed to work on planning, and facilitating, more than a dozen deep dive project sessions for a range of disabilities as part of the pre-consultation process. The consultant was uniquely placed to</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		<p>understand the challenges faced by disabled people and has been working with various support groups for people with disabilities. Each session was targeted to a specific disability group as each had varying needs and issues regarding access to cultural events in the City.</p> <p>Data from consultations with 3,264 people were analysed. We held 86 events, including a creative lock-in, and 1,089 members of public attended our city centre consultation hub. We held specific sessions with Section 75 specialist groups including Sure Start, Disability groups, VOYPIC, a Refugee and Asylum Seekers Group and the Council's Youth Forum and Older People's Forum. This analysis informed the strategy and resultant implementation plans which are designed to deliver a people-focused approach, allow people to express their cultural identities, and support high quality cultural events that are accessible, diverse and inclusive.</p>
A20 - Local Development Plan	P&E	<p>The Local Development Plan sets out how the council area should develop up until 2035. It is vital to the delivery of the outcomes in the Belfast Agenda and it will provide a 15 year planning framework to support economic and social outcomes in the city, while providing the delivery of sustainable development.</p> <p>Stage 1 of the process, the preparation of the LDP Plan Strategy (PS) is at an advanced stage, recently submitted to the Department for Infrastructure. The Plan Strategy is a document that has undergone significant public engagement and sets out the Councils strategy to guide the future development of Belfast. The Plan Strategy has been subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment to ensure all legislative obligations (including Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Disability Discrimination Order 2006) have been met and that the promotion of equality of opportunity is at the core of the LDP. The draft Plan Strategy was published in the autumn for a formal consultation that closed on 15th November 2018. The 109 submissions received were published on the Council's website on 1st March 2019 for a further eight week consultation period to allow for counter-representations. As with the POP, Plan Strategy also underwent a full public consultation, with a series of stakeholder engagement events, including consultation with Section 75 groups and the Council's own Equality Consultative Forum.</p> <p>Social and Affordable Housing</p> <p>This is being brought forward as part of the Development Plan within a new proposed policy. In the interim, developers are being encouraged to provide a level of social/affordable housing. For example, in June 2019, Sirocco outline application approved for c650 residential units with a Section 76 agreement requiring 20% for social and affordable housing.</p> <p>Public Realm</p> <p>Developers are being encouraged to offset the impacts of a development by making developer contributions and one of the main catalysts is that of public realm. For example Clarence Gallery, Clarence Chambers and Belfast Telegraph redevelopments all include public realm improvements in line with Streets Ahead which will ensure that the access to those developments and the pedestrian routes around them are of appropriate quality and specifications.</p> <p>Open Space</p> <p>Planning Policy Statement 8 and Creating Places require new residential developments to provide communal open space and where applicable, play facilities. Similarly to the public realm, this ensures accessible environments for all</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A21 - City Deal	F&R	<p>City Deals were first established in 2010 as a UK-wide initiative to give local areas specific powers and freedoms to help support economic growth, create jobs or invest in local projects. A City Deal is an agreement between government and a city, giving the city and its surrounding area certain powers and freedom to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take charge and responsibility of decisions that affect their area; • do what they think is best to help businesses grow; • create economic growth; • decide how public money should be spent. <p>Initial work on the development of a City Deal for the Belfast Region (BRCD) commenced in 2017 and ultimately resulted in the emergence of 22 projects within four interrelated themes of Innovation and Digital; Tourism-led Regeneration; Infrastructure; and Employability and Skills for which, during this Phase 2 of the Programme, OBCs will be put in place. Together with contributions from partner organisations the ambition is to deliver £1 billion of investment in the Belfast Region's economy through the Deal, with funding derived from HM Treasury, the NI Executive, the six Councils, the Further and Higher Education sectors and private sector contributions.</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>Through a programme of targeted support and investment, the Region City Deal aims to enhance inclusive economic and structural growth that delivers more and better jobs, along with greater connectivity across the region, with a positive impact on the most deprived communities but also with a fair and proportionate spread of benefits for people from across all communities</p> <p>Actions and Outcomes</p> <p>All partners have received guidance about the development of their OBCs at the outset of this process following the Heads of Terms. This included a reminder of the need to ensure they remained in compliance with equality legislation. Work is ongoing with an Equality Officer to develop more detailed guidance about how this should be taken forward.</p> <p>Next Steps</p> <p>To encourage proactive approaches the PMO has compiled an initial summary of the examples of positive/innovative ideas already emerging from some of the projects.</p> <p>Given that the BRCD projects are the responsibility of individual partners within councils, colleges and universities, it is their own equality teams which will support them in taking this forward. The BRCD will continue to remind them of their obligations and will seek assurances at appropriate intervals that they are following this advice.</p>
A22 – Belfast Open Spaces Strategy	CNS	<p>BCC's Open Spaces Strategy is designed to protect, create, enhance and connect open spaces across the city. It incorporates principles to provide welcoming shared spaces; improve connectivity; improve health and well-being; support place making and the built environment; increase resilience to climate change; protect and enhance the natural environment and support learning.</p> <p>Specific achievements include:</p>

