Belfast
involved

Community Support Plan

2011-14

For public consultation

Department for
**Social
Development**
www.dsdni.gov.uk

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

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1. Introduction

Belfast City Council has prepared its Community Support Plan in a time of hope and uncertainty. The city and the wider region are facing unprecedented changes within both local and regional government and across the community and voluntary sector. Together we face the growing repercussions of the troubled global economy and growing public and private sector financial constraints.

This new plan identifies the role for our Community Services section over the next three years and describes a plan of action that will allow the council to continue its support for the sector and communities across the city. In particular the CSP is shaped by a series of strategic drivers:

1. The radically changing economic, financial and public sector climate
2. External policies and programmes which are relevant to the achievement of successful community development strategies
3. The corporate priorities of Belfast City Council
4. The circumstances of the community sector across the city.

Our over-riding priority, whether we are in a recession or not, is to develop a sector that is well-structured, skilled and with the necessary resources to tackle socio-spatial exclusion and deliver council objectives for better equipped, engaged and more resourceful communities.

A Community Development model for Belfast

In early 2010 Belfast City Council committed to lead on the design of a new community development strategy that would do two things:

1. Establish a simple **model of community development** that could be shared both within the council and with our partners across the city.

2. Create a **community development strategy** specifically for the council that would allow us, within the context of our corporate objectives, to contribute to the outcomes described in the model.

The **draft model** focuses on a broad definition of community development and the strands of work that contribute to it. It also considers the types of outcomes that such a model would support. In the first instance, this model will help clarify the council's position on community development. Over time, we would work with our partners to agree how, individually and jointly, we might adopt the model to contribute to shared outcomes.

The second element, the **draft strategy**, is specifically for the council and its services. It considers where the community development model fits with our own corporate objectives. It also describes activities specifically for the council that outline a number of additional actions that can enhance our existing work on community development (particularly within Community Services) and offers ideas for new approaches across the council. The development work on the strategy has thus greatly informed the design and content of this Community Support Plan.

Because the two documents are intimately linked, the council has decided to consult on both its draft Community Development strategy and its Community Support Plan at the same time.

2. The corporate context of our work

This Community Support Plan is directly shaped by Belfast City Council's corporate priorities:

2.1 A new corporate plan for 2011 to 2014

The council's corporate plan places great importance on the relationship between the council, its stakeholders, and the communities it serves in contributing to the quality of life of people in the city. The plan focuses the council's activity and resources on achieving this vision:

> *'The Council, working with communities and stakeholders, takes a lead role in improving quality of life now and for future generations for the people of Belfast by making the city and its neighbourhoods better places to live in, work in, invest in and visit'*

The plan recognises that our citizen and our communities are the lifeblood of the city. There is a presumption that engaged and active communities are not simply the by-product of a successful city but a prerequisite for its success. Thus supporting and engaging with such communities makes it easier for the council and its partners to contribute to a successful Belfast.

2.2 Development Department plan

Community Services is based within the council's Development Department. The Community Support Plan is thus also influenced by the remit and activities of its home department whose main purpose is *'to play a key role in supporting the council to improve quality of life by creating a city which is competitive, connected, confident and cohesive.'*

The department has identified a number of key actions to which the Community Support Plan will contribute:

Better opportunity for success across the city
- To work with other council departments to develop our integrated approach to neighbourhood working to maximise the impact of existing neighbourhood and community development work.

Better Support for People & Communities
- Champion and secure integrated support for a Community Development model for the city.
- Deliver new Community Development strategy.
- Support 70,000 volunteering hours in community facilities and develop a new volunteering framework.
- Invest £840,000 in community-based advice services via 5 city-wide advice consortia.
- Increase usage of community centres and other facilities.
- Deliver coherent inter agency and inter departmental approach to working with the Traveller community.
- Deliver the first year actions in the council Framework on Tackling Poverty and Inequalities.

Creating and coordinating opportunities for Children and Young People
- Creating and co-ordinating opportunities for children and young people.
- Establish an inter-departmental plan for children and young people.

Better Services
- As part of the community development strategy, develop and deliver three community engagement pilots to maximise community ownership of and access to identified corporate initiatives.

