

Belfast Agenda
Strategic Environmental Assessment – Adoption Statement

December 2017

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. How have environmental considerations been integrated into the Belfast Agenda?.....	4
3. How has the SEA Report been taken into account	8
4. How have the results of consultation on the SEA been taken into account?.....	9
5. Reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with	10
6. What steps are to be taken to monitor any significant effects	10
7. More information/contact details	14
APPENDIX 1: Summary of Consultation Responses to Strategic Environmental Assessment (Environmental Report) on the (draft) Belfast Agenda	15

1. Introduction

1.1 The Community Plan (Belfast Agenda) identifies the vision, outcomes and priorities of the Council and its' Community Planning Partners for improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Council area, as well as for contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. It is intended to guide the delivery of services and functions by all partners, setting the context for future delivery plans and informing more detailed supporting strategies and plans, including the forthcoming Local Development Plan for Belfast. The Belfast Agenda was endorsed formally by Belfast City Council on 2 October 2017. Following subsequent endorsements by the Community Planning Partners it was published on 9 November 2017.

1.2 The Post adoption statement for the Strategic Environmental Assessment on the Belfast Agenda has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (EAPPR).

1.3 The purpose of this statement is to provide written evidence of how the SEA findings and consultation process have been taken into account by the Belfast Agenda (Community Plan).

1.4 The statement also outlines the measures for monitoring environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the Belfast Agenda. Full details can be found in the Strategic Environmental Assessment report for the Belfast Agenda, available on the Belfast City Council website www.belfastcity.gov.uk/belfastagenda. A summary of how the contents of this statement are considered to address the requirements of Regulation 15 (4) for contents of an Adoption Statement is provided in the table below:

<i>Regulation 15 (4) [Statement should include the following particulars]</i>	
<i>(a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;</i>	Section 2
<i>(b) how the environmental report has been taken into account;</i>	Section 3
<i>(c) how the opinions expressed in response to the invitations mentioned in regulation 12 have been taken into account;</i>	No transboundary consultations were considered to apply to this SEA.
<i>(d) how the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 13(4) have been taken into account;</i>	Section 4 and Appendix I
<i>(e) the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and</i>	Section 5
<i>(f) the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.</i>	Section 6

2. How have environmental considerations been integrated into the Belfast Agenda?

2.1 Belfast City Council, as the responsible authority, determined that the Belfast Agenda should be subject to a SEA. Even though the screening determination process concluded that there was uncertainty in identifying likely significant environmental effects due to the high level strategic nature of the plan, it was still advisable to undertake one. This is due to its links to the Local Development Plan.

2.2 The main components of an SEA comprise: obtaining baseline information; identifying the potential environmental impacts arising from the Belfast Agenda/Community Plan; identifying reasonable alternatives and their potential environmental impacts; assessing the Belfast Agenda to establish if there are any significant impacts; proposing mitigation measures for any significant adverse impacts; incorporating consultation responses on scoping and on the Environmental Report; and establishing monitoring measures. The Environmental Report and this Adoption Statement provide a written, transparent and open account of the process.

2.3 A summary of the key stages of the SEA process for the Belfast Agenda is provided in the table below:

Process stage	Documents produced	Timeframes	EAPPR NI 2004 requirements
Drafting of initial community plan for early partner engagement and consideration of whether SEA Directive/Regulations apply to emerging contents		January – August 2016	Regulations 2, 3 and 5
Preparation of a SEA screening determination report, and due consideration of the comments of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency	SEA screening report NIEA response to screening determination	September – November 2016	Regulation 9 and Schedule 1
Preparation of a SEA Scoping report, and due consideration of the comments of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency	SEA scoping report NIEA response to Scoping report	September- November 2016	Regulation 11, Schedule 2, para's 1-5
Preparation of an Environmental Report on the draft Belfast Agenda including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of baseline environmental data and information • establishment of the current state of the environment in Belfast City Council area • review of relevant plans, policies and strategies at local, regional, national and international level • identification of environmental issues pertaining to the Belfast area 	SEA report on draft Belfast Agenda	November – December 2016	Regulation 11, Schedule 2, para's 6-10