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Created an up to date and robust data-set reflecting and describing Belfast's open spaces (public & private) <p>Creation of a draft Open Spaces Strategy & high level action plan which was consulted on from June – September 2019 and the findings brought to Committee in March 2020 (please note that the finalisation of the strategy document and development of the action plan has been delayed due to Covid 19).</p>
A23 – Capital Projects	PP	<p>The Council's physical investment programme is a £325 million citywide commitment to making Belfast a better place to live, work, visit and invest. The programme, which includes around 350 projects, includes major schemes to boost the economy, create jobs and also improve the quality of life in our neighbourhoods.</p> <p>The programme is not simply about building new facilities or assets. Investment decisions are taken in line with the strategic aims and objectives of the Belfast Agenda. The physical programme's capital projects are delivered under various funding streams such as Capital Programme, Leisure Transformation Programme, Belfast Investment Fund (investment of £250k or more), Local Investment Fund (investment of under £250k), Urban Villages programme in Belfast; Social Investment Fund capital investment is a number of projects in Belfast.</p> <p>The year 2019/20 was a significant year for the council and the department in terms of the ongoing delivery of the physical programme. We spent £40.5 million to complete 21 major physical developments in the communities across the city. The key projects include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure Transformation Programme (LTP) – Flagship projects included the new leisure centres at Lisnasharragh and Brook which officially opened in December 2019. The Andersonstown Leisure Centre works is recently completed (March 2020). The LTP programme came top in the leisure category for the inaugural Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Social Impact Awards 2020, which took place on 21 May. • Other major investments include the completion of eight community facilities, two refurbished parks and open spaces, sports pitches and three upgraded play parks at Lower Ormeau/ Ravenhill, McClure St and Geeragh Community Centre. These projects improved accessibility and local provisions. • In addition a range of corporate projects have been undertaken including the allotment works at Ballysillan, St George Market, and the surface replacement works at Cregagh & Shaftesbury pitches. <p>In addition, we are the delivery agent on behalf of the Executive Office on the Urban Villages Initiatives programme. The Urban Villages Initiative is a headline action within the NI Executive's Together Building a United Community (T:BUC) strategy. The Initiative is designed to improve good relations outcomes and develop thriving places where there has been a history of deprivation and community tension. During the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, Belfast City Council, in partnership with The Executive Office, developed the designs, engaged with stakeholders and delivered 12 capital projects at a value of £3.3million. Project included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footprints Women's Centre – the renovation and refurbishment of the drop in area within Footprint's Women's Centre and the downstairs training/education/support rooms, to accommodate a new Community Food Exchange facility;

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Foundry training Café - a training café at the Foundry in the City East Enterprise Centre to provide a training operation in a “real” catering business environment for local people, including those with learning disabilities, unemployed or economically inactive, to learn catering and hospitality skills, which supports them in securing employment; • Glenbyrn Play Park – a newly constructed play park on waste ground in the Glenbyrn neighbourhood of Greater Ballysillan. The park provides facilities for toddler to young teenage children in a safe and accessible location agreed with the community. The area previously had no play facilities, with the nearest accessible facilities some 1km away at Ballysillan Road; <p>Reverend Robert Bradford Play Park - Refurbishment of existing community park, with community consultation and engagement tailored to ensure a wide spectrum of community groups – different ethnic backgrounds, age groups, toddler groups, youth groups – had an opportunity to input and shape this space to be a more inclusive space for all.</p>
A24 - City and Neighbourhood Transition and Improvement Programme	CNS	<p>The City and Neighbourhood Transition and Improvement Programme commenced in 2016 and complements the Council’s approach to continuous improvement. It is an ongoing programme comprising of a series of projects, activities and tasks which together, will enable the Department to deliver our ambitions for the City and our commitment to providing modern, integrated, high-quality, consistent and cost effective services that make a real difference to the City’s residents and their communities.</p> <p>It should be noted that the Transition and Improvement Programme sits in a wider corporate context as such, there is an inter-reliance between the corporate and departmental objectives.</p>
A25 - Social Clauses	P&E	<p>Social Value is the additional benefit to the community from the commissioning or procurement process which is over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and works, including <i>economic, environmental and social well-being</i> or community benefits that can be delivered to a local area.</p> <p>A Social Value Act was introduced in England and Wales in 2013, and in Scotland in 2014. Unfortunately, an equivalent act – shaped to reflect the priorities of Northern Ireland has not yet been introduced. We are committed to work with stakeholders to ensure that a social value act is established in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The Council’s Economic Development Unit screens relevant contracts as highlighted to the unit through Commercial and Procurement Services and the Physical Projects team to identify if social clauses should be integrated and develop the clauses for inclusion. This is specific to each individual contract.</p> <p>Delivering Social Value delivers the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda. Our research suggests that developing social value clauses can deliver a range of positive benefits for Belfast and can really improve quality of life of Belfast constituents. Based on the themes of the Belfast Agenda; this could include</p> <p><i>Working & Learning - Promote local skills and employment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More opportunities for disadvantaged people • Reducing the number of long term unemployed getting back into employment • Improved skills for local people

