



BELFAST CITY COUNCIL
DRAFT INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2012-2015

Equality Impact Assessment
at a Strategic Level

13 March 2012



Consultation

We are committed to listening to and responding to the views of our stakeholders. This EQIA report has been prepared primarily for the purposes of consultation. All comments are welcome and will be accepted in any format. All relevant documents can be accessed on the Council's website at: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/investment

How to respond

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If there is any information in this report which is not clear or if you need any more information, please contact the Chief Executive's Department on 028 9027 0202.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

In accordance with the Freedom of Act 2000 all responses to consultations may be disclosed if requested. We will contact you before any disclosure to get your views about Freedom of Information requests received.

Access to Information

As part of our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations, we want to ensure that everyone is able to access the documents we produce. We would therefore be happy to provide any of the information in this document in alternative formats on request. Please contact the Chief Executive's Department on the above number to request an alternative format.

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1. Overview and Executive Summary

- 1.1 Belfast City Council is conscious of the effect the economic downturn is having on local families, businesses and communities, so the Council has developed a draft Investment Programme which outlines our commitment to supporting the city from now until 2015.
- 1.2 Belfast is the capital city of Northern Ireland and is acknowledged as the economic driver for the region. Overall investment in the city has the potential to grow the city's attractiveness as a place to live in, work in, visit, study in or invest in. We recognise that a more competitive economy in Belfast will bring the potential for increased prosperity to all residents and beyond and at least the potential for more sustainable employment. We also recognise that modern infrastructure is critical to the future success of Belfast and will underpin the revitalisation of our local economy. The assets we create will help communities and the city as a whole prosper, compete and create further opportunities now and for future generations.
- 1.3 A key focus of the Programme is therefore investing in capital projects – at a city level through investing in key infrastructure projects to support the development of key sectors and at a local level through investing in council facilities and neighbourhood assets to support and regenerate local areas. This investment will help stimulate and support the local economy by growing the city's competitiveness and creating job and supply opportunities at a time when they are needed most. We want to ensure that everyone across the city has an opportunity to be connected to the city's success. These investments will be supported and enhanced by a range of ongoing programmes which we deliver at a community and neighbourhood level across the city.
- 1.4 The Council however is aware of the impacts of the economic downturn and we are working hard to strike the right balance between continuing to invest in our city to stimulate the economy and providing value for money services. We are aware that we have a responsibility and a duty to keep our expenditure under review and provide best value to our ratepayers at this time.
- 1.5 Our Investment Programme reflects these key areas. Over the next three years, we have committed to:
 - a £150m Physical Investment Programme
 - Supporting the local economy

- People Communities and Neighbourhoods
- Value for Money

Further detail of our commitments is outlined in Section 3.

- 1.6 The Council is aware that it cannot deliver many of the projects, programmes and actions under this Investment Programme on its own and therefore one of the underlying principles supporting this document is the need to work in partnership. It is crucial that we continue to develop productive relationships with the Northern Ireland Executive and other key partners from the public, private and voluntary and community sectors to deliver the objectives under this Programme.
- 1.7 Overall, delivering significant investment in Belfast, through the implementation of the Investment Programme, is likely to have a positive impact on all Section 75 groups, both directly and indirectly by contributing to the economic, social and environmental regeneration and wellbeing of the city. The Council believes that the Investment Programme will not have specific adverse impacts for any Section 75 group but the analysis of available data and research shows that there are a number of key inequalities which the Programme may help to address.
- 1.8 It is possible that some of the individual investment projects or programmes under the Investment Programme may have a differential impact on a number of the Section 75 groups. However that impact is likely to be positive and addresses recognised need. In this context, the Investment Programme has the potential to promote equality and good relations while addressing issues of exclusion and marginalisation. This is reinforced by the fact that the first of the 5 supporting principles, underpinning delivery of the programme relates to the promotion of good relations and equality.
- 1.9 Our draft Investment Programme 2012-2015 will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) at a strategic level. The screening and EQIA were undertaken at the same time as the development of the draft Investment Programme 2012-2015. In this way the EQIA can help inform the development of the Investment Programme and influence the decision making so that the potential for positive impacts is fully maximised.

- 1.10 This EQIA has been conducted at a strategic level addressing the Investment Programme in a holistic way and does not include details of the equality impacts of every project which may be undertaken as part of the implementation of the Programme. The issues identified in this EQIA will act as a guide to all Council departments and external partners when they are developing projects under the Programme, but programmes and projects will be subject to separate screening/EQIA under the Act as appropriate. Where an external partner takes the lead in implementing a particular project, they will be responsible for ensuring that the statutory duties are met but the Council will use its knowledge of key inequalities in Belfast to assist in the process of assessing and addressing equality impacts.
- 1.11 This draft EQIA, which has been undertaken at a strategic level, will be subject to formal consultation. Details of how to respond at this consultation are outlined on page 2 of this document. All information relating to the Investment Programme, including this draft EQIA, can be made available in alternative formats upon request.

2. Background

- 2.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires all public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between –
- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
 - men and women generally;
 - persons with a disability and persons without; and
 - persons with dependants and persons without.
- 2.2 In addition, without prejudice to the above obligation, public authorities must, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.
- 2.3 The Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 introduced new duties requiring all public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to –
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
 - encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
- 2.4 In developing the Investment Programme 2012-2015, Belfast City Council has ensured that these obligations are met to the fullest possible extent and that the promotion of equality of opportunity is at the core of the Programme. This EQIA report sets out how Belfast City Council intends to promote equality of opportunity, good relations and positive attitudes to disabled people through the implementation of the Investment Programme over the period 2012-2015.
- 2.5 The EQIA has been conducted at a strategic level addressing the Investment Programme in a holistic way and does not include details of the equality impacts of every individual element of the Programme. The issues identified in this EQIA will act as a guide to all Council departments and external partners when they are developing projects/programmes under the Investment Programme; but each project/programme will be subject to separate screening/EQIA under the Act as appropriate. Where an external partner

takes the lead in implementing a particular project/programme, they will be responsible for ensuring that the statutory duties are met but the Council will use its knowledge of key inequalities in Belfast to assist in the process of assessing and addressing equality impacts.

2.6 It should be noted that the Council is currently in the process of developing a new Equality Scheme and has submitted a draft scheme to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) for approval. The new scheme contains an interim equality action plan which was developed as the result of an audit of key inequalities in Belfast. Many of the findings of the audit of inequalities are relevant to this EQIA and are reproduced in section 3 below. Copies of the draft Equality Scheme, the audit of inequalities and the interim equality action plan can be accessed on the Council's website at: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality

2.7 The purpose of this EQIA is to –

- consider the potential equality and good relations impacts of the Investment Programme at a strategic level focusing on the key inequalities which the plan can help to reduce;
- provide an outline analysis of data and research on current major inequalities experienced by people in the Section 75 groups in relation to the key commitments under the Investment Programme
- establish the positive equality impacts which the Investment Programme can make in order to provide guidance to Council departments for the development and implementation of individual projects.