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment of the Belfast Agenda elements against 19 SEA objectives to identify those with potential for environmental impact • Identification of reasonable alternatives • Identification of mitigation measures to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects; and • Establishment of monitoring measures across 19 SEA objectives to allow for future identification of likely environmental effects and potential mitigations required. 			
<p>Consultation on the draft Belfast Agenda and SEA Report</p>	<p>Consultation webpage</p> <p>DAERA (NIEA) Consultation response</p> <p>DfC (HED) Consultation response</p> <p>APPENDIX 1: Summary of Consultation Responses to Strategic Environmental Assessment (Environmental Report) on the (draft) Belfast Agenda</p>	<p>Dec 2016- April 2017</p>	<p>Regulation 12</p>
<p>Taking into account the consultation responses to prepare an updated SEA report and final Belfast Agenda; Habitats regulations screening; and Indicators to monitor the significant environmental impacts of the implementation of the Belfast Agenda</p>	<p>Habitats Regulations Screening report for Belfast Agenda</p>	<p>May – November 2017</p>	<p>Regulation 15</p>
<p>Endorsement and publication of final Belfast Agenda</p>	<p>Final Belfast Agenda (adopted)</p>	<p>October – November 2017</p>	<p>Regulation 15</p>
<p>Preparation and publication of SEA Adoption Statement</p>	<p>SEA Adoption Statement</p>	<p>November – December 2017</p>	<p>Regulation 15 (4)</p>

2.4 The Belfast Agenda is the first Community Plan for Belfast and its preparation is the first step in an iterative community planning process which will result in its contents being subject to further development and improvements over the coming years. Its contents are visionary and aspirational in nature and its level of detail, in terms of quantifying its outcomes and priorities, will be subject to considerable change and development going forward. Accordingly, a succinct, high level approach to the preparation of the SEA for the Community Plan was adopted, as per Regulation 11 of the 2004 EAPPNI Regulations to avoid unnecessary duplication of the detailed strategic environmental assessment that is being carried out for the Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP). This approach was also recommended on the basis that the detailed workings of a strategic environmental assessment are best reserved for the LDP process, given its material weight in determining proposals that are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

2.5 The SEA report on the draft Belfast Agenda identified a range of environmental issues in Belfast which should be taken into account in development of the plan, and provided an initial scoping assessment of the Vision, ambitions, outcomes, priorities, stretch goals and workstreams to identify those with potential significant environmental effects. It then provided an assessment of the relevant aspects of the plan to identify reasonable alternatives, mitigations and any monitoring required. The detailed assessment can be found within the final SEA report, however a brief overview of the main findings is summarised below.

2.6 The SEA identified the following environmental issues in Belfast that the Belfast Agenda has to take into account:

Environmental issues taken into account	SEA topic - EAPPR (NI) 2004 Schedule 2 para 6 (i-xiii)
Population – facilitating residential growth in a sustainable way. Planning for an ageing population, declining household size and a city that has segregated areas (on political/religious grounds).	Population
Human health – reducing inequalities in Belfast that are linked to poorer health in economically deprived areas.	Human health
Air and Environmental Quality (including noise) – reducing reliance on private transport.	Air
Waste Management – meeting recycling and landfill obligations.	Fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets
Wastewater capacity – investment in infrastructure required to facilitate growth.	Water
Flood risk (Climate change) – management & mitigation required.	Climatic factors
Biodiversity – ensuring its protection in a mainly urban environment that is earmarked for growth.	Biodiversity, fauna, flora
Historic environment (Cultural and built heritage) – protecting the historic environment from insensitive redevelopment while confronting the challenges of dereliction and vacancies.	Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage
Landscape – safeguarding the unique setting of Belfast & assessing the need for increased open space in the City Centre.	Landscape
Contaminated soils – contamination issues raise questions about the suitability and viability of certain brownfield land to accommodate housing.	Soil, human health

Coast, marine and river – improving water quality and protecting environmental designations of international, European and national importance.	Water, biodiversity, fauna, flora
---	-----------------------------------

2.7 Taking the above into account, a set of 19 SEA objectives was developed against which relevant elements of the Belfast Agenda would be assessed for potential significant environmental effects.

The 19 SEA objectives are set out below:

	SEA objective	SEA topic - EAPPR (NI) 2004 Schedule 2 para 6 (i-xiii)
Social	1. Reduce deprivation and encourage an inclusive and equal society.	Population
	2. Improve health and well being for an improved quality of life.	Population, Human health
	3. To provide opportunity for good quality housing and enable people to meet their housing needs.	Population
	4. Increase community safety by supporting the reduction of crime and antisocial behaviour.	Population
	5. To improve skills and education of residents through providing high quality, accessible lifelong learning opportunities.	Population
	6. Retain and enhance access to local services and facilities.	Population
Economic	7. To ensure local residents have access to employment opportunities.	Population
	8. Support the economic development of Belfast as a competitive place and contribute its role as a regional economic driver.	Population
	9. Promote an integrated transport system and encourage sustainable travel.	Population, Air, Climatic factors
Environmental	10. Maintain and enhance biodiversity assets and protect habitats and species.	Biodiversity, fauna, flora
	11. Protect and enhance soil quality.	Soil
	12. Protect, enhance and manage the quality of the historic environment.	Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage, Material Assets
	13. Protect, maintain and enhance the quality of Belfast's distinctive landscape and geodiversity.	Landscape
	14. Protect and enhance open space and natural greenspace including Belfast's countryside asset.	Landscape
	15. Promote the sustainable management of waste.	Material Assets
	16. Promote the quality and efficient use of water resources	Water, Material Assets
	17. Reduce air pollution and ensure continued improvements to air quality.	Air
	18. Support mitigation efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition to a low carbon economy.	Climatic factors
19. Support the adaptation to Climate Change and effectively manage flood risk.	Climatic factors	