Finance, Governance and Risk
- Ensuring an outcomes-based quality service provision that is value for money

- Implementing a coordinated approach to grant management

- Implementing a coordinated approach to grant management

3. Community Services' resources

In delivering the Community Support Plan the Service has a number of resources to draw upon. It is led by a Community Development Manager who is supported by five Community Services Unit Managers and a Traveller Liaison Officer. The current establishment figure for the unit is 127 employees (Full Time Equivalent). The section has three main resources which it uses to achieve its objectives:

1. Estate
- Provision of 22 community centres
- Provision of support to six independent community-run centres
- Provision of play centres and play development across the city
- Provision of an outreach support office for the Traveller community and support for an independently-managed Traveller support centre.

2. Grants
Provision of grants and funding including:
- Advice services: core funding to cover revenue and other operating costs; supplementary funding (with DSD) for advice outreach costs
- Capacity building (grant funding to support the building of skills and knowledge of community organisations and local people).
- Revenue (financial support towards running costs of community buildings)
- Small community development projects
- Grants for Play schemes appropriate for children & young people aged 5-14 years
- Community chest grant (in support of, for example, small scale seasonal activity)

3. People
- Provision of community development staff and support for community networks
- Support for twelve Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships
- Delivery of a range of community projects
- Support for the city's Youth Forum
- Support for volunteering across the city

Community Services re-structuring

The Service completed a major re-structuring programme in late 2010 as part of a wider improvement agenda across the council. This has lead to the creation of a new management structure and a change in emphasis in the delivery of its work. This is the first full year that managers have developed a Community Support Plan under the new structure. The service is moving from a mostly 'centre-based' community service delivery model to an integrated area-based approach that encourages the creative use of social assets to enhance community capacity. Thus planning and service delivery will increasingly be informed by assessments of areas in terms of local needs and priorities.

Community Facilities Unit

The unit is responsible for the provision of accessible and well co-ordinated services to people in local neighbourhoods by providing access to a range of high quality venues where people can gather, meet, participate, share information and celebrate.

The unit will specifically market and manage council-owned community centres and play centres. It will also oversee community-managed council centres and provide support for community sector provision across the city via grant assistance programmes and access to advice and information.

Area Support Unit

The unit works in partnership with the community sector to improve social assets in order to increase the levels of confidence, participation and engagement of citizens. The unit works to increase the capacity of citizens to make informed decisions about their neighbourhoods in order to improve the conditions or quality of life within local communities across the city.

This includes delivery of capacity building support, including related grant aid, to the community sector. The unit offers community development support to internal and external partners in the delivery of the council's key thematic priorities at a neighbourhood level including supporting the delivery of local Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships action plans. The unit also supports other services within council to adopt community development approaches.

Community Resource Unit

The unit supports the Service to identify more sustainable ways to meet local need. It leads on the development of citywide activity and resources to support our work to develop communities and the sector including the provision of advice and information, support for volunteering and the service grant aid programme. This includes ways to protect and improve the quality of existing provision including business improvement, performance management and communications.

The unit maximises the service contribution to corporate thematic priorities including good relations, community safety, health and well being and sustainable development. It also ensures we meet the needs of harder to target sections of the community.

Children and Young People Unit

Children and Young People (C&YP) is a priority area of work for the council. While we have traditionally provided a range of young people's services, no single department or service has been allocated overall responsibility for internal and external co-ordination. The latter is becoming more significant if the council is to work in partnership with other key agencies in order to fully identify opportunities to extend service provision.

The unit works to join up and focus the management of C&YP service delivery within the service and the department. The unit manages the children and young people team within Community Services including the play development team and the council's Youth Forum. The unit has responsibility to ensure best practice in relation to child protection policy and practice across the council.

It will also provide a single reference point for the development and management of a corporate strategy and related planning framework in order to ensure a clear council wide vision regarding our aspirations for our young citizens. The unit will also be the key interface for external stakeholders particularly in relation to changing roles and responsibilities within RPA.

Travellers Liaison Unit

The unit works to support the development of the Traveller community to influence and take informed decisions on matters which impact on their lives. It works across the council to deliver and support services which will improve the quality of life of all the Traveller community in Belfast.