2.8 In carrying out this EQIA the Council has followed the guidance of the Equality Commission on the practical conduct of impact assessments (2005) and best practice as defined by the OFMDFM in the EQIA of the Programme for Government. These recommend that there should be seven steps in the EQIA process :

- Step 1 : Definition of the aims of the policy
- Step 2 : Consideration of available data and research
- Step 3 : Assessment of potential and actual impacts
- Step 4 : Consideration of measures
- Step 5 : Formal consultation
- Step 6 : Decision and publication of the results of the EQIA
- Step 7 : Monitoring for adverse impact.

2.9 This report has been written primarily to provide information to consultees during the formal consultation phase (Step 5) and includes the findings of the first four steps of the process. The action to be taken under the remaining three steps is also outlined in the report.

3. Definition of the aims of the policy

3.1 The Investment Programme for Belfast sets out the Council's commitment to deliver significant additional investment over the period 2012-2015, balanced across the city.

3.2 The Investment Programme contains four areas of commitment -

- Physical Investment Programme
- Supporting the local economy
- Supporting people, communities and neighbourhoods; and
- Value for Money

3.3 Under each of these, the Council has committed over the next three years to -

Physical Investment Programme - Investing £150 million in capital projects to build assets and support construction and the wider economy, including:

- £75 million in council facilities for local communities - including new pitches, playgrounds and the refurbishment and regeneration of local facilities and community assets;
- £20 million in partnership projects which will contribute to city regeneration;
- £50 million levered from Europe and other sources to provide key economic infrastructure projects to support the development of key sectors; and
- £5 million in smaller local regeneration projects.

Economy

- investing £34 million in local economic growth, through tourism, events, arts and culture and encouraging competitiveness;
- delivering 400 work placement, internship and apprenticeship opportunities;
- delivering 200 employment opportunities at no additional cost to ratepayers; and
- increasing our local procurement by 10%.

People, communities and neighbourhoods

- using our £5 million Local Investment Fund to attract and complement other funding for neighbourhood regeneration;
- implementing a £10 million grant aid programme;
- leveraging in an extra £3 million to support community safety;
- rolling out £4 million PEACE III funding to support programmes which improve community relations and reduce segregation;
- investing £1.5 million in delivering our Renewing the Routes programme; and
- dealing with dilapidated and derelict buildings.

Value for money

- keeping any required rates increase to the rate of inflation or below
- introducing the use of social and community benefit clauses in our contracts
- sustaining and enhancing the value of the city's rate base to ensure future investment

3.4 The Investment Programme sets out a wide range of projects which will together deliver the desired outcomes. However this list of projects is not exhaustive and will be subject to continual review and prioritisation over the investment period as funding and delivery opportunities present themselves. The projects highlighted in the Programme are at different stages of development, with some being initial concept ideas, some already in progress and others more fully worked up with economic appraisals to support them. The Council is committed to continuing to work with partners to further analyse and support projects which demonstrate feasibility and the ability to contribute to the city's economic, social and environmental well-being. All of the projects will be underpinned by the following principles –

- **Good relations and equality**

We are committed to promoting equality and good relations and believe these are key to improving the quality of life for everyone. Fairness and respect are central to this programme and underpin all of our activities. A peaceful and inclusive society is vital to economic regeneration, attracting talent, sustaining inward investment, generating tourism and tackling poverty. We want to shape Belfast so that its spaces and services meet the ambitions of all residents.

- **Balanced investment**

We believe all parts of Belfast should benefit from investment and growth and we will work to transform and connect all areas in the context of their individual challenges and strengths. We will work with partners to connect all areas to new city developments.

- **Partnership and integration**

We believe in strong, shared, collaborative leadership and are committed to bringing together partners from all sectors and communities to develop innovative solutions to Belfast's challenges and to take advantage of all opportunities. We believe organisations should work together to deliver the most accessible and convenient services and facilities wherever possible. We will engage with local communities in delivering this programme and will advocate with government and the private sector for more investment in Belfast.

- **Value for money**

We will test all our services, plans and projects to ensure that they provide value for money for ratepayers. We will provide efficient and effective services, making the most of scarce resources and pursuing all sources of funding for investment in Belfast. We will maximise our spend to benefit the local economy and communities.

- **Sustainability**

We will work to improve quality of life, now and for future generations, creating a sustainable, clean and healthy living space for all.

3.5 A detailed implementation plan will be produced to support the delivery of the final Investment programme. This will include:

- performance indicators;
- clear lines of accountability for delivery against actions; and
- timescales for delivery.

3.6 Given the strategic focus of the draft Investment Programme 2012-2015, the equality impacts of individual capital projects, plans and programmes are not specifically considered as part of this EQIA. As outlined in the Overview and Executive Summary above, these will continue to be subject to equality

screening in line with our Equality Scheme and in accordance with the criteria set out in the guidance produced by the Equality Commission.

4. Analysis of available data and research

- 4.1 This EQIA has been carried out utilising a wide range of both quantitative and qualitative data, from sources both within and external to the Council. Key references are included as footnotes to the text. Much of the general research relates to Northern Ireland as a whole but is particularly pertinent to Belfast. Wherever possible, data from the Council's own Section 75 monitoring systems has been included.
- 4.2 The analysis is presented under the headings of the nine Section 75 equality categories. However, these headings simply provide a framework; it is acknowledged that the effects of the Investment Programme will be different for each individual person and will not necessarily relate to a specific Section 75 characteristic.
- 4.3 The Investment Programme has four areas of commitment
- investing in a £150million physical investment programme
 - supporting the local economy
 - supporting people, communities and neighbourhoods
 - value for money
- 4.4 Recognising the strategic nature of this investment across the city, the analysis within this EQIA focuses on the potential of the Investment Programme across these 4 areas of commitment.
- 4.5 Overall delivering significant investment in Belfast, through the implementation of the Investment Programme, is likely to have a positive impact on all Section 75 groups, both directly and indirectly by contributing to the economic, social and environmental regeneration and wellbeing of the city. Belfast is the capital city of Northern Ireland and is acknowledged as the economic driver for the region. Overall investment in the city has the potential to grow the city's attractiveness as a place to live in, work in, visit, study in or invest in. A more competitive economy in Belfast will bring the potential for increased prosperity to all residents and at least the potential for more sustainable employment. The Council believes that the Investment Programme will not have specific adverse impacts for any Section 75 group but the analysis of available data and research shows that there are a number of key inequalities which the Programme may help to address.

4.6 The main purpose of this EQIA is to ensure that, in identifying and taking forward projects under the Investment Programme, the Council and its partners give due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity by addressing inequalities within and between Section 75 groups. It is therefore important to identify clearly the key inequalities which the Investment Programme has the potential to address.