2.8 The high level scoping of elements of the Belfast Agenda for potential environmental effects identified the following as warranting further assessment:

- Long term outcome: Everyone in Belfast benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
- Long term ambition: Our urban economy will support 46,000 more jobs
- Long Term ambition: Our city will be home to an additional 66,000 residents
- 2021 Priorities for Growing the Economy (Create employment and opportunity, attract investment into Belfast, Foster business growth in Belfast, Increase tourism spend)
- 2021 Stretch goals for Growing the Economy (Create 15,000 new jobs, Attract over £1 billion of private sector investment including FDI, Create over 4,000 new business start-ups, Secure a City Region Growth deal, Increase the value of out of state tourism to £500 million, Welcome £1.9 million overnight tourist stays per year)
- 2021 Priorities for Living Here (Improve Neighbourhoods)
- 2021 Stretch Goals for Living here (Deliver £1 billion of physical investment in our neighbourhoods, Deliver 1,800 social housing units and agree a target for affordable housing, Invest £1 million in communities to drive social innovation, Roll out £105 million in new leisure provision)
- 2021 Priorities for City Development (Promote and position the city to compete, Develop the city's infrastructure and improve connectivity, attract more tourists, Drive the physical and cultural regeneration of the city centre, Deliver key strategic physical projects and policies)
- 2021 Stretch Goals for City Development (Grow the rates base by 5%, Create 1.5 million sq ft of Grade A office accommodation, Create a minimum of 3,000 new hotel bedspaces)
- 2021 Workstreams for City Development (Develop an integrated and sustainable city transport plan, Deliver city centre regeneration and investment projects, Manage resources and waste, Develop a further world class visitor attraction).

3. How has the SEA Report been taken into account

3.1 The SEA process has enabled the Council and its partners to highlight and consider environmental considerations during the development of the Belfast Agenda. This occurred during the screening, scoping, environmental report and consultation stages, as well as in finalising the Belfast Agenda following consultation.

3.6 Details of the further assessment of each of the above elements of the Belfast Agenda are contained within section 6 of the main SEA report. The findings of this assessment highlight environmental considerations and mitigations that will need to be considered, particularly in relation to future more detailed action planning and delivery of the workstreams, and in future reviews of the plan.

3.7 In most cases, the Belfast Agenda puts forward a high level description of the work proposed to address its priorities, however more detailed action plans which would support more detailed assessment of effects and clearer actions that could include mitigations are yet to be developed.

Therefore, the high level findings of the assessment will need to be taken into account as these progress to more detailed planning stages and towards delivery over the coming months and years.

3.8 Also, this part of the assessment highlighted the fact that in the context of the Councils work to create a new Local Development Plan, with a more detailed Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA) many of the elements within the Belfast Agenda (Such as Long term ambitions, 2021 Stretch goals and workstreams, etc.) may need to be updated as the preparation of the LDP progresses.

3.9 Environmental considerations have been taken into account in the final Belfast Agenda by strengthening the description of the outcome *'vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city'*

- *'a city where 'the natural and built beauty of Belfast linked to its hills, parks, rivers, lough, fine buildings and public space is **well protected** and can be enjoyed by everyone'*
- *'people enjoy the city's natural beauty through good access to well cared for and bio-diverse rivers, hills, parks and green open spaces. The city has an attractive built environment that is well maintained and free from dereliction. It retains its character and values its strong maritime and industrial heritage, while building a city for the future.'*
- *'a city that looks after its environment for future generations – a low carbon and sustainable city that manages waste and natural resources responsibly and which takes advantage of new technologies. A city that is resilient to environmental and climate change.'*

3.10 In addition, Sustainable Development and Respect for our environment is highlighted as a shared value for partners in the Belfast Agenda.