The unit provides an internal and external advice service regarding the Traveller community. It is also responsible for the delivery and development of the successful outreach office on the Glen Road.

The unit has developed and promotes a unique Traveller Awareness/ anti-racism training programme both within the council and with our external partners.

4. What should we be doing?

Over the past year Community Services has been looking at ways for the council to contribute more effectively to community development goals. Our new Community Development strategy attempts to unpack the outcomes associated with community development work by focussing on creating effective, engaged and enterprising communities and in doing so support the corporate outcomes associated with better quality of life. The strategy suggests that there are four supporting strands of work that can contribute to this vision:

1.   **Core community development work**
2.   **Engagement that works**
3.   **Building effective partnerships**
4.   **Shared service design and delivery**

The basis of the council's Community Services section's programme of work is predicated on this community development model with a particular focus on the first building block of core community development activity.

Building Block 1 - Core community development

Working with the community to build up a critical mass of community associations, environmental groups, residents' associations and other local voluntary groups and networks that provide the foundations for communities to articulate their needs and issues and so that they begin to understand how to work best with local and central government bodies.

Building Block 2 - Engagement that works

Communities need to have the ability to engage effectively with those who deliver services to ensure that such services meet their needs. Groups therefore need the skills and information necessary to both identify priorities and propose solutions. From the deliverers' perspective, councils and other public bodies must acquire the skills and capacity to engage meaningfully and effectively with communities.

Building Block 3 - Building effective partnerships

Increasingly, partnership-working is at the heart of many of the relationships between communities and service providers in our city. For it to work well community organisations and service providers need the capacity to co-design, monitor and evaluate services that address local need. They also need to be able to understand the wider interlocking social, economic and environmental issues which impact on local areas.

Building Block 4 - Shared service design and delivery

Although not always appropriate, in some instances communities may wish to move to a position where they are the co-deliverers of local services. Community groups become delivery partners in meeting local needs, developing community assets and delivering local and central government aims.

The potential contribution of Community Services

For each strand there a number of current and potential future roles emerging from the strategy that Community Services through its Community Support Plan can make. These include:

- Provide **support and advice** to new and emerging community groups
- Manage and support **community facilities** as accessible venues for community activities and events.
- Support **community managed facilities** through grant aid, service agreements and advice on management.
- Provide **grant aid** in support of community groups' activities and facilities and for area based networking and capacity building.
- Develop a **volunteer framework** which supports active citizenship internally and externally.
- Promote **community development skills and knowledge** across the council as part of our organisational development programme.
- Strengthen and improve the quality of **community activity**
- Develop the capacity to assist council departments to **design and undertake community engagement;** facilitate shared learning on **community engagement**
- Engage with **community centre users** in developing programmes and management structures.
- Represent the council on all **Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships** and relevant sub-groups
- Work with the SNAP team to **facilitate communication** between council services and the NR Partnerships
- Co-ordinate the Council's work on its priority themes of improving services for **children and young people** and the **Traveller community**.

The Service has thus designed a programme of work for 2011 to 2014 that is influenced by a number of key elements:

1. Belfast City Council's **corporate priorities**
2. The existing **resources and structures** of the Community Service section
3. The emerging roles in supporting the outcomes of the new **Community Development strategy**.
4. The wider **regional and urban policy environment** (see **Appendix 2** for an examination of this context)
5. A **socio-economic and demographic analysis** of the city and its neighbourhoods (see **Appendix 3** for a summary of this work)

In the next section we detail the specific pieces of work the section aims to deliver between 2011 and 2014. The work is aligned against the council's corporate priorities and Community Services own service objectives.