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number. of apprentices <p><i>Growing the Economy - Supporting Growth of Business Community</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More opportunities for SMEs and VCSEs <p><i>Living Here - Healthier, Safer and more Resilient Communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a healthier community • Volunteering hours <p><i>City Development - Environment: Protecting and improving our environment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate impacts are reduced <p>Savings in CO2 emissions</p>
A26 - Social Value Procurement Framework	F&R	<p>Social value in procurement is defined as “the additional benefit to the community over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes”.</p> <p>Using its buying power, Belfast City Council will enter into procurement contracts that make a real difference to Belfast residents, including building a local supply chain that is connected to its wider social responsibilities. This could include, but is not limited to, opportunities such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating supply chain opportunities for small business and social enterprises • Improving market diversity • Encouraging community engagement <p>Delivering environmental benefits for local communities.</p> <p>Currently; contracts are screened to identify if social clauses should be integrated and develop the clauses for inclusion, in line with procurement guidance notes from the Department of Finance’s Construction & Procurement Delivery (CPD) Service and relevant legislation. This includes removing barriers to procurement and increasing the capacity of under-represented suppliers to compete by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dividing contracts into lots, so that there is more opportunity for SME organisations to bid and • Ensuring the minimum financial turnover required does not exceed twice the estimated contract value. • Ensuring we only ask the minimum, proportionate number of quality (award) questions to establish a bidder’s ability and proposals to deliver a contract. • Ensuring that we provide advice and guidance on our procurement processes. • Encouraging local businesses to engage in tenders for council contracts though publishing a forward plan of tender opportunities and where appropriate offering pre-tender ‘meet the buyer’ local market engagement sessions.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		<p>We know Procurement <i>can</i> play a role in delivering Social Value.</p> <p>We've gone some way, within the Council, to develop our thinking but we also have some way to go. The development of the framework is being overseen by the Commercial Panel.</p> <p>Our current thinking is that <i>Themes</i> must align with the Belfast Agenda and specific to the contract and determined by Belfast City Council (based on knowledge of the market and pre-market engagement activity). In addition, there are the implementation decisions to be made, including</p> <p><i>Internal staffing resources</i> - Corporate Procurement Services, Legal Services, Economic Development and Commissioners across the Council.</p> <p><i>Supplier implications</i> – We need to provide a 'enabling environment' for suppliers. For example, if contractors have a commitment to recruit the long term unemployed, then the Council (through the Council's Economic Development Unit) can provide them with access to a pool of individuals to recruit from.</p> <p>In any such case, any proposed policy will have to have committee approval, undertake public consultation, equality and rural screening and a refreshed proposal will go back to committee for final approval, before developing guidance documents and training for staff and contractors, clearly identifying the Council's ambitions, processes to be applied and sources of support/assistance</p>
A27 - Urban Villages Programme	PP	<p>We are the delivery agent on behalf of the Executive Office on the Urban Villages Initiatives programme. The Urban Villages Initiative is a headline action within the NI Executive's Together Building a United Community (T:BUC) strategy. The Initiative is designed to improve good relations outcomes and develop thriving places where there has been a history of deprivation and community tension.</p> <p>During the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, Belfast City Council, in partnership with The Executive Office, developed the designs, engaged with stakeholders and delivered 12 capital projects at a value of £3.3million. Projects included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footprints Women's Centre – the renovation and refurbishment of the drop in area within Footprint's Women's Centre and the downstairs training/education/support rooms, to accommodate a new Community Food Exchange facility; • The Foundry training Café - a training café at the Foundry in the City East Enterprise Centre to provide a training operation in a "real" catering business environment for local people, including those with learning disabilities, unemployed or economically inactive, to learn catering and hospitality skills, which supports them in securing employment; • Glenbyrn Play Park – a newly constructed play park on waste ground in the Glenbyrn neighbourhood of Greater Ballysillan. The park provides facilities for toddler to young teenage children in a safe and accessible location agreed with the community. The area previously had no play facilities, with the nearest accessible facilities some 1km away at Ballysillan Road;