3.11 It is also important to note that the Belfast Agenda as the first community plan for Belfast marks the start of a long term community planning process. It will be subject to further detailed development of supporting strategies and plans, action planning, regular reviews and updated iterations of the plan. The SEA process will need to be revisited as these reviews are undertaken to ensure that the environmental issues and mitigations identified in the assessment report are taken into account and updated as necessary.

4. How have the results of consultation on the SEA been taken into account?

4.1 The draft Belfast Agenda and SEA report were made available for public consultation and comment between 15th December 2016 and 20 April 2017 (18 weeks).

4.2 In total, 5 responses were received to the consultation on the SEA for the Belfast Agenda. Two of these were written responses from statutory consultees – the Department for Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (DAERA NIEA); and the Department for Communities, Historic Environment Division (DfC HED). Three additional responses were received from individuals via an online questionnaire on the Council's public consultation (citizen space) hub.

4.3 A report summarising the responses to the SEA consultation, and how these have been addressed in the next stages of finalising the SEA report and Belfast Agenda, is provided in Appendix 1.

5. Reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with

5.1 The Belfast Agenda has been subject to an extensive engagement and consultation process over the past 3 years, involving partners, stakeholders from across the community, voluntary, business and higher/further education sectors, as well as wider residents and communities across the city. This process has distilled the long term vision, outcomes (and indicators) and ambitions for growth in the plan's creation process, for which there has been strong agreement. The Belfast Agenda's priorities for inclusive growth, across 'Growing the Economy', 'Living Here', 'City Development' and 'Working and Learning' have also been developed through extensive engagement and consultation throughout this process.

5.2 The community planning process requires the Council and its community planning partners to take into account the views of the wider community, including the range of stakeholders above, as well as baseline evidence of social, economic and environmental issues and needs, and this was reflected in the draft Belfast Agenda that was published for public consultation in December 2016. Subsequent consultation on the draft Belfast Agenda and the associated SEA, has not identified any reasonable alternatives that should be adopted at this stage.

5.3 It is recognised that there are difficulties in generating reasonable alternatives at a strategic level, as the proposals in the Belfast Agenda refer to detailed supporting strategies, plans, actions and projects that have either yet to be developed, projects already approved through the planning process, or others that be subject to processes of environmental assessment at the relevant planning stages. As a result, the alternatives presented are options for not including the proposals in the Belfast Agenda, and such alternatives are not considered viable in the context of discharging the duty to ensure that the community plan includes long term objectives and actions for improving social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

6. What steps are to be taken to monitor any significant effects

6.1 The SEA identifies 19 objectives that the Council and its Community Planning Partners must have regard to when performing actions and exercising functions in relation to the Community Plan. While many of these are already embodied within the Belfast Agenda they are expressly identified in the SEA, in the interest of clarity and to aid compliance. The SEA objectives and indicators are outlined in the table below:

SEA objective	SEA topic - EAPPR (NI) 2004 Schedule 2 para 6 (i-xiii)	Indicators
1. Reduce deprivation and encourage an inclusive and equal society.	Population	Indicators for monitoring SEA objectives 1-9 are contained within the Community Plan/Belfast Agenda (Population indicators for monitoring progress towards the 5 long term outcomes)
2. Improve health and well being for an improved quality of life.	Population, Human health	
3. To provide opportunity for good quality housing and enable people to meet their housing needs.	Population	
4. Increase community safety by supporting the reduction of crime and antisocial behaviour.	Population	
5. To improve skills and education of residents through providing high quality, accessible lifelong learning opportunities.	Population	
6. Retain and enhance access to local services and facilities.	Population	
7. To ensure local residents have access to employment opportunities.	Population	
8. Support the economic development of Belfast as a competitive place and contribute its role as a regional economic driver.	Population	
9. Promote an integrated transport system and encourage sustainable travel.	Population, Air, Climatic factors	
10. Maintain and enhance biodiversity assets and protect habitats and species.	Biodiversity, fauna, flora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of international, regional and local sites of natural importance (NIEA/SES) • Achievement of Biodiversity Action Plan Targets (BCC) • Native species at risk especially protected species (NIEA) • Number of Tree Preservation Orders (BCC) • Programme for Government indicator on Biodiversity