5. Community Support Plan actions 2011 to 2014

	Our service objectives	What we will do to contribute to this objective?	Unit	Delivery years			CD links
				1	2	3	
Corporate priority: **Better Support for People and Communities**							
1	**Lead the implementation of the council's community development model and framework**	Deliver a council-wide community development strategy including championing and securing integrated support for a CD model for the city.	CDM	✔	✔	✔	All
		Build a related outcomes framework that contributes to council's measurement of community development work	CDM	✔	✔		All
		Deliver the Community Support Plan aligned and measured against the outcomes framework.	All		✔	✔	All
2	**Support positive growth in core community development**	Develop core training and other resources, for internal and external use to support work in communities.	CRU	✔	✔		1
		Deliver community development training programmes with internal partners.	CRU	✔	✔	✔	1
		Deliver community development training programmes with external partners.	ASU		✔	✔	1
3	**Resource support for community development activity**	Manage an outcomes-based grants programme to foster community development projects, build skills and support community-managed facilities	All	✔	✔	✔	All
4	**Increase the number of people actively engaged in neighbourhood and city life**	Develop a volunteer framework which supports volunteer development internally and externally.	CRU	✔			1,2
		Recruit, manage and support volunteer involvement in centre and neighbourhood programmes	ASU	✔	✔	✔	1,2
5	**Improve citizen access to a network of locally facing community facilities**	Promote the potential of community facilities to increase involvement and usage of facilities.	CFU	✔	✔	✔	1

		Maximise the outreach benefits of community facilities as a key asset to link council services with local communities.	CFU	✔	✔	✔	1,2
		Work with statutory and community partner organisations to maximise access to services by local communities.	CFU	✔	✔	✔	3
		Provide advice and support to community managed facilities to enable them to become more effective and self sufficient.	CFU	✔	✔	✔	3,4
6	**Develop a Neighbourhood Assets strategy**	Contribute to the creation of an optimal neighbourhood physical assets model and associated implementation plan to improve outcomes for neighbourhoods and the city.	CFU	✔	✔		3,4
7	**Deliver an integrated approach to working with the traveller community**	Support an integrated approach to working with the Traveller community (both internally and with statutory and community partners).	TLU	✔	✔	✔	3
		Deliver, and enhance, Traveller awareness / anti racism training and support Good Relations programmes.	TLU	✔	✔	✔	1
		Promote an innovative Traveller / service provider outreach initiative including the Traveller outreach office.	TLU	✔	✔	✔	1
		Support for Traveller children and young people.	TLU	✔	✔	✔	1
8	**Developing strong neighbourhoods and supporting communities**	Represent the council on each of the twelve Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Boards to ensure delivery of the council's commitments.	ASU	✔	✔	✔	3
9	**Support the development of citywide local generalist advice provision**	Support the delivery of community-based advice across the city through five area-based advice consortia.	CRU	✔	✔	✔	1
10	**Work with communities to promote good relations and diversity**	Design and deliver a series of Good Relations projects in local neighbourhoods.	ASU	✔	✔	✔	1
		Support community-centre based Good Relations programmes (including the Bonfire management programme).	CFU	✔	✔	✔	1

		Promote and deliver a training support programme to address the disadvantage position of the Traveller community.	TLU	✔	✔	✔	1
		Support the delivery of work identified through the corporate Good Relations Plan.	ASU	✔	✔	✔	3
11	**Encourage safer communities**	Work with Belfast Community Safety Partnership and Belfast Safer City group to deliver community safety projects in local communities.	ASU	✔	✔	✔	3
12	**Encourage healthier communities**	Support the design and delivery of the council's Healthier City plan in local communities.	ASU	✔	✔	✔	2,3
Corporate priority: **Children and Young People**							
13	**Lead the implementation of the council's Children and Young People Framework**	Formulate a Children & Young People's framework for intervention including formulating an agreed position paper.	CYPU	✔			1
14	**Develop the potential of the city's children and young people**	Deliver an innovative programme of activities throughout the city	CYPU	✔	✔	✔	1
		Design and deliver an inclusive play development programme for children throughout the city.	CYPU	✔	✔	✔	1
		Design and deliver a comprehensive citywide summer programme.	CYPU	✔	✔	✔	1
		Promote a programme to ensure traveller children and young people are included in council's children and young people initiatives.	TLU/CYPU	✔	✔	✔	1
15	**Increase the participation of children & young people in city and neighbourhood life**	Develop a range of innovative and inclusive programmes to increase the participation.	CYPU	✔	✔	✔	2
		Build the capacity of Youth Forum members to participate fully in the Forum and to deliver programmes externally.	CYPU	✔	✔	✔	2
16	**Ensure the protection of Children and Young People & meet changes in the ext environment**	Ensure compliance with all legal, policy and practice obligations in regard to child protection.	CYPU	✔	✔	✔	1