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A28 - Leisure Transformation Programme	PP/CNS	<p>Our Strategic Leisure Operator (GLL) has signed up to a Programme to align their policies and operating procedures with those of the Council. The latest report in this regard to the ABL stated 'As of April 2019, BCC and GLL policies and operational procedures in relation to Equality and Diversity are closely aligned with no significant variances or areas of concern to address.</p> <p>In this regard, GLL also provides a regular progress update to the ABL on the participation by underrepresented target groups in centres managed by GLL in Belfast. New Leisure Centres at Lisnasharragh and Brook officially opened in December 2019. The Council's Leisure Transformation Programme came to in the Leisure Category for the inaugural Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Social Impact Awards 2020 which took place on 21st May</p>

Priority B: Understanding our communities through information and consultation

Our society is becoming more diverse. Today it is impossible to assume we know the composition of our communities – we have to find that out through gathering information known as data. The prosperity and cohesion of all people and communities can be affected by age, gender, marital status; if you have, or have not, a disability or dependents, religious and/ or racial background, political opinion and different sexual orientations. It is also important to understand the different needs within communities, for examples there are many forms of disability, and like the other Section 75 characteristics, every individual straddles all of the groups in some way, with great differences, as well as similarities between socio-economic groups.

Consultation and engagement with our communities will also help us to understand their needs better and we need to use different ways of will involving communities and neighbourhoods.

Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update
B1 Develop an appropriate system to collect information about communities'	Strategy, Policy & Partnership Manager / Statistician / EDO	<p>In order to gain a better understanding of issues and needs so that more informed decisions can be made, the Council is currently developing an appropriate system to collect information about communities' needs and aspirations. This is an ongoing programme of work linked to the data development agenda of the Belfast Agenda and emerging work around civic voice participation as well as the ongoing implementation of our consultation and engagement framework.</p> <p>During April 2018, a technical report was published for all population and stretch goals included within the Belfast Agenda. Work is ongoing to disaggregate this information to lower level geographies. Gaps in relation to S75 groups will continue to be addressed.</p>

Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update
needs and aspirations.		
B2 Services use relevant city data when developing policies and services	<p>Corporate and Departmental Policy Officers / EDO</p> <p>P&E</p>	<p>The SPP unit continued to work with services and departments to improve how data is accessed and utilised across council. This included working with services and departments to ensure that they incorporated relevant Belfast Agenda population indicators and stretch goals into their planning processes as appropriate. We facilitated three OBA based ‘turning the curve’ workshops, with council services and community planning partners, which helps ensure data and monitoring forms part of policy decisions.</p> <p>Work has also begun, in collaboration with QUB and community planning partners, to explore better use of area based data. A community planning dashboard, titled “Belfast Agenda: City View” was developed to visualise data relating to a sample of Belfast Agenda population indicators and stretch goals. Due to the council’s domain name policy this has not been promoted. Work continues to develop the city’s evidence base aligned to the Belfast Agenda outcomes framework and particularly how this data breaks down by equality groupings</p> <p>Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan</p> <p>The Council publicly consulted on the draft Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (GBIP) in 2019 - in tandem with the draft Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS), led by City and Neighbourhood Services. The GBIP is a high level plan for the city, aligned to the Local Development Plan. It recognises the many functions of the city’s green areas and water features, including health, biodiversity and environmental resilience. As part of the consultation process, 337 people completed postcard questionnaires at 6 events that took place across the city. Consultations were held with the Council’s Youth Forum and a group from Age Friendly Belfast. 96 detailed responses were received online via Citizenspace and in hard copy. The consultation demonstrated support for the vision that by 2035 green and blue infrastructure will be strategically planned to enhance ecosystem services that benefit all living, working in and visiting Belfast. However, based on the feedback some revisions were made to improve or clarify draft wording, maps and diagrams. The Council adopted the Green & Blue Infrastructure Plan in January 2020.</p> <p>Sundays in the City programme</p> <p>The council undertook a significant public consultation to develop a “Sundays in the City” programme seeking views on how to attract new users to Belfast city centre on Sundays.</p> <p>1440 people responded to the online CitizenSpace survey (more than 70% were Belfast residents). In addition, the following consultation took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent survey-based market research to target city centre stakeholders and users to seek their views. • In-depth one-to-one interviews with city stakeholder groups, including Trade Union representatives. • Focus groups with a number of target groups including older people, younger people, disabled people, family groups. <p>The analysis considered frequency and ease of accessing the city centre as well as identifying improvements that could be made to attract more families and others to the city centre on a Sunday. Suggested improvements include: creating play facilities/open space, more frequent public transport scheduled and reducing the number of cars in the city. This analysis has highlighted the need</p>

Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update
		for additional programming to encourage everyone to use the city centre including those with dependants. It will be used to inform the development of a programme of cultural animation and an associated marketing programme.
B3 Develop a city dashboard to share city data including equality-related information between community planning partners and publish to citizens	Strategy, Policy & Partnership Manager / Statistician	A community planning dashboard, titled “Belfast Agenda: City View” was developed to visualise data relating to a sample of Belfast Agenda population indicators and stretch goals. Due to the council’s domain name policy this has not been promoted. Work continues to develop the city’s evidence base aligned to the Belfast Agenda outcomes framework and particularly how this data breaks down by equality groupings.
B4 Establish an appropriate mechanism for Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) representation and facilitate participation of CVS in the community planning process	Director of City & Neighbourhoods / City Solicitor/ Strategy, Policy & Partnership Manager	<p>During 2019-20, we undertook best practice research and carried out engagement with the sector to co-produce options for enhancing the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector’s representation and participation in community planning. The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) approved the recommended model and approach in September 2019 to establish a Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sectoral Advisory Panel comprising 15 members and a complimentary citywide network.</p> <p>A selection process was undertaken by NICVA on behalf of the CPP’s and the final list of 15 Panel members were appointed in March 2020. Stratagem NI have been appointed to provide a programme of support for the Panel, including secretariat, facilitation, engagement-planning, and training roles.</p>
B5 Roll out corporate consultation and engagement plan	Strategy, Policy & Partnership Manager / Policy Officer	In order to ensure effective and inclusive public engagement, a high-level review of the draft consultation and engagement framework has been completed and as a result, an action plan to update and present a new draft framework to the new council has been agreed. In the meantime, the investment in employee capacity development continued with refresher training for existing Consultation Institute CPD holders held in June. A procurement review of the existing on-line consultation platform, Citizen Space, was undertaken and a new platform is currently being rolled out.

Priority C: Services accessible to all

Providing services, whether provided directly or procured/commissioned, remains central to what we do and through the Equality Action Plan this priority will be central to how we do business.

Action	Responsibility	2019/2020 Update
C1 Demonstrated promotion of equality and diversity embedded in departmental business plans	All Chief Officers COS P&E	<p>Included in draft committee and departmental planning templates.</p> <p>The Director of City & Organisational Strategy worked with the council's senior management team to refresh the corporate values and priorities and to ensure they are fully embedded across the organisation. This includes a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as indicated in our 'organisational wheel' (part of Civic Leadership) and reflected in our core values of Integrity and Responsibility. A new CMT oversight board has been established to monitor progress and to help ensure that our corporate plan is delivered effectively.</p> <p>The Place and Economy Department is represented on the Council's Equality & Diversity Network Strategic and Operational groups with staff identified as equality contact points in each of the divisions to cascade equality information and support the mainstreaming of equality across the Department's work. Staff also participate in corporate 'network' groups that have been established such as Proud. Work is underway to identify improvements to the Department's approach to managing these issues.</p> <p>The Department contributes to delivering the Belfast Agenda and inclusive growth through its various work streams, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• encourage and support enterprise;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support employability and skills, particularly for those who are furthest from the labour market and may face multiple barriers. Work has commenced with QUB to develop our approach to monitoring inequalities, based on deprivation measures and including S75 via a Geographic Information System. This will increase our understanding of the end user and outcome based on a geospatial data. • delivery of the Cultural Strategy encouraging and recognising the value of diversity in our communities • developing the city centre as an accessible and shared space that is welcoming to all. <p>Employability and Skills (Youth Initiatives)</p> <p>Research was commissioned to identify gaps and barriers that prevent disadvantaged young people accessing guidance and information regarding their education, training and employment choices. Gaps identified included a lack of meaningful work experience, inconsistent quality of careers advice and guidance, and disjoints between different statutory stakeholders.</p> <p>This research shaped policy and embedded equality and diversity in to project delivery.</p>
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Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update
	CNS	<p>The annual events programme, delivered through the City Events Team have continued to deliver events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that are diverse, varied and free to access; • that profiled groups from across the city from a range of cultural, ethnic and mix-ability organisations and • that were designed to be intergenerational, non-religious and to comply with DDA guidance and created so patrons were attracted to safe and welcoming shared spaces. <p>Examples in 2019/20 include the Maritime Festival held in April, Halloween and Christmas celebrations. An inclusive events plan is completed for each event.</p> <p>City Centre Connectivity Study</p> <p>The City Centre Connectivity Study (Draft Vision) aim is to agree a shared approach to creating a more attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant city centre, which will improve economic, societal, health and environmental wellbeing for all.</p> <p>Section 75 specialist groups (Belfast Seniors Forum, IMTAC and Guide Dogs NI and the City Council's Youth Forum) attended our Visioning Workshop with 27 key civic partners in the City Hall.</p> <p>As part of the overall study, a community visioning workshop was held with representatives from residents' associations and community groups to better understand and address connectivity issues experienced along the key arterial routes and how these affect communities on the periphery of the city centre. Key issues discussed was the need to provide improved access for people walking and cycling to and from the city centre. Good accessibility across busy roads was important for older people, parents with younger children people from all communities and those accessing goods, services and employment in the city centre. As a result, early engagement and input from Section 75 groups shaped the vision and principles for the overall study and key themes were refined and changed to reflect their input.</p> <p>Following the Community and Stakeholder Workshops. The final document, "A Bolder Vision" specifically references issues of community cohesion and segregation, belonging and safe and shared spaces.</p> <p>The proposed next stages of the project are planned to include further detailed engagement and detailed equality impact assessments of the emerging proposals and a 12 week public consultation.</p> <p>When planning and carrying out our functions we aim to set equality and diversity at the heart of the way we do business, through our strategic and business planning processes, by ensuring its core position in service delivery is embedded in day to day business. Some examples are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All friends groups encouraged to welcome stakeholders with disabilities at meetings and events are accessible by all • Sports and leisure development target disability specific programmes, thus increasing participants with disabilities
Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update