		(Measurement annex in development NISRA)
11. Protect and enhance soil quality.	Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of development within the Urban Footprint (BCC) • Proportion of development on brownfield sites (BCC) • DAERA classifications of land quality via Agricultural Land Classifications NI • DAERA data on Areas of Natural Constraint
12. Protect, enhance and manage the quality of the historic environment.	Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage, Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Conservation Areas, Areas of Townscape Character, Listed buildings, archaeological sites (BCC/DAERA/DfC) • Number of Buildings at Risk on BHARNI (BHARNI) • Loss or damage of listed buildings/monuments/historic landscapes and their settings (HED/ NIEA)
13. Protect, maintain and enhance the quality of Belfast's distinctive landscape and geodiversity.	Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New homes built on previously developed land (BCC) • Vacant land, properties and derelict land (BCC) • Areas of landscape quality • Number of Townscape Character Areas/Areas of Village Character • Local Landscape Policy Areas
14. Protect and enhance open space and natural greenspace including Belfast's countryside asset.	Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living Environment Deprivation – Outdoor Physical Environment (NISRA) • Number of Council areas of open space, sport and recreation (OSS BCC) • Number of greenways (OSS BCC)
15. Promote the sustainable management of waste.	Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste arising and management • Household waste arising • Recycling rate of household waste • Percentage of the tonnage of household waste arising which have been (a) recycled (b) composted (c) used to

		<p>recover heat, power and other sources of energy (d) land filled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and demolition waste rate
16. Promote the quality and efficient use of water resources	Water, Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of flood events • Development in the flood plain • Development in areas at risk of flooding • Numbers of people and properties affected by flood events • Numbers of flood management systems including SuDs • National water quality figures (NIEA) • NI Water quality data • Water consumption data (NI Water)
17. Reduce air pollution and ensure continued improvements to air quality.	Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population living in Air Quality Management Areas (BCC) • Air Quality data (BCC)
18. Support mitigation efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition to a low carbon economy.	Climatic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon Dioxide Emissions per capita
19. Support the adaptation to Climate Change and effectively manage flood risk.	Climatic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of energy supplied from renewable sources • Energy use by type (gas, oil and electricity) DfE • Percentage of land at 'significant flood risk' • Frequency of flood events • Numbers of people and properties affected by flood events

6.2 Compliance with the above objectives will be monitored by reference to a corresponding set of environmental indicators identified in section 4.2 of the final SEA report and the population indicators referred to within Appendix 1 of the Belfast Agenda.

6.3 In line with requirements for Council to publish a progress report on implementation of the Community Plan every 2 years, details of the measures for environmental effects will also be monitored and reported on a 2 yearly basis.

7. More information/contact details

7.1 For more information on the Belfast Agenda, including information relating to the SEA process and other relevant assessments, as well as next steps visit www.belfastcity.gov.uk/belfastagenda or email communityplanning@belfastcity.gov.uk or write to:

Community Planning Team
Chief Executives Department
Belfast City Hall
Donegall Square South
Belfast
BT1 5GS

Tel: 02890 320202

APPENDIX 1: Summary of Consultation Responses to Strategic Environmental Assessment (Environmental Report) on the (draft) Belfast Agenda

Introduction

As part of the plan making process for the Belfast Agenda (Belfast's Community Plan), and in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was undertaken to consider potential significant environmental effects, and whether any mitigation or alternatives would be required. As part of the process, the SEA was made available for public consultation and comment between 15th December 2016 and 20 April 2017 (18 weeks), and statutory consultees were also invited to respond.

In total, 5 responses were received to the consultation on the SEA for the Belfast Agenda.

2 of these were written responses from statutory consultees – the Department for Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (DAERA NIEA); and the Department for Communities, Historic Environment Division (DfC HED).

3 additional responses were received from individuals via an online questionnaire on the Council's public consultation (citizen space) hub.

This report summarises the responses to the SEA consultation, highlighting how these were addressed in the next stage of the SEA and plan making process

SEA in general

While the NIEA was broadly satisfied that the existing environment and environmental issues were identified in the SEA it stated that the assessment of environmental effects connected to the ambitions and priorities has not included all environmental issues raised and may not therefore have sufficient mitigation.

However, the general and far reaching nature of the ambitions and priorities for population and economic growth means that it is conceivable that most environmental considerations identified in Section 3.3 of the environmental report could be relevant to a greater or lesser extent at this high level of plan-making. Mindful of the foregoing, the SEA sought to focus on the most apparent effects to the environment that are readily identified at this conceptual stage of plan-making. This approach was reinforced by the conclusions reached by Shared Environmental Services in screening out the need for a related Habitats Regulation Assessment, largely on the basis that the contents of the Community Plan were too general to assess.

Notwithstanding the above it is accepted that the wastewater treatment capacity of Belfast and the need for investment to cater for growth envisaged in the Community Plan is of particular environmental significance. Clearly, this has implications for water quality given the discharge of wastewater into Belfast Lough and the River Lagan. Accordingly, it is important to highlight, in terms of mitigation, that the Community Plan will be informed by the most up to date information as it becomes available and, if appropriate, wastewater treatment capacity will be addressed through review and phasing of growth in the Local Development Plan. Added to this, the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems for residential and economic development will be fully explored as mitigation measures to reduce and slow water entering the drainage and sewer network.