		Provide child protection training for staff and external groups.	CYPU	✔	✔	✔	1
		Scope the responsibilities and implications for council in relation to vulnerable adults.	CYPU		✔		1
17	**Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of services for children and young people**	Design a performance management framework to build impact and outcome measures.	CYPU	✔			All
		Implement the performance management framework – and share with relevant partners.	CYPU		✔	✔	All

Corporate priority: **Better Services**							
18	**Contribute to council's cross cutting thematic priorities**	Represent the service on all corporate thematic groups to facilitate local delivery of council's commitments to each action plan.	ASU/All units	✔	✔	✔	2,3
19	**Support for communities to engage with council**	Design and deliver support for council staff to enhance skills in engaging with and responding to communities.	CDM/ASU		✔	✔	1,2
		Provide support for effective community engagement on major corporate capital projects to ensure outcomes appropriate to the needs of communities.	CDM/ASU	✔	✔	✔	1,2
		Design, manage community engagement pilots for Titanic Quarter and Connswater Community Greenway; and share learning across council.	CDM/ASU	✔	✔	✔	2
20	**Ensure community development outcomes are embedded in performance management**	Research and design a performance management framework based on community development impact measures.	CRU	✔			All

		Implement the CD performance management framework within Community Services and encourage adoption across council.	CDM/CRU		✔	✔	All
21	**Ensure community centre quality service standards**	Research, confirm and design quality kite mark programme for community centre management.	CFU	✔			4
		Seek quality kite marks for all council community centres.	CFU		✔	✔	4
Corporate priority: **Quality systems**							
22	**Integrated approach to grant management programme**	Develop the existing grants programme and administer community grant programmes.	CRU/All units	✔	✔	✔	All
23	**Manage effective and efficient systems**	Ensure compliance with corporate procedures and policies, including effective risk management, human resource management, financial and business planning.	CDM/All units	✔	✔	✔	All
		Design and deliver an integrated communications plan for Community Services.	CRU/All Units	✔	✔	✔	All
		Deliver Community Services change management plan to maximise the potential of the organisational re-structuring.	CDM/All Units	✔	✔		All

Key

'Unit'
The lead unit responsible for the delivery of the action.
They are:
  • Community Development Manager (CDM)
  • Area Support Unit (ASU)
  • Children and Young People Unit (CYP)
  • Community Facilities Unit (CFU)
  • Community Resource Unit (CRU)
  • Travellers Liaison Unit (TLU)

'Delivery years'
Indicates the year in which this action will be in operation.

'CD links'
This indicates the strand of community development work to which the action is mainly contributing.

6. How will we measure success?

Community Services has the responsibility for coordinating, monitoring, reviewing, appraising and evaluating the Community Support Plan. The Service reports regularly on the progress of all objectives and key performance indicators, using the information gathered to feedback into service delivery and policy decisions. Monitoring and evaluation of the Plan will be carried out using the following channels:

1. DSD reporting

Community Services will be monitoring progress made against the output measures agreed with DSD on a quarterly basis and will produce six monthly and annual reports. Yearly reports will chart progress made on the plan including the identification of any proposed changes. The DSD indicator set is as follows:

	Indicator	Definition
1	Community support grants	Amount (and proportion of total grants) of community support grants
2	Volunteers and volunteer hours	Volunteer hours and numbers in organisations funded through community support grant aid
3	Profile and usage of community centres	Yearly profile and usage of community centres per 1,000 population
4	List of community organisations	Organisations represented on council led forums and support networks with which council engage
5	Number of advice enquiries	Enquiries addressed through funded advice and information agencies (by type of enquiry) and the amount of additional benefit entitlement successfully claimed
6	Spending on community support (including community centres	Per capita spending on actual provision of community support (inc. community centres
7	Spending on community support (excluding community centres)	Per capita spending on actual provision of community support (excluding community centres

2. Departmental and Committee reports

The overall Development Department plan, of which the Community Support Plan is an element, is monitored via quarterly progress updates to the council's Development Committee. These updates identify areas of the plan and projects that are behind schedule or off target. For each problem a brief explanation is provided together with the proposed response to deal with the issue. The Committee scrutinises these updates and proposed remedial action and highlights any additional changes that need to be made.