	F&R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground refurbishments include a range of inclusive play items • Age friendly events consistently take into consideration the needs of older people with disabilities eg accessible venues, sign language, interpreters, accessible transport and hearing loop Belfast Zoo has incorporated shorter routes which remove several steep inclines and an electric buggy is now available to assist visitors • Sensory play programmes are accessible for all children • Improvements in relation to access to Council owned carparks e.g. drop kerbs, pay and display machine relocation, revision of blue badge provision and charges <p>Provision of accessible toilets for all Council managed toilets. Implementation of 3 Changing Places Toilets. Review of Council Toilet Strategy is still underway.</p> <p>Unfortunately, progress in relation to the above has been delayed due to the covid-19 pandemic</p> <p><u>Customer Focus Programme</u></p> <p>Customer Focus Vision</p> <p>The council's customer vision document 'Putting you first. Transforming Customer Experience' was published in October, 2019. It clearly sets out the customer focus programme's aim of improving the council's customer experience and service provision for all our customers and stakeholders. Through its statement of intent it promises inclusive well designed customer focused and accessible services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision promotes positive images of disabled people. • It was available to all sections of the community in a choice of formats. <p>Customer Focus Vision, Equality Screening Consultation</p> <p>The Customer Focus Vision equality consultation took place from November, 2019 to February, 2020. Our Putting You First customer vision sets out how we plan to provide our customers with a quality and appropriate customer experience and service. Understanding customers' needs and expectations is an important part of our equality and customer research in order to help shape our customer experience. In keeping with the council's statutory obligations under equality and rural screening requirements, and as part of the programme's customer research, two consultation methods have been used to date:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A -Public Consultation on-line using Citizenspace</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">B-Public Consultation at venues across Belfast</p> <p>The online consultation took place for a period of 12 weeks from 11th November, 2019 to 2nd February 2020. A venues based consultation took place in venues across the city from 13th to 24th January, 2020. The locations chosen for the consultations were:</p>
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Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olympia Leisure Centre • Grove Wellbeing Centre • Kennedy Shopping Centre • Girdwood Community Hub • City Hall • Connswater Shopping Centre <p>Over 450 customers were engaged in the consultation programme and the information gathered used to inform the customer focus programme's on going implementation.</p> <p>Presentations</p> <p>A number of presentations were made to key equality groups, including,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migrants Forum, 2019-20 • Disability Advisory Group, 2019-20 • Equality Consultative Forum 2019-20 • Sign Language Users Forum February 2019-20 <p>Customer Function Detailed Design Plan</p> <p>The Customer Function Detailed Design Plan was developed in conjunction with PA Consulting, appointed as Council's Strategic Delivery Partner. It sets out the implementation of the customer focus programme's vision from Initial Operating Capacity (IOC) to Full Operating Capacity (FOC). Implicit in the plan is a more professional and better structured/resourced customer facing hub –incorporating a new contact hub and website- which will improve accessibility for all customers and enable a more proactive approach to meeting both our equality goals and our disability duties.</p> <p>Service Design Journey Mapping,</p> <p>The customer focus programme in partnership with PA Consulting and Fathom, an experienced customer research company, focused on representing the voice of the user within the service design process, including key equality and disabled representatives, to ensure our user insights were representative of the entire community to drive design performance.</p>
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Action	Responsibility	2019/2020 update
		<p>Customer Service Standards A new corporate Service Standards Policy was developed and includes ensuring that future staff training in customer service delivery will incorporate the principles of equality, good relations adhere to our disability duties and will use, for example, the most up to date tools such as Big Word and SignVideo.</p> <p>Sign Video We were the first council in Northern Ireland to provide a dedicated sign language service for Deaf residents and visitors. The pilot scheme was introduced at three Belfast City Council venues allowing Deaf people to independently communicate with hearing people via a British Sign Language interpreter in real time, on a video relay system. This service is also accessible for the telephone channel via the Council's website and during the Covid-19 emergency has been redirected to the Community Response Hub.</p> <p>The Sign Video facility is available in the Council's Cecil Ward Building, at Belfast Zoo and Olympia Leisure Centre. Prior to Covid -19, funding was awarded from the Department for Communities to purchase an additional 14 iPads to roll out to other venues including the City Hall, 12 leisure centres and Tropical Ravine.</p> <p>The initiative has come about as part of council's language strategy, and the scheme is in line with Council's review of how residents and users access services, as part of its customer focus programme.</p> <p>Channel Management Planning An important component of the customer focus programme- outlined in our vision document, <i>Putting You First, Transforming Customer Experience</i> - is the preference of many of our customers to have access to our services using the most convenient channels possible and, in particular, recognising the exponential growth of digital channels. Channel shift to digital is a key programme benefit, while still maintaining the highest levels of customer service across all channels- <i>digital first, not digital only</i>. And a significant opportunity for key equality and disabled groups to have improved access to council services. People will use different channels not just for different types of interactions, but also to suit their own convenience. An integrated channel strategy to encourage channel shift to more cost effective digital channels is required but one that also takes into account the varied ways in which customers may want to interact with the council.</p> <p><u>Audit Plan for 2019/2020</u> The Council's AGRS have delivered the Audit Plan 19/20 and provided assurance and consulting advice over the key programmes and initiatives which underpin the Equality and Diversity Framework.</p>
Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update
	L&CS	<p><u>Language Action Plan</u></p> <p>The Council launched its Language Strategy during April 2018. A Language Strategy Action Plan 2020-2021 was then developed to deliver those actions as part of the strategy. The aim of which was to present a range of actions and targets enabling the Council to provide a greater range of services through languages other than English. Thus increasing equality of opportunity.</p>