Religious belief / Political opinion

- 4.7 There is a fairly even proportion of people from the two main communities in Belfast with 47.2% of residents from a Catholic community background and 48.6% from a Protestant or other Christian related community background¹. However, there are many neighbourhoods comprising people almost exclusively from one community background; in the 2007 Council public survey, 78% of residents described their area as mainly one religion². In the Council's 2010 public survey, 51% of those surveyed stated 'that their local area is a place where people from different religious and political backgrounds get on well together'. 4.2% of the population has indicated that they are of a non-religious persuasion or a member of other non-Christian religions³.
- 4.8 In terms of political opinion, in the last Council election (May 2011), 29.4% of first preference votes were cast for Sinn Féin (SF), 23.5% for the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), 13.8% for the Social, Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), 12.7% for the Alliance Party (ALL) and 8.6% for the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP).
- 4.9 The DSD Households Below Average Income (HBAI) reports use data collected in the Family Resources Survey in Northern Ireland. The latest figures show that over a quarter of individuals living in families classified as Catholic were below the low-income threshold, while just over a fifth of those living in families classified as Protestant were in low-income. The proportion of children living in poverty also varies according to the religion of the family; 32% of children living in Catholic families lived in poverty in 2008-09 compared with 18% of children living in Protestant families.⁴
- 4.10 Over the period 1992 to 2009 the number of economically active people from a Catholic community background has increased; however, across Northern Ireland as a whole, people from a Protestant community background have had a consistently higher rate of economic activity over this period. However, in Belfast in 2010 the difference was only 1% with 70% of the Protestant working age population economically active compared with 69% of Catholics.⁵

¹ Census of Population, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2001

² Survey of Belfast Resident Population, BMG Research, 2007

³ Census of Population, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2001

⁴ Households Below Average Income, DSD, 2009

⁵ Labour Force Survey Religion Report OFMDFM, 2010

- 4.11 In terms of qualifications, in 2010 there was no difference in the proportion of economically active Protestants and Catholics of working age who had higher level qualifications (both 32%) or who had A levels as their highest level qualification (both 17%).⁶
- 4.12 Findings from the 2008/09 Continuous Household Survey showed that there was no significant difference in the proportions of Catholics and Protestants participating in sport⁷.
- 4.13 Findings from the 2008/09 Continuous Household Survey showed a higher proportion of Protestants (26%) than Catholics (22%) participating in arts activities. However, there was no difference in the proportions of Catholics and Protestants attending arts events (both 67%)⁸.
- 4.14 According to the Council's most recent public survey⁹, safety is considered priority by residents with half mentioning it in their top three priorities and over a quarter stating safety as their top priority. Catholics were more likely than Protestants to feel that safety is a priority (54% compared to 47%).

⁶ Labour Force Survey Religion Report OFMDFM, 2010

⁷ Continuous Household Survey, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2009

⁸ Continuous Household Survey, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2009

⁹ Survey of Belfast Resident Population, Ipsos MORI, 2010

Racial group

- 4.15 Belfast is becoming a more culturally diverse city. It is recognised that minority ethnic people may have more difficulties accessing public services, particularly if English is not their first language.
- 4.16 There is a slightly higher proportion of people from a black and minority ethnic background in Belfast at 1.4% compared with 0.8% in Northern Ireland. The largest minority ethnic groups in Belfast are the Chinese community (0.5%) and the mixed community (0.3%)¹⁰. The Census data relates to 2001 and does not take account of the influx of migrants over the last 9 years, particularly from the eastern European countries which joined the European Union in 2004. A study commissioned by the Council in 2006¹¹ estimated that approximately 7500 migrants had settled in Belfast during the previous 2 years, mostly people within the 18-34 age range. Most new migrants to Belfast come from Poland, followed by Slovaks, Filipinos, Indians and Czechs.
- 4.17 Research published by the Institute for Conflict Research in 2009¹² indicated that migrant workers are a relatively young population with almost half in the 25-34 age group and that approximately 39% have children with the majority of children joining their parents at some stage by moving to Northern Ireland from their home country;
- 4.18 The Labour Force Survey¹³ estimates indicate that in April-June 2010 the number of those not born in the UK or Ireland of working age was 62,000 of whom 52,000 were in employment. Overall this suggests that approximately 7% of those of working age and in employment in Northern Ireland comprised migrant workers.
- 4.19 The Final Report of the Promoting Social Inclusion Working Group (published by the OFMDFM in 2000) concluded that Irish Travellers are at greater risk than any other minority ethnic group of poverty, multiple deprivation and exclusion. They also experience the most stark health inequalities and their general health and life expectancy are lower than for any other group.

¹⁰ Census of Population, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2001

¹¹ New Migrants and Belfast, Jarman, N , 2006

¹² Migrant Workers in NI, Institute of Conflict Research, 2004

¹³ Labour Force Survey Apr-Jun 2010, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2011

4.20 The research published by the Institute for Conflict Research in 2009¹⁴ indicated that just over three quarters of migrant workers were employed (either full or part-time) while a further 9% were unemployed. It also suggested that, in terms of specific jobs, some migrant workers are working at a lower level than in their country of origin; however, there was evidence of some progression in the labour market.

4.21 Research commissioned by the UK Sports Council in 2009¹⁵ suggests that inequality and discrimination persist in the provision of and access to sport and physical recreation opportunities by black and ethnic minority communities. These communities are poorly represented at decision making levels and face a range of barriers to sports participation. Research commissioned by Belfast City Council in 2008 showed that a growing number of teams across all sports have members from a minority ethnic background¹⁶.

¹⁴ Migrant Workers in NI, Institute of Conflict Research, 2004

¹⁵ A systematic review of the literature on Black and Ethnic Minority Communities in Sport and Physical Education, 2009

¹⁶ Research commissioned from consultants Strategic Leisure, including the findings of an assessment of supply and demand for association football, Gaelic football, camogie, cricket, rugby union and hockey in Belfast.

Age

- 4.22 Belfast has a lower percentage of young people (aged under 16 years) and a higher percentage of older people (aged over 60 years) than the NI average. In 2001¹⁷, 21.7% of Belfast residents were under 16 years (compared with 23.6% in NI as a whole) and 19.7% were aged over 60 years (compared with 17.6%). Population projections for the 15 year period ending 2021 indicate that the percentage of young people is likely to fall to 18.8% and the percentage of older people is likely to rise to 22.3%¹⁸.
- 4.23 As a group, pensioners are the most reliant on income from the state as an insulator against income poverty. The majority of pensioners are from a Protestant community background (61% of people aged 60 and over).¹⁹ Pensioners are also more likely to suffer from fuel poverty.²⁰ Older persons households are more likely to be workless, tend to have lower incomes and are more benefit dependent and will experience other forms of exclusions such as isolation from friends, relatives, services etc.²¹ Contributing to pensioner hardship is the fact that pensioners spend a higher proportion of their weekly income on basic necessities than any other type of household. Pensioners have a higher absolute poverty rate in 2008-09 compared to 2002-03. Furthermore, pensioners, as a group, display the greatest extent of clustering just above the relative income poverty line. This suggests that pensioners, as a group, are at greatest immediate risk of falling into relative income poverty²².
- 4.24 Younger households are most likely to experience poverty. The youngest group of households are twice as likely to be in poverty as the oldest²³.
- 4.25 The DSD Households Below Average Income (HBAI) reports use data collected in the Family Resources Survey in Northern Ireland. The latest figures show that approximately 30% of pensioners living in Belfast fall below the low-income threshold. Across Northern Ireland as a whole, Catholic