For larger projects and the Key Performance Indicators, progress is captured on the council's CorVu Performance Management system. Results are collected centrally and reported to the Corporate Management Team (CMT). This enables a strategic level overview of the council's performance to be seen so that overall trends and problems can be identified and addressed.

3. Building a new CD outcomes approach to the CSP

Over the period of the Plan Community Services aims to build an outcomes-focussed approach to measurement. Belfast City council places great emphasis on measuring the impact of our work.

This focus on measurable (and shared) outcomes lies at the heart of our draft Community Development strategy. We note in the strategy that measuring the impact of community

development can often prove difficult. However, evidence can take many forms and be collected at different points in the community development process.

Over the period of the Community Support Plan Community Services will work with the rest of council to develop frameworks and templates for more continuous feedback through community development officers' reports and proposals for shared templates with other departments. These will inform the future content of the Community Support Plan.

The outcomes approach reflects 'theory of change' reasoning:

➔ The work is being done in order to change something.
➔ What is it that needs to be changed?
➔ What is its present state?
➔ What is the desired state that we want to change it to?
➔ What actions are most likely to bring the change about?
➔ How will we recognise whether the change has happened or not?
➔ How will we judge whether the change was the result of the action taken?

Appendix 1: Key achievements 2008 to 2011

The achievements below are a sample of some of the work of Community Services over the past three years.

- The total number of visits to our 23 community centres during the last three years was 1,689,928. Our centres were booked on average for 67% of the time available (meeting our corporate target of 65%).

- Our centre based programmes were supported by 222,500 volunteer hours over the three years. An ongoing programme of volunteer celebration events recognised the efforts of these volunteers and provides ongoing training opportunities.

- Distribution of £7.2 million of grant aid was distributed to community projects across the city, delivering a range of services including support for community buildings, community support networks, summer play schemes, and small project funding.

- We supported generalist advice provision across the city. In the three years, the five Advice Consortiums dealt with 268,500 enquiries and we supported this work with £2.4 million of funding through our Advice programme. It has been estimated that agencies contributed to £9 million per year in benefits 'clawback' for clients.

- New and improved community centre facilities were opened at Ardoyne (April 2008) and Woodvale (May 2008) which have reinvigorated community programmes and are visible indicators of the council's commitment to supporting local communities.

- Community and leisure amenities opened at the council-owned facilities at Roden Street and Lower Ormeau. Funding support to six independently managed facilities enabled them to secured approximately £2.5 million of external leverage to further develop and extend their services.

- We delivered city wide programmed for children and young people including 26 annual summer schemes engaging over 1,700 children each year in social, educational and physical activities. In addition we supported through grant funding 81 summer schemes across the city which benefited 5,500 children.

- Our play team worked, through the Play for All programme to support the inclusion of children with disabilities within summer schemes.

- We developed and supported Good Relations programming across all community centres such as activities to support the city's new and more established migrant populations.

- We developed and delivered a successful programme in disadvantaged areas in East Belfast through a partnership initiative with East Belfast Community Development Agency to tackle weak community infrastructure.

- We developed a bespoke Traveller Awareness programme that has drawn interest from cities across Europe. The programme has been successfully delivered to 12 organisations including council staff in Community Services, Good Relations and Community Safety teams. In addition a training DVD 'Think Traveller' was developed with 600 copies being distributed locally, nationally and internationally.

- We are the only council in Northern Ireland to support a Youth Forum that has been a key mechanism for involving young people in the political culture of the council. During the three years of the plan we recruited 36 young people from the nine electoral wards across

the city to work on a diverse range of issues such as suicide awareness, Travellers issues, and project work on drugs and alcohol awareness.

The work of Community Services (case studies)

Building community capacity

We facilitate and support capacity building for a range of organisations as a means of encouraging local community development at neighbourhood level. We broadly define 'capacity building' as work that strengthens the ability of community organisations to build their structures, systems, people and skills. We support such work in two main ways:

1. by providing grant funding to large community support organisations that can demonstrate their track record in building confidence and empowering local community organisations in specific target areas to articulate their needs and respond to issues at local level; and
2. by providing capacity support through our Community Development Officers.