SEA Section 1, Introduction, Pages 1-4

This section of the SEA provided an outline of the background to the SEA process. The online consultation questionnaire did not ask for feedback on this section of the report and no specific comments or suggested improvements to this section were received from respondents

SEA Section 2, Belfast Community Plan (Belfast Agenda), Pages 5-10

This section of the SEA provided a short background to the Belfast Agenda, its purpose and relationship with other plans and programmes. The online questionnaire did not ask for feedback on this section of the report, however the following comments and suggestions were received from statutory consultees:

<i>Respondent comment</i>	<i>Our response</i>
NIEA suggested an amendment in section 2.2.1 to more accurately describe 'Belfast City Council Air Quality Review and Assessment Reports'	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
NIEA suggested that section 2.2.1 should also include the UK CCRA 2017, and NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2014.	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
NIEA suggested an amendment to note an updated EC Air Quality Framework Directive (2008/50/EC) and to insert 'Air Quality Fourth Daughter Directive 2004/107/EC	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
HED , suggested that additional European Conventions relating to protection of the historic environment be included for consideration in section 2.2.	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.

No other comments or suggested improvements to this section of the SEA were received from respondents

SEA section 3 – Environmental Considerations, Pages 11-17

This section the SEA report outlined baseline information about the existing environment of the Belfast City district. We asked if this information provides an appropriate reflection of the environment in the Belfast area.

Q4. Do you think that the baseline data collected is appropriate i.e. at the right level and sufficient coverage or is there anything missing?

Yes No Comments:

<i>Respondent Comment</i>	<i>Our response</i>
<p>NIEA indicated that this section of the report has included sufficient detail on the current state of the environment however highlighted the following in relation to natural heritage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lagan Valley Regional Park and Lagan Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are two overlapping designations rather than a single entity. 	The suggested revision as to how these sites are referred to has been reflected in an updated version of the SEA report.
<p>NIEA also highlighted that the section on Air Quality (p15) should note the ongoing infraction regarding breach of the Air Quality Directive limit values for modelled values of Nitrogen Dioxide on certain streets and in particular the A12 Westlink.</p>	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
<p>HED suggested additional historic environment records be included in section 3.1 for consideration, including industrial heritage, shipwrecks, defence heritage, register of historic parks, gardens and demesnes (with link to GIS datasets), and other information such as historic routes and boundaries.</p>	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
<p>2 out of 3 online responses from individuals agreed ('Yes – it's at the right level and has sufficient coverage'), all providing no further comment.</p>	Noted
<p>1 online respondent (individual) disagreed ('No - there's information missing') and suggested information on transport services and infrastructure should be included.</p>	Noted – It should be noted that traffic related air quality is already identified as an environmental issue in section 3.3 pg15 and potential significant environmental effects arising from transport planning are assessed further in Section 6 (pg45) in relation to the Belfast Agenda workstream (develop an integrated city transport plan).

Q5. Have we got the Environmental issues right (Section 3.3 pages 14-17)? Yes No

If you feel there are environmental issues that should be added or removed, please provide comments:

<i>Respondent Comment</i>	<i>Our response</i>
NIEA indicated that this section of the report has highlighted all the relevant environmental issues however suggested that the biodiversity flora and fauna section should identify priority species of interest within brownfield sites (such as invertebrates, swifts in buildings in urban area).	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
HED suggested additional discussion in section 3.3 on the role of the historic environment in relation to tourism and regeneration.	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
2 out of 3 online responses from individuals agreed that the Environmental Issues were right, providing no further comment.	Noted
One online respondent (Individual) disagreed and suggested that section 3.3 should include information on 'lack of transport infrastructure' and its impact on air quality, along with information on 'replanting schemes to offset CO2 emissions'.	Noted –Transport related air quality is discussed in section 3.3 (page 15) of the SEA report. Addressing carbon emissions in relation to climate change is now included as one of the 19 SEA objectives for assessing impact.

SEA Section 4 – SEA Objectives and indicators, Pages 18-26

Section 4 of the report identified 19 'Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) objectives' to promote and safeguard the environment when assessing the impact of the Belfast Agenda (Community Plan), as well as environmental indicators for monitoring these objectives. We asked if respondents thought these SEA objectives and indicators are appropriate.

Q6. Have we got the 19 SEA objectives (identified in Table 4.0, pages 18-19) right?

Yes No

Q7. Are there any other objectives that should be included (bearing in mind the need to keep the number of objectives manageable?)