¹⁷ Census of Population, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2001

¹⁸ Population Projection 2021, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2005

¹⁹ Labour Force Survey Religion Report, NI Statistics and Research Agency, December 2011

²⁰ Lifetime Opportunities Monitoring Framework Baseline Report, OFMDFM, October 2010

²¹ Audit of Inequalities, Belfast City Council, 2011

²² Poverty and Social Exclusion in NI, Democratic Dialogue, 2003

²³ Ibid

pensioner households showed a greater proportion in low-income than Protestant pensioner households²⁴.

4.26 Research published in 2010²⁵ indicates that there has been a decline in employment rates in Northern Ireland between 2006 and 2009 and that the biggest decline has been for the 18-24 age group. One direct impact of the recession has been an increase in economic inactivity rates for younger people as they defer entry to the labour market by entering either further education or higher education. The report stressed that though the recession has had a significant impact on younger age groups, the vulnerable position of older workers is also a concern, reflecting the difficulties they may face in re-entering the labour market once they have become retired. Once older people move into unemployment they are far less likely to move back to work when compared to other age groups.

4.27 The Labour Market Report published in 2010 showed the following changes in unemployment rates by age group:

Table 1: Unemployment rates by age group

	18-24	25-49	All persons
	%	%	%
Jan-Aug 2007	9.9	2.5	3.7
Jan-Aug 2010	19.0	4.9	7.0

Source: Labour Market Report, October 2010

4.28 The recent survey of adult sporting activity published by the Sports Council NI provided figures for sport participation in Belfast (defined as at least 30 minutes of at least moderate intensity in the last 7 days) showing that participation decreases with age and that participation by older age groups is lower in Belfast than in Northern Ireland as a whole.

Table 2: Sport Participation

Age Group	Belfast	NI
	%	%
16-29	57	55
30-49	34	42
50+	17	21

Source: NI Sport and Physical Activity Survey, Sports Council NI, 2011

²⁴ Households Below Average Income, DSD, 2009

²⁵ Employment Inequalities in an Economic Downturn, Equality Commission for NI, 2010

4.29 Findings from the 2008-09 Continuous Household Survey showed participation in arts activities and attendance at arts events by people in different age groups as shown in the table below. The findings indicated that attendance at arts events declines with age but that the highest participation in arts activities is by people aged 55-64.

Table 3: Participation in any arts activity/ attendance at arts events during the last 12 months

Profile of respondent	% of respondents participating in arts activities	% of respondents attending arts events
All respondents	25	67
Aged 16-24	27	83
Aged 25-34	25	82
Aged 35-44	24	81
Aged 45-54	27	70
Aged 55-64	29	61
Aged 65+	21	42

4.30 According to the Council's most recent public survey house²⁶, 46% of those interviewed highlighted that they felt the thing which would help improve quality of life most in the city was lower levels of anti-social behaviour while 39% stated lower levels of crime. Reducing anti-social behaviour and crime are particularly important among over 55s. Those aged between 16-24 however were more likely to say that more activities for children and young people was the thing that would most improve quality of life.

4.31 Residents were also asked what they thought the Council's key priorities should be with 31% stating that supporting children and young people was a top priority. Those aged 16-34 year olds (40%) and those with children in the household (45%) were more likely to think that supporting young people should be a priority for the Council.

²⁶ Survey of Belfast Resident Population, Ipsos MORI, 2010

Marital status

- 4.32 A relatively high percentage of Belfast residents are single at 41.3% compared with the NI average of 33.1%. There is also a higher percentage of widowed people at 9.3% compared with the NI average of 7.8%. Conversely there are fewer married people at 36.9% compared with the NI average of 48.5%²⁷. Belfast hosted 42 civil partnership ceremonies in 2011.
- 4.33 Research published in 2010²⁸ indicated that the greatest impact of the recession has been on those who are single or separated, although this finding is largely driven by the fact that this group is likely to be made up of large numbers of younger people.
- 4.34 In income terms, data shows that women pensioners in couples aged over 65 had the lowest total incomes in 2006-07 (at only 48% of their male counterparts). Among men, singles aged 65 and over had the lowest incomes.²⁹
- 4.35 Evidence from 2003 showed that divorced and separated people have the highest risk of poverty while married or co-habiting households have the lowest³⁰.
- 4.36 Findings from the 2008-09 Continuous Household Survey showed a higher than average participation in sport by single people. However, the survey acknowledged that differences in marital status proportions were likely to be due to other factors such as age and dependents.

Table 4: Participation in any sport in the last 12 months

Profile of respondent	% of respondents participating
All respondents	45
Married	47
Cohabiting	65
Single	54
Widowed	14
Divorced	34
Separated	40

²⁷ Census of Population, NI Statistics and Research agency, 2001

²⁸ Employment Inequalities in an Economic Downturn, Equality Commission for NI, 2010

²⁹ Individual Income Series for Northern Ireland, DSD, 2007

³⁰ Poverty and Social Exclusion in NI, Democratic Dialogue, 2003

4.37 Findings from the 2008-09 Continuous Household Survey showed participation in arts activities and attendance at arts events by people of different marital status as shown in the table below. The survey acknowledged that differences in marital status proportions were likely to be due to other factors such as age and dependents.

Table 5: Participation in any arts activity in the last 12 months

Profile of respondent	% of respondents participating in arts activities	% of respondents attending arts events
All respondents	25	67
Married	26	70
Cohabiting	32	76
Single	26	72
Widowed	17	40
Divorced	26	60
Separated	17	60

Sexual orientation

- 4.38 There is limited statistical data available on sexual orientation in Northern Ireland and within Belfast. The 2005 Life & Times Survey showed that 1.7% of respondents identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual³¹; however, the Council currently has no data specific to Belfast.
- 4.39 The Life and Times Surveys since 1998 have examined questions concerning people's attitudes towards lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people. In 3 of the past 4 surveys, LGB people were considered second to minority ethnic people as being more likely to be treated unfairly.³² These surveys also reveal "*widespread prejudice towards gay and lesbian people in Northern Ireland*". In addition, a study by the Equality Commission found that 24% of respondents believed that discrimination against LGB people was more common than five years ago and 54% of respondents believed that LGB people were especially likely to be subject to forms of harassment, more than any other group.³³
- 4.40 Limited data is available on the labour market position and incomes of individuals by sexual orientation. Recent research indicates that although the majority of people in Northern Ireland, across all workplace sectors, believe their sexual orientation would have no impact on their chances of progressing professionally at work, over a third did not know what impact it would have or think their sexual orientation will have a negative impact.³⁴
- 4.41 One of the key issues for LGB people is the promotion of community safety across the city to reduce both homophobic hate crime incidents and fear of crime. Research by the Rainbow Project in 2009³⁵ found that 21% of gay and bisexual males and 18% of LGB females had been victim of one or more homophobic hate crimes or incidents in the previous three years and 30% of these incidents resulted in physical injury. In addition, 13% of LGB people felt that harassment/attacks on people because of their sexual orientation in their neighbourhood was a problem.