Our Community Development Officers work closely with groups and initiatives, ranging from small, single focussed groups (eg after schools clubs), to organisations which we have supported to take on responsibility for the community management of council facilities (eg) Grosvenor and Shaftesbury recreation centre.

We recently completed such a programme with Shankill Football Club who wanted support to take on the community management of a local council facility. Our staff mentored and advised the group on policies, systems, structures and programmes to make sure that the club had the necessary abilities, competencies and confidence to take on this responsibility. The club successfully demonstrated their capacity to manage the facility through a pilot, and as a result, we extended the lease on the facility.

Come and Play

This project is all about encouraging children to play freely in their local parks and open spaces, widening their horizons, and building their self-confidence, personal development, health and wellbeing through a range of play experiences.

Come and Play provides important safe space for children, parents and carers to interact socially, with a focus on responding to local needs. We provide sports equipment, dressing up and play materials and our play workers facilitate craft activities and games for the children and encourage adults and carers to participate.

The project benefits participating children's health and emotional and social development by encouraging energetic, imaginative outdoor play opportunities. On one occasion, an impromptu football game began with a group of boys and dads. It was so successful that one dad thanked staff and said: *"I'm just texting my mate to make sure he brings his kids next week".*

We're now developing a Come and Play model to provide more teams of play workers in parks and open spaces in the future.

Neighbourhood Renewing

Our staff are active participants in a number of collaborative structures and organisations across the city ranging from local forums and networks through to Area Partnership Boards.

We have also committed our support to regeneration work in the 12 Neighbourhood Renewal areas within the city boundary. A member of our team sits on each Partnership.

The partnerships have each developed plans which set out several hundred actions that need to be delivered in partnership by a range of organisations in key areas such as: community

development, children and young people, advice, older people, housing, health, education, community safety, good relations, employability, culture, tourism, leisure, environmental and physical improvement.

We lead on delivering key actions for each of the partnerships. Just one example is our collaborative work with neighbourhood organisations and health service providers, with one of our Community Development officers working in the Ballysillan Upper Ardoyne Neighbourhood Renewal area organising health and wellbeing programmes for people aged 50+ in Concorde Community Centre. This particular programme included 30 weeks of social and recreational activities, workshops, taster sessions, discussions and talks.

50+ cross-community project

We facilitated this year-long cross-community project to encourage older residents in Ligoniel, Ballysillan and Upper Ardoyne to meet, exchange experiences, find out about council services, learn new skills and broaden their understanding of each other's culture and traditions.

The project's 45 participants took part in tailored activities ranging from bus outings to St. George's Market, the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and Clifton House, to information sessions on everything from recycling to home safety. The groups also got active through Boccia, armchair aerobics and line dancing, and a visit to renowned local storyteller Liz Weir provided a welcome opportunity to share memories and life experiences. One particularly popular event in Belfast Castle attracted 150 people aged 50+.

68 year old Helen* from Ballysillan commented: *"getting involved in the 50+ project encouraged me to visit new places and try out new activities. It introduced me to a whole range of useful information on local services and contacts and made me think about the changes I needed to make to live a healthier lifestyle. Most importantly for me, I made a group of great new friends who I wouldn't otherwise have met. The project came at a really difficult time in my life when I was just starting to deal with the loss of my husband. It threw me a lifeline"*.

How we see it...the Traveller Community

Our Traveller Liaison and Children and Young People's units recently worked with the council's Youth Forum, PSNI, Department of Education, Belfast Health Trust and An Munia Tober to deliver the 'How we see it' event as part of the All Ireland Traveller Focus week.

Our aim was to help break down barriers and challenge the stereotypes that young people throughout Belfast hold about the traveller community. BBC NI presenter William Crawley hosted a lively debate between Youth Forum members and local schoolchildren in the council chambers and as a result of the event, a young traveller is now an active member of council's youth forum, enabling the voice of young travellers to be represented and contributing to improved relations and better understanding of Belfast's traveller community.