Yes No Please provide any comments

Q8. Should any objectives be re-worded or removed?

Yes No Please provide any comments

<i>Respondent Comment</i>	<i>Our response</i>
NIEA noted that the SEA objective referring to climate change adaptation and flooding risk does not make linkages to the need for climate change mitigation across other areas such as air quality (and transport), waste management and energy use/renewables.	The SEA objectives have been updated in an updated version of the SEA report
HED highlighted the potential co-relationship with the historic environment across the objectives and outcomes, citing the example of Titanic Quarter as a tourism asset around the city’s maritime heritage, and contribution to the economy, and pointing out that historic environment provides an inclusive backdrop for the city promoting identity and community pride, and that heritage assets and heritage open spaces play a vital role in health and wellbeing.	The suggested revision has been included within section 3.3 of an updated version of the SEA report
2 out of 3 online responses (individuals) indicated they agreed that the 19 SEA objectives were right and that addition or rewording of the objectives was not required.	Noted

<p>One online respondent (individual) suggested additional SEA objectives should include ‘scale down bonfires’ and ‘homes’ (to reduce house prices)</p>	<p>Comment noted. This is not assessed in the SEA as the Belfast Agenda does not contain strategic proposals for provision of bonfires. At an operational level, Council has a bonfire management strategy for addressing one off bonfires which includes environmental considerations, with mitigations including prohibition of tyre burning, aerosols etc. Access to affordable housing is considered to be included within the SEA objective ‘3. To provide for good quality housing and enable people to meet their housing needs’</p>
--	---

Q9. Section 4.2 (pages 19-22) identifies environmental indicators for measurement and monitoring of the SEA objectives. Have we got this right?

Yes No Please provide any comments

<i>Respondent Comment</i>	<i>Our response</i>
<p>Both NIEA and HED did not suggest any changes or additions to the proposed indicators for monitoring of the SEA objectives.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>2 out of 3 online responses (individuals) indicated that the suggested indicators for monitoring the SEA objectives were right and did not suggest any changes or additions.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>One online respondent (individual) did not answer this question, but commented ‘all of them are very vague’.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

SEA Sections 5 and 6, Scoping and Assessment of environmental effects, Pages 27-50

Sections 5 and 6 of the report assessed the potential significance of the impact of the outcomes, ambitions, priorities, stretch goals and workstreams.

Q10. Are there any elements that you think could have been assessed differently?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Please provide any comments
Q11. Are there any alternatives that, in your opinion, are not viable?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Please provide any comments
Q12. Are there any viable alternatives that may have been missed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Please provide any comments
Q13. Are the mitigation measures identified appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Please provide any comments
Q14. Are the monitoring arrangements right? Is there any information not present in the SEA that, in your opinion, would be beneficial to monitor and could be monitored?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes - the suggested monitoring arrangements are right. <input type="checkbox"/> No - there is additional information that would be beneficial and could be monitored.	Please provide any comments

<i>Respondent Comment</i>	<i>Our response</i>
Pg 29 – HED highlighted that in addition to the list of subject matters identified within the scope of the report, historic environment should be added.	The suggested revision has been included within an updated version of the SEA report
Pg29: NIEA suggest that the Habitats Regulation Assessment carried out for BMAP requires a review to ensure the assessment and mitigation is still applicable (NIEA point out that the HRA for BMAP was based on housing growth of 66,500 units over a larger geographical area).	A Habitats Regulations Assessment screening report has now been completed for the Belfast Agenda.
Pg 36-37: NIEA suggest section 6.1 (Assessing the ambitions for growth) should recognise the potential loss of biodiversity that may occur from the additional 70,000 residents and new built form in the city. Following on from this NIEA highlight there is no mitigation proposed such as protecting local sites of nature conservation interest, green roofs for brownfield biodiversity or green infrastructure.	Comments noted and suggested revisions incorporated into an updated version of the SEA report