³¹ NI Life & Times Survey, ARK, 2005

³² Attitudes towards Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People in NI, ARK, March 2010 (Research Update No. 66)

³³ Equality Awareness Survey, Equality Commission NI, 2008

³⁴ Through Our Eyes: Experiences of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People in the Workplace, the Rainbow Project, 2011

³⁵ Through Our Eyes: Perceptions and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People towards Homophobic Hate Crime and Policing in Northern Ireland, The Rainbow Project, 2009

Gender

- 4.42 Belfast has a predominantly female population (53.2% of residents). This is slightly higher than the NI figure of 51.3%³⁶.
- 4.43 Despite considerable advances in recent years, in terms of the rates of economic activity, employment and entrepreneurial activity, women are less well connected to the labour market than men. There are notable gender differences in employment rates and in the nature of employment between the sexes in NI. In 2010, 72% of males in Northern Ireland, aged 16-64, were in employment compared with 63% of females. This represents a narrowing of the gap between female employment rates and those of males compared to five years ago (61.7% for females and 74.5% for males)³⁷. The table below shows economic activity rates by age and gender as at October 2010.

Table 6: Economic activity rates by age and gender

Age group	All persons	Male	Female
	%	%	%
18-24	68.4	75.6	60.8
25-49	84.1	91.7	76.9
50+	34.5	42.8	27.3
50-64	57.3	66.6	48.2
65+	6.6	10.1	-

Source: Labour Market Report, October 2010

- 4.44 Research published by the Equality Commission in 2010 suggested that the impact of the recent economic downturn has been greater on men than on women, in part because of the high job losses in the construction and manufacturing sectors which are male dominated industries. The unemployment figures for young men are a particular concern, especially if they translate into long term unemployment. Women are also in a vulnerable position in the jobs market in low paid, part-time employment.³⁸
- 4.45 In income terms, data shows that women pensioners in couples aged over 65 had the lowest total incomes in 2006-07 (at only 48% of their male counterparts). Among men, singles aged 65 and over had the lowest incomes.³⁹

³⁶ Census of Population, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2001

³⁷ Women in Northern Ireland, Labour Market Statistics Bulletin, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2011

³⁸ Employment Inequalities in an Economic Downturn, Equality Commission for NI, 2010

³⁹ Individual Income Series for Northern Ireland, DSD, 2007

- 4.46 DSD data on median total individual income by life stage (2006-07) shows that the highest weekly income is achieved by men aged 40-64 living in a household consisting of a couple with children. For women, the highest weekly income is achieved by women under the age of 40, living in a household consisting of a couple with no children. Single people across all age groups (especially men) have significantly lower median weekly incomes.⁴⁰
- 4.47 The recent survey of adult sporting activity published by the Sports Council NI provided figures for sport participation in Belfast (defined as at least 30 minutes of at least moderate intensity in the last 7 days) showing that participation by women (25%) was considerably lower than for men (45%). Participation by women in Belfast was also lower than in Northern Ireland as a whole (31%).⁴¹
- 4.48 Findings from the 2008-09 Continuous Household Survey show that a significantly higher proportion of females (27%) than males (22%) participated in arts activities in the previous 12 months. The findings in relation to attendance at arts events were similar with 70% of females and 64% of males attending an arts event in the previous 12 months.
- 4.49 Life expectancy is a high level indicator of health. In terms of life expectancy the average for men in Belfast is 73.5 years and for females 79.6 years – this is lower than the NI average of 78.6 for men and 81.4 for women. A boy born in Belfast West Parliamentary Constituency can expect to live six years less than a boy born in Belfast South. Male life expectancy in Belfast is 11th lowest in the UK (422, based on 2004-06 data)⁴².
- 4.50 According to the Council's most recent public survey⁴³ 94% of those interviewed stated that they felt safe in their local area during the day and 85% felt safe in the city centre during the day. 64% said they felt safe in their local area after dark while 41% stated they felt unsafe in the city centre after dark. Women and those aged over were more likely to feel unsafe in both the city centre and their local area after dark.

⁴⁰ Individual Income Series for Northern Ireland, DSD, 2007

⁴¹ Northern Ireland Sport and Physical Activity Survey, Sports Council NI, 2011

⁴² Divided by health: a city profile, Belfast Healthy Cities, 2008

⁴³ Survey of Belfast Resident Population, Ipsos MORI, 2010

Disability

- 4.51 The Census showed that one in four (24.2%) of Belfast residents has a limiting long term illness, health problem or disability which limits their daily activities or the work they can do, compared with the NI average of 20.3%⁴⁴. Most people underestimate the prevalence of disability in NI; 92% of respondents to a survey in 2002 thought that the figure was lower than it actually is⁴⁵.
- 4.52 People with disabilities face a range of recognised physical barriers such as transport, access, signage, seating and general facilities; attitudes of others can also create a barrier.⁴⁶
- 4.53 People living in a household with one or more disabled adults have a higher than average risk of living in relative poverty.⁴⁷ 30% of individuals living in a household with one or more disabled adults live below the poverty line compared to 21% of individuals in the population as a whole. (Relative poverty is defined as all those living below 60% of the median UK income.)
- 4.54 People with multiple disabilities are at the greatest risk of poverty (47%) compared with those with a single disability (38%) and those without a disability (21%)⁴⁸.
- 4.55 For persons with a disability the employment rate is considerably lower than that for persons without a disability (see Table 7 below). For person with a disability the employment rate is highest for those aged 30-39 (44%) and lowest for those aged 50-59/64 (21%).