Throughout 2019-2020, the Equality and Diversity Unit held a number of events as part of this strategy as follows:

- Valuing Languages – closed screening Film Project (21/6/19)
- Irish Language Family Parks Event (5/8/19)
- Valuing Languages Film Project Launch (25/11/19)
- International Day for People with Disabilities (3/12/19)
- Burns Week Celebrations (28/1/20)
- International Mother Tongue Day (21/2/20)
- Irish Language Week Event (11/3/20)

It is worth noting that the Valuing Languages Film project was a collaboration with Queen's University Belfast's School of Film Studies to show the increasing linguistic diversity in Belfast and how this impacts on day to day life. Languages featured included Irish, Ulster Scots, Polish, Arabic, BSL and ISL and Chinese. The Film also looked at the communication challenges faced by people with disabilities.

Sign Language Users Forum

The Council signed up to a BSL & ISL Charter in March 2019 and one of the pledges was to set up a Sign Language Users' Forum to provide input on council services. The Forum consists of 12 Sign Language users who either live or work in Belfast and they first met in June 2019. The Forum has met three times so far and has constructively provided feedback on new developments including the Customer Focus Programme, the new website, the Disability Action Plan 2019-22 and the Language Action Plan.

Sign Video Project

The Council identified the need to support sign language users; British and Irish Sign Language in accessing their services. The barriers in telephone and face-to-face communication with council staff and sign language users was identified. We are committed to removing these barriers. A pilot programme commenced in May 2019, originally a pilot for 12 months. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, SignVideo in March 2019 agreed to extend the pilot for an additional 6 months which will come to an end in October 2020.

The SignVideo provision is currently available on the Council's Contact Us webpage and at three venues including the Belfast Zoo, the Cecil Ward Building and the Olympia Leisure Centre. Successful funding from the Department of Communities in January 2020 enabled the Council to purchase 14 new iPads for a SignVideo service at 12 leisure centres, the Tropical Ravine and the City Hall. This provision will be in place later this year. The Customer Focus Programme will oversee the delivery of this service including a new procurement exercise from November 2020.

Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update	
C2 Support departments in carrying out equality screenings of emerging policies	City Solicitor / EDO	Screenings completed during 2019/20 are listed below:	
		Title of Screening	Screening Decision
		Cultural Strategy	Screened In – Necessary to conduct a full EQIA
		Flying the Rainbow Flag on Pride Day 3/8/19	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		Planning Application for Office Development at Stewart Street, Belfast	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Corporate CCTV Policy	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Waterworks Pitch (Westland)	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2021	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Development of an Openspaces and Streetscene structure leading to restructuring of the current Parks and Street Cleansing Services	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Customer Focus “Putting You First, Transforming Customer Experience”	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		Language Strategy Action Plan 2020-2021	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		Corporate Plan 2020/2024	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
Open Spaces Streetscene Service	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)		
Dept	Responsibility	2019/2020 update	

		Request for a permanent plaque to commemorate WWI Nurses	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Boodles Dam	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Reservoir Safety Programme	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Future City Centre Programme	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Employability and Skills Programme	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		Business Growth Programme	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		Start a Business Activity	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		City for Investment Service	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Final Belfast Green & Blue Infrastructure Plan	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Final Developer Contributions Framework	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Data gaps across all functions remain for S75 groups and this is an increasingly significant issue, we have initiated discussions with key stakeholders.	
C3 Annual reporting to the Equality Commission	City Solicitor / EDO	A system of departmental returns was introduced following restructuring and made a significant contribution to the collation of information for the annual report. In addition, co-ordination and feedback from the EDN operational tier has contributed significantly to the annual reporting process.	

Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update
C4 Advice and guidance for services to promote participation and inclusion for underrepresented groups	City Solicitor / EDO / departments P&E	<p>Themes identified in the advice and guidance sought included interdependencies between equality and good relations outcomes and monitoring. Updated guidance on monitoring from ECNI would be welcomed.</p> <p>Employability & Skills – Employment Academies</p> <p>Disability information is collected from participants on our Employment Academies prior to starting and any adjustments needed are taken into account to ensure opportunities are available to all and venues are accessible. Work is in progress with Hearing Loss to gain advice on appropriate adjustments and systems that can be provided to increase access to our programmes. We currently have the ability to agree bespoke supports such as childcare costs (currently through Access to Opportunity) to enable participation in our programmes.</p>
C5 Facilitated testing of website by people with different abilities, including online forms and transactions	Marketing & Corporate Communications	User research carried out by people with different abilities in February 2020, which feeds in to redesign of website.
C6 Benchmarking of website by an external organisation	Marketing & Corporate Communications	Annual reviews of website by Plain English Campaign SOCITM BetterConnected+ website accessibility assessment.
C7 Scoping development of a range of inclusive communication channels to meet different needs	Marketing & Corporate Communications	<p>Signvideo implemented on the contact page of Belfast City Council website in May 2019. Work on this project started in early 2019. Signvideo is a Video Relay Services and Video Remote Interpreting provider who provides British Sign Language (BSL) video interpreting services. British, Irish and International sign language video clips for Belfast City Hall Exhibition and Tropical Ravine placed on Youtube. Browsealoud is implemented on Belfast City Council website, Belfast Zoo website, Public-I website, Minutes3 website and online forms. This software adds speech, reading, and translation to our websites to facilitate access and participation for people with Dyslexia, Low Literacy, English as a second language, and those with mild visual impairments.</p> <p>The new website aims to conform to the latest accessibility requirements under The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations: (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/852/contents/made)</p>

Action	Timescale	2019/20 Update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Skills and Employability team have attended the Migrant Forum to better understand the needs of black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) people and ensure our employability programmes are accessible. • Members of our City Events Team have also attended autism awareness sessions. <p>The Economic Development team have built strong relationships with a range of disability specialist organisations (Disability Action, Orchardville, Action on Hearing Loss, NIUSE, NOW Group, USEL) to develop interventions to support the development of their businesses and to ensure that our employment academies and are accessible to people with disabilities.</p>
D2 Mechanisms to monitor the diversity of the workforce and applicants are further developed	2017-18	<p>Profile of workforce is broadly representative of the community it serves</p> <p>Development of the new HR/Payroll system, as required, to enable the council to fulfil its statutory monitoring and reporting obligations.</p> <p>The fair employment monitoring form and voluntary monitoring form is currently being reviewed.</p>
D3 Implementation of Organisational Development Strategy	2017-21	<p>The council's diversity action plans are now delivered under the umbrella of the Equality and Diversity Framework and the People Strategy, which is currently under development. (See A8, A9, A10) and the Disability Strategy (encompassing DDA & DDO measures)</p>
D4 – Achieving through our People		<p>Our Achieving Through People Framework is a new corporate framework which sets out new organisational values and behaviours for all employees (specified at employee, manager and senior manager levels). Once fully developed it will be rolled-out corporately to all staff and aligned to various key people management processes such as senior management appraisal, staff PDP processes etc.</p> <p>During August/September 2018, a series of focus groups were held with staff from business support, operational, managers, team leader/supervisors, professional, Trade Unions and representatives from the Council's staff networks (Disability/Women/LGBT).</p> <p>The framework is in its final stages of development. Once implemented further screening will be carried out to assess which has been achieved against what was planned. The framework will also closely be aligned to the corporate People Strategy, which is currently being developed and monitoring the application of this will be a key feature going forward.</p> <p>Within the framework, there is an element which specifically relates to promoting equality and diversity within the workplace and within this, effective managers will be expected to ensure compliance with our section 75 duties and policy and procedures in relation to equality, good relations and disability.</p>

Action	Timescale	2019/20 Update
		Within the same element, senior managers are expected to “promote and role model an inclusive working environment and culture that values equality of opportunity and diversity”. The ATP framework also sets out that all employees within the organisation are expected to actively challenge bias, prejudice, discrimination or intolerance.

Glossary

COS – City & Organisational Strategy Department

CNS – City & Neighbourhood Services Department

EDO – Equality and Diversity Officer

GRU – Good Relations Unit

HR/OD – Human Resources and Organisational Development

F&R – Finance & Resources Department

L&C – Legal & Civic Services

P&E – Place & Economy Department

PP – Physical Programmes