Pg 36-37: NIEA suggest that use of sustainable urban drainage systems should be considered as potential mitigation towards addressing drainage capacity issues, with regard to the proposed additional 70,000 residents in section 6.1, and could also be highlighted in relation to addressing and improving the city's infrastructure.	Reference to SUDS considered as mitigation in relevant sections
Pgs 38-41: HED highlight the importance of considering the heritage led regeneration of historic environment assets as a key environmental consideration.	Noted
Pg41 (Living here): HED highlight the importance to utilising existing vacant housing stock including historic buildings instead of resorting to new build as a primary option. Also suggest living over city centre shops, and reuse of historic buildings.	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
Pgs 42-50 (City Development): HED suggest zoning for office buildings (and development in central Belfast generally) have to take account of a range of heritage assets, including listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological potential. Historic environment assets development at Titanic Quarter needs to be cognisant of statutorily protected historic monuments and buildings, and national significance for heritage importance, as well as economic importance.	Noted - Belfast Agenda does not provide zoning of land. The Local Development Plan will set out land use strategy and policy including zoning – a specific Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating SEA is being undertaken for this. Suggested issues now included in text within assessment of City Development priorities.
Pg 44 (Attract more tourists): HED highlight importance of vibrant and maintained historic environment that is attractive to tourists and provides and experience for them (focus cannot just be on more hotel bed spaces).	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
Pg 47: NIEA comment on the assessment of the workstream 'Deliver city centre regeneration and investment projects' on page 47 of the SEA, highlighting presence of roosting bats and nesting swifts/seagulls within the city centre which would require mitigation within regeneration plans at the detailed planning stage.	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
Pg 47 (City Centre regeneration and investment projects): HED suggest assessment of potential effects on historic environment should not solely identify potential negative effects but should also highlight the potential positive implications of re-use of historic environment assets and greater cultural vibrancy in the city centre.	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
Pg 48, Table 6.1 (Grade A office development in traditional core) - HED suggest this should note potential impacts on the Belfast Area of Archaeological Potential	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
Pg 48, Table 6.1 (Grade A Office development in Titanic Quarter) - HED suggest potential impacts on nationally important heritage assets of maritime heritage significance should be noted.	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
Pg 48, Table 6.1 (Construct two pedestrian bridges) - HED suggest this should note the need to be cognisant of riverside and navigational heritage assets.	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.

Pg 48, Table 6.1 (Continuous waterfront promenade, and residential development) - HED note built heritage includes historic environment assets such as river lagan navigation infrastructure. Historic environment should be included as a related SEA topic.	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
Pg 48, Table 6.1 (Increase water activity on the Lagan) - HED suggest that the Lagan Navigation (remaining elements are scheduled monuments) should be included as an environment likely affected, and historic environment should feature as a main related SEA topic.	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
Pg 50: HED highlights potential positive and negative impacts on heritage and historic environment of a further world class visitor attraction. Possible impacts that should be included are impacts on historic environment including historic environmental assets such as monuments, buildings and areas of archaeological potential. There is also potential for such an attraction to be heritage led.	The suggested revision has been included in an updated version of the SEA report.
2 out of 3 online responses (individuals) responded that there were no elements that should have been assed differently.	Noted
1 online respondent (individual) suggested an alternative that may have been missed relating to 'working and learning', to ' <i>upskill the whole population - everyone must contribute</i> '. No other mitigations were identified, and agreed that the monitoring arrangements were right.	Noted: Skills, employability and lifelong learning aspects of the Belfast Agenda are contained within the 'Working and Learning' section of the Community Plan. The SEA did not identify potential significant environmental effects from these elements of the plan, and therefore the SEA does not identify alternatives or mitigations in this section of the report relating to skills.
1 online response (individual) provided comments about traffic congestion, parking provision in the city centre and suggested improvements to public transport. This respondent indicated that they felt viable alternatives may have been missed and that there could be additional information that could be monitored, but did not provide any comments/suggestions as to what these might be.	Noted: Public transport, parking and traffic congestion will be considered further in the Belfast Agenda workstream (develop an integrated city transport plan) and through the Local Development Plan.

Conclusion

Section 7 of the SEA report identified the conclusions of the assessment. We wanted to know respondents' views on these conclusions and if they felt they reflected the body of the document.

<p>Q.15 Are the conclusions outlined in the SEA (Page 51) right? Do they reflect the body of the document?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Please provide any comments</p>
--

<i>Respondent Comment</i>	<i>Our response</i>
NIEA and HED did not make any specific comments about this section of the SEA report	Noted
2 out of 3 online responses (individuals) indicated they felt the conclusions in this section of the report were right.	Noted
1 online response (individual) indicated the conclusions were not right but did not make any comments or suggestions as to how it could be improved.	Noted

Non-Technical Summary

We asked if respondents' thought the Non-Technical summary (pages i- iv) provided an accessible summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Report.

<p>Q16. Does the Technical Summary section (pages i - iv) provide an appropriate summary of the main SEA report?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Please provide any comments</p>
--

<i>Respondent Comment</i>	<i>Our response</i>
NIEA and HED did not make any specific comments about this section of the SEA report	Noted
2 out of 3 online responses (individuals) indicated they felt the technical summary in this section of the report provided an appropriate summary of the report.	Noted
1 online response (individual) indicated the technical summary was not right but did not make any comments or suggestions as to how it could be improved.	Noted