Table 7: Employment Rate by Age Group and Disabled Status

Age Group	Persons with disability (%)	Persons without disability (%)
16-19	*	24
20-29	*	75
30-39	44	84
40-49	41	90
50-59/64	21	74
All persons	31	75

(* Cell size too small for a reliable estimate) Source: Labour Force Survey, Apr-Jun 2010

⁴⁴ Census of Population, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2001

⁴⁵ Survey into Public Attitudes to Disability, Equality Commission NI, 2002

⁴⁶ Audit of Inequalities, Belfast City Council, 2011

⁴⁷ Households Below Average Income, DSD, 2010

⁴⁸ Poverty and Social Exclusion Project, OFMDFM, 2005

- 4.56 The working age employment rates for males with disabilities is slightly higher than that for females with disabilities; this pattern of employment rate is common to both people with a disability and those without⁴⁹.
- 4.57 The Sport NI 2009 Active Places Research Report stated that sports facilities in Northern Ireland have generally been built to the standards required by building regulations but, in reality, are unable to accommodate the needs of many sports people with disabilities, particularly in relation to team sports.
- 4.58 Disability Sports NI estimates that only 10% -15% of people with disabilities in Northern Ireland regularly participate in sport or physical activity, a figure well below the participation levels for the population as a whole, yet there is an increasing demand from people with disabilities to take part in sport.
- 4.59 The recent survey of adult sporting activity published by the Sports Council NI provided figures for sport participation in Belfast (defined as at least 30 minutes of at least moderate intensity in the last 7 days) showing that participation by disabled people (12%) was considerably lower than for the population of Belfast as a whole (34%). Participation by disabled people in Belfast was also lower than in Northern Ireland as a whole (19%).⁵⁰
- 4.60 Findings from the 2008-09 Continuous Household Survey showed that significantly less people with a limiting longstanding illness participate in arts activities (19% compared with 27% of those without a disability). However, the difference in the proportions is much less pronounced than for those with and without a limiting longstanding illness participating in sport (see above).

⁴⁹ Labour Force Survey, Apr-Jun 2010, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2011

⁵⁰ Northern Ireland Sport and Physical Activity Survey, Sports Council NI, 2011

Dependants

- 4.61 30.4% of households in Belfast include dependant children, compared with the NI average of 36.5%. 11.0% of households consist of a lone parent and a dependant child or children, compared with the NI average of 8.1%. Over 94% of lone parents in Belfast are female⁵¹.
- 4.62 At the time of the 2001 Census, 11.8% of people in Belfast said that they provided unpaid care for a dependant person; this is slightly higher than the NI average of 11.0%⁵².
- 4.63 DSD data on median total individual income by life stage (2006-07) shows that the highest weekly income is achieved by men aged 40-64 living in a household consisting of a couple with children. For women, the highest weekly income is achieved by women under the age of 40, living in a household consisting of a couple with no children.⁵³
- 4.64 Single parents are at greater risk of economic disadvantage than other household types; 39% of people living in a lone parent household are living in relative poverty.⁵⁴
- 4.65 Persons with dependants are likely to face additional barriers to employment. These include access to affordable childcare and continuation of benefits once in employment⁵⁵.
- 4.66 The proportion of lone parents in employment is well below the average, with female lone parents at the highest risk of poverty. There are also indications of higher job exit levels among lone parents, the majority of whom are women⁵⁶.
- 4.67 The Sport England Active People Survey 2009/10 showed that women aged 25-34 with children at home are half as likely as women the same age without children to take part in sport on a regular basis, the main barrier being lack of child care.

⁵¹ Census of Population, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2001

⁵² Census of Population, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2001

⁵³ Individual Income Series for Northern Ireland, DSD, 2007

⁵⁴ Breakthrough Northern Ireland, Centre for Social Justice, 2010

⁵⁵ What Can We Do to Tackle Child Poverty in NI?, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2009

⁵⁶ Lone Parents Cycling between Work and Benefits, Department of Work & Pensions, 2004

4.68 According to the Council's most recent public survey⁵⁷ 37% of those interviewed highlighted that they felt the thing which would help improve quality of life most in the city was more activities for children and young people. This was highest in people with children in their households and those aged 16-24.

4.69 Residents were also asked what they thought the Council's key priorities should be with 31% stating that supporting children and young people was a top priority. Those aged 16-34 year olds (40%) and those with children in the household (45%) were more likely to think that supporting young people should be a priority for the Council.

⁵⁷ Survey of Belfast Resident Population, Ipsos MORI, 2010

Multiple Identities

- 4.70 The Council's effectiveness in addressing existing inequalities and generating positive impacts via its draft Investment Programme will be dependent upon the delivery of individual capital investment projects, actions and programmes.
- 4.71 As outlined in Sections 1 and 3 above, this EQIA has been carried out at a strategic level and does not include details of the equality impacts of every project which may be undertaken as part of the implementation of the Programme. The precise impact of individual projects or programmes in terms of the potential impact in respect of the promotion of equality and good relations will be assessed on an individual basis. The issues identified in this EQIA will act as a guide to all Council departments and external partners when they are developing projects under the Programme, but each project will be subject to separate screening/ EQIA under the Act as appropriate
- 4.72 This listing should not be regarded as definitive as there will be considerable variation in the scale and scope of inequalities experienced by each of the s75 groups. In addition many of the issues raised in the above listing permeate more than one s75 group, for example the difficulties faced by lone parents in particular the situation facing women in respect of economic and social well-being. Likewise, the older population may face particular difficulties in accessing public services. The 'cumulative impact' of multiple sources of disadvantage – low incomes, dependency on benefits, limited skills and qualifications, absence of role models – are likely to combine together to create long term inequalities in our society.
- 4.73 The 'cumulative impact' of multiple problems affecting particular groups indicates the need for co-ordination of mitigating measures across not just the Council but all sectors and make their resolution challenging for all concerned. As outlined in the Overview and Executive Summary, the Council is not responsible alone for many of the actions contained in the Investment Programme and can only deliver these in partnership with other public, private and community and voluntary sector bodies.
- 4.74 In many instances there is an important spatial dimension to these issues. For example, areas of multiple deprivation suffer from a concentration of problems and outcomes which may reflect the cumulative impact of multiple inequalities as evidenced by health and lifestyle indicators. Deprived areas have lower life

expectancy, worse health outcomes, suffer from increased morbidity and mortality, have substantially higher levels of teenage pregnancy than the region's average and perform less well in terms of educational outcomes.

- 4.75 Multiple deprivation is a particular issue in Belfast. The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation. This uses information on seven types of domains of deprivation (covering income deprivation; employment deprivation; health deprivation and disability; education, skills and training deprivation; proximity to services; the living environment as well as crime and disorder).
- 4.76 According to the 2010 Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM)⁵⁸ 46% of the population of Belfast live in the most deprived Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland and eight out of the ten most deprived wards in Northern Ireland lie within the city's boundaries. However deprivation levels in Belfast vary considerably with the city also having some of the least deprived wards in Northern Ireland. The majority of these deprived areas are situated in the west and north of Belfast.
- 4.77 7 out of the ten most deprived wards in Northern Ireland in terms of health deprivation are in Belfast. There are pockets of health inequalities across the city and the gap in life expectancy is not reducing between the most affluent areas and the most deprived.

⁵⁸ Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2010, May 2010

5. Analysis of actual and potential impacts

- 5.1 Having established the key inequalities for people in each of the Section 75 categories in relation to the key areas on which the Investment Programme will have an impact, the next step in the EQIA process is to consider whether the differential impacts are likely to be beneficial or adverse.

Overall impacts

- 5.2 The implementation of the Investment Programme will make an important contribution in terms of supporting the recovery of the local economy and is likely to have a positive impact on all Section 75 groups, both directly and indirectly, by contributing to economic growth and social progress. A more competitive economy in Belfast will bring the potential for increased prosperity to all residents and at least the potential for more sustainable employment. The Council believes that the Investment Programme will not have specific adverse impacts for any Section 75 group but the analysis of available data and research shows that there are a number of key inequalities which the Programme may help to address.
- 5.3 The main purpose of this EQIA is to ensure that, in identifying and taking forward projects under the Investment Programme, the Council and its partners give due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity by addressing inequalities within and between Section 75 groups. It is therefore important to identify clearly the key inequalities which the Investment Programme has the potential to address. The following paragraphs therefore summarise the key inequalities which will need to be taken into account as the implementation of the Programme progresses.

Religious belief / political opinion

- 5.4 The Council believes that the Investment Programme will benefit all Belfast residents, irrespective of their religious belief or political opinion. The Council is committed to investing over £150million in investment in Belfast balanced across the city. It is possible that certain projects may benefit one community more than another, simply because of geographical distribution and potential usage. However, one of the underlying principles of the Investment Programme is balanced investment across the city and the Council will ensure that investment responds to recognised need.

- 5.5 The analysis of data suggests that there is considerable parity between the two communities in Belfast in terms of economic activity, qualifications and participation in sport and arts events.
- Findings from the 2008/09 Continuous Household Survey showed that there was no significant difference in the proportions of Catholics and Protestants participating in sport⁵⁹.
 - Findings from the 2008/09 Continuous Household Survey showed a higher proportion of Protestants (26%) than Catholics (22%) participating in arts activities.
- 5.6 According to the Council's most recent public survey, safety is considered priority by residents with half mentioning it in their top three priorities and over a quarter stating safety as their top priority. Catholics were more likely than Protestants to feel that safety is a priority (54% compared to 47%).

Racial group

- 5.7 The Investment Programme should be beneficial to all residents of Belfast regardless of their racial group or country of origin. The data analysis highlights some of the key inequalities that the Investment Programme may help to address, notably
- Travellers are at greater risk than any other minority ethnic group of poverty, multiple deprivation and exclusion. They also experience the most stark health inequalities and their general health and life expectancy are lower than for any other group;
 - UK research suggests that inequality and discrimination persist in the provision of and access to sport and physical recreation opportunities by black and minority ethnic communities. These communities are poorly represented at decision making levels and face a range of barriers to sports participation.

Age

- 5.8 The Investment Programme should be beneficial to all residents of Belfast in all age groups. Inequalities to be addressed include:
- Younger households are most likely to experience poverty and the most pronounced decline in employment rates as a result of the recent recession has been for the 18-24 age group. According to the Council's

⁵⁹ Continuous Household Survey, NI Statistics and Research Agency, 2009

most recent public survey⁶⁰ 37% of those interviewed highlighted that they felt the thing which would help improve quality of life most in the city was more activities for children and young people. This was highest in people with children in their households and those aged 16-24.

- Pensioners as a group are at greatest immediate risk of falling into relative income poverty and 30% of pensioners living in Belfast fall below the low-income threshold.
- Physical activity and attendance at arts events declines with age and participation in sport by older age groups is lower in Belfast than in Northern Ireland as a whole.

Marital status

5.9 The Investment Programme should be beneficial to all residents of Belfast regardless of marital status. Inequalities to be addressed include:

- Divorced and separated people have the highest risk of poverty while married or co-habiting households have the lowest. However, this changes with age; women pensioners in couples aged over 65 have the lowest total incomes and, among men, singles aged 65 and over have the lowest incomes.
- The recession has impacted heavily on those who are single or separated, although this may be largely as a result of the fact that this group is likely to be made up of large numbers of younger people.
- The key barrier to participation in sport and arts is family commitments; this may have significant impacts for lone parents.

Sexual orientation

5.10 The Investment Programme should be beneficial to all residents of Belfast regardless of sexual orientation. Specifically one of the key issues for LGB people is the promotion of community safety across the city to reduce both homophobic hate crime incidents and fear of crime and this is an area which will be addressed.

5.11 On the whole there is a lack of statistical data available on sexual orientation in Northern Ireland and within Belfast and the Council is aware of the need to improve monitoring. The Council would particularly welcome comments on

⁶⁰ Survey of Belfast Resident Population, Ipsos MORI, 2010

the key inequalities which lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people are likely to experience during the consultation on the Investment Programme and the EQIA.

Gender

- 5.12 The Investment Programme should be beneficial to all residents of Belfast regardless of gender. Inequalities to be addressed include:
- Women are less well connected to the labour market than men in terms of the rates of economic activity, employment and entrepreneurial activity, despite considerable advances in recent years.
 - The impact of the recent economic downturn has been greater on men than on women, in part because of the high job losses in the construction and manufacturing sectors which are male dominated industries. However, women are also in a vulnerable position in the jobs market in low paid, part-time employment.
 - Life expectancy is a high level indicator of health. In terms of life expectancy the average for men in Belfast is 73.5 years and for females 79.6 years – this is lower than the NI average of 78.6 for men and 81.4 for women. A boy born in Belfast West Parliamentary Constituency can expect to live six years less than a boy born in Belfast South. Male life expectancy in Belfast is 11th lowest in the UK (422, based on 2004-06 data)⁶¹.
 - The recent survey of adult sporting activity in Belfast showed that participation in sport by women (25%) was considerably lower than by men (45%). Participation by women in Belfast was also lower than in Northern Ireland as a whole. However, a higher proportion of women than men participate in arts activities.

Disability

- 5.13 The Council is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, investment under its Investment Programme takes full account of the needs of people with disabilities. This includes ensuring compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. The Investment Programme should be beneficial to all residents of Belfast, both people with disabilities and people without. However, there are some major inequalities for disabled people that need to be addressed, including:

⁶¹ Divided by health: a city profile, Belfast Healthy Cities, 2008

- People with multiple disabilities are at the greatest risk of poverty (47%) compared with those with a single disability (38%) and those without a disability (21%). 30% of individuals living in a household with one or more disabled adults live below the poverty line compared to 21% of individuals in the population as a whole.
- For persons with a disability the employment rate is considerably lower at 31% than that for persons without a disability at 75%.
- Disability Sports NI estimates that only 10% -15% of people with disabilities in Northern Ireland regularly participate in sport or physical activity. The recent survey of adult sporting activity in Belfast showed that participation in sport by disabled people (12%) was considerably lower than for the population of Belfast as a whole (34%).
- Significantly less people with a disability participate in arts activities: 19% compared with 27% of those without a disability.

Dependants

5.14 The Investment Programme should be beneficial to all residents of Belfast, both people with dependants and people without. Inequalities to be addressed include:

- Persons with dependants are likely to face additional barriers to a range of life experiences, including employment, sport and arts activities and access to health care. Access to affordable childcare is a major barrier to participation. In addition carers tend to suffer higher levels of ill health compared with the non-carer population.
- Single parents, in particular, are at greater risk of economic disadvantage than other household types; 39% of people living in a lone parent household are living in relative poverty. The proportion of lone parents in employment is also well below the average, with female lone parents at the highest risk of poverty. There are also indications of higher job exit levels among lone parents.

Multiple Identities

5.15 The Investment Programme should be beneficial to all residents of Belfast including those who are affected by inequalities across multiple identities.

- The 'cumulative impact' of multiple sources of disadvantage – low incomes, dependency on benefits, limited skills and qualifications, absence of role models – have the potential to combine together to create long term inequalities in our society.

6. Consideration of measures

6.1 The Investment Programme is likely to have a positive impact on all Section 75 groups, both directly and indirectly, by contributing to economic growth and social progress. It is anticipated, however, that some areas of investment will have a differential impact on a number of Section 75 groups in a positive manner through addressing recognised need and these are highlighted below.

- New pitch provision at Cherryvale, Woodlands, Cliftonville playing fields, Falls Park and Ormeau Park and the upgrade of the Mary Peters Track will provide direct benefits to people in younger age groups who are more likely to participate in sport and also offer an opportunity to increase participation by under-represented groups such as older people, disabled people, people from BME communities and people with dependants.
- The investment in Dunville and Woodvale parks will directly benefit children and young people, particularly in terms of use of the new play areas and indirectly benefit people with dependants, by providing a safe, welcoming environment for their dependants to play and spend time. There will also be space for community events which will provide opportunities to encourage under-represented groups to become more involved.
- The refurbishment of existing children's playgrounds and expansion of community gardens across the city will benefit children and young people across all Section 75 groups and will focus on making facilities accessible and inclusive to children of various abilities.
- Projects to support employability and skills development, including investing £300,000 to create bursaries, will target young people (16-24) who have been badly impacted by the economic downturn and help them into further education, training and employment.
- The Council will provide over 400 work placement, apprenticeship and internship opportunities within its own workplaces with a focus on graduates, young long-term unemployed and disabled people and will work with local partners to deliver similarly targeted employability initiatives across the city.

- The £4.5 million investment in the cultural and arts sectors will provide further opportunities to encourage participation and attendance at events by under-represented groups, such as disabled people, boys and young men and people from BME communities.
- Projects within the Investment Programme will maximise inward investment and encourage new business start ups. Initiatives designed to foster new businesses and expand existing small businesses will provide opportunities to target under-represented groups such as women, young people and disabled people.
- Projects aimed at people, communities and neighbourhoods will help to reduce segregation and promote inclusion and integration of different communities. These projects include the PEACE III Programme which has a specific focus on tackling sectarianism and racism and a youth engagement initiative aimed at breaking the cycle of youth involvement in interface violence.
- The Poverty and Social Inequalities Framework will seek to ensure that public services are more accessible which will have particular benefits for those groups which currently experience barriers to access, including people from BME communities, migrant workers, disabled people, older people and people with dependants.
- The investment of £3.5 million in health and well-being programmes will include early years and life long learning projects targeted at young people and older people and will promote better use of local parks and leisure facilities, providing an opportunity to target under-represented groups.

Further action

6.2 Investing in infrastructure has the potential to promote equality and good relations whilst addressing issues of exclusion and marginalisation. However, this potential will only be realised where the delivery of individual projects is subject to and informed by due consideration of the inequalities that need to be addressed. It is a pre-requisite that each project will be subject to equality and good relations screening at the appropriate time when all relevant information to conduct a full analysis is available. Where, appropriate, further EQIAs will be carried out in relation to individual projects.

7. Consultation

7.1 Belfast City Council is committed to consultation which is timely, open and inclusive, and conducted in accordance with the Equality Commission's Guiding Principles. The Council welcomes the views of any organisation, group or individual on this equality impact assessment. It will reflect on any proposals made in relation to the impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity:

- Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial
- group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- Between persons with dependants and persons without.

7.2 Additionally, we will give regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

7.3 The consultation process in respect of the draft Investment Programme and the potential equality impacts includes –

- an on line questionnaire
- opportunities to comment in writing
- consultation with the Council's Section 75 Forum

7.4 To facilitate this process you may wish to consider the following questions:

- 1. To what extent do you agree with the key findings and conclusions outlined in this document?**
- 2. Do you feel all potential impacts have been adequately identified within the Investment Programme? If not, what additional evidence do you have to support your view?**
- 3. What suggestions would you like to make to address either any of the issues raised in the draft EQIA or any of the concerns you may have?**
- 4. Do you have any additional evidence concerning the impact of the draft Investment Programme on the different groups within any of the nine categories?**

- 7.5 All consultation documents can be made available in hard copy and alternative formats on request and every effort will be made to provide alternative formats as quickly as possible.
- 7.6 All Equality Scheme consultees will be notified of the availability of this EQIA report and invited to comment. This report will be made available on the Council's website and comments will be invited from any individual with an interest in the proposals. Comments will be accepted in any format.
- 7.7 As much background information as possible has been included within this report and the associated documents. If there is any information which has not been provided, the Council will make every effort to do so on request. If any consultee has difficulty accessing the background information the Council will consider providing summaries in other formats or explaining issues on a face to face basis.
- 7.8 In line with the Council's Equality Scheme, a 12 week consultation period applies to the consultation on the draft EQIA on the Investment Programme. However we would appreciate it if comments and views could be submitted in line with the Investment Programme consultation period by **27 April 2012**.

8. Further Steps

- 8.1 At the end of the consultation period, the EQIA report will be revised to take account of all comments received from consultees. The EQIA report, together with a full report of the consultation process, will then be submitted to the Council to assist them to make final decisions on the Investment Programme. The decisions made will be incorporated into a final EQIA report which will set out the consideration given to the impact of alternative policies and mitigating actions. This will complete Step 6 of the EQIA process.
- 8.2 The final EQIA report will be made available through the Council's website. Information will also be made available to publications and media associated with the Section 75 categories. The Council will ensure that information is available in accessible formats in a timely fashion, paying particular attention to the special needs of particular groups within each equality category.
- 8.3 The implementation plan for the Investment Programme will include a monitoring and evaluation framework and appropriate performance indicators. When this framework is developed, due attention will be paid to the need to monitor the equality impacts of the Investment programme in order to find out the effect on the relevant groups and sub-groups within the equality categories.
- 8.4 The results of ongoing monitoring of the equality impacts will be reviewed on an annual basis and included in the annual review on progress to the Equality Commission. This review will be published on the Council's website. This will complete Step 7 of the EQIA process.
- 8.5 If the monitoring and analysis of results over a two year period show that there has been a greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the Council will take steps to achieve better outcomes for the relevant equality groups.