Emergency Response

We play a key co-ordinating role in planning emergency responses and helping communities to recover from major incidents. We want to make sure that council is ready to respond rapidly and give local families, communities and businesses appropriate support if a major emergency takes place.

Community Services is represented on the council's Emergency Planning Working Group which includes council services, government departments, PSNI, Fire and Rescue Service, community and voluntary organisations and churches across the city. Over the past eighteen months, we've made a major contribution to the development and implementation of the council's Emergency Plan.

Last winter we supported local communities during the water crisis by using four community centres (Finaghy, Inverary, Markets and North Queen Street) to distribute bottled water. Our staff's local knowledge ensured that vulnerable groups and individuals received water, with many people, particularly the elderly and housebound, receiving home deliveries.

As a result of several security incidents in early 2011, a number of people living in north and west Belfast were evacuated from their homes. We opened our Glen Road, Ardoyne and Ligoniel community centres late at night and through to morning to provide much needed shelter and support for those affected.

In January, a fire on the 16th floor of a block of flats in North Queen Street resulted in full evacuation of the building. We opened North Queen Street Community Centre to accommodate those who had been evacuated from their homes. And in February 2011, Hammer Community Centre supported people from Albany Place who were off mains electricity for around 14 hours in very cold conditions.

We're continuing to work closely with council's Emergency Co-ordinator and team to explore how community centres, staff and networks can be fully utilised to enhance emergency provision across the city.

Supporting advice services

Last year we invested £843,198 through grants for local generalist advice provision in Belfast. Generalist advice is delivered free of charge to local people by five consortia across Belfast, made up of Citizens' Advice Bureau and local generalist advice providers. Generalist advice covers a range of issues, but is often related to improving people's circumstances by supporting them to claim benefit money which they are entitled to.

East Belfast Independent Advice Centre (EBIAC) helped John* when he was experiencing a traumatic period in his life.

John was referred to the advice centre by his Mental Health Social Worker for help in appealing a Disability Living Allowance decision and assistance with managing debt. John had been a carer for his father who had recently passed away and suffered from anxiety, depression and alcohol dependency. The advice centre represented John successfully at a Social Security Appeal Tribunal and as a result, he was awarded Disability Living Allowance plus arrears, enabling him to pay a bankruptcy fee of £460. EBIAC's money advice worker also assisted John to prepare this application and successfully represented him at his Bankruptcy Hearing, leading to a Bankruptcy Order being granted, and allowing John to start afresh.

The Citizens' Advice Bureau also provides invaluable community support as a result of our grant aid. Mary* and Joe* are one elderly local married couple who have benefited recently. Aged 79 and 77, they were suffering ill health, living only on retirement pensions and had no savings. They were also living in rented accommodation and receiving no assistance with their rent and rates. Both were experiencing difficulties managing financially, particularly as a result of increased heating costs during a recent spell of cold weather.

CAB carried out a full benefit assessment, found that Mary and Joe were entitled to £69.14 per week in pension credit, and guided them through the claiming process, including assisting them with completing the necessary forms. Claiming this support meant that they could also have their full rent and rates paid – making a really positive impact on their quality of life.

Please note that client names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Appendix 2: Community Services expenditure

Below we detail a breakdown of Community Services' total expenditure through the Community Support Plan (including grant programmes) from 2008 to 2010 and by geographical area.

Community Support Plan expenditure

Area of work	Gross budget 2011/12
Area support	£1,132,017
Children and Young People (including play development)	£839,671
Community Chest management	£285,679
Community Facilities	£2,209,680
Community Grants	£2,574,237
Community Resource unit	£316,293
Travellers Liaison	£50,836
Total	£7,408,413

(In 2011 Community Services changed how it profiles expenditure to reflect the restructuring of the section. The previous three years were profiled as below:)

Area of work	Gross budget 2008/9	Gross budget 2009/10	Gross budget 2010/11
Community Services management	£716,533	£889,425	£799,965
Community centres	£3,184,084	£3,160,750	£3,175,043
Travellers	£55,184	£57,285	£57,212
Community grants	£2,226,305	£2,398,780	£2,526,827
Play centres	£544,898	£583,403	£597,831
Children and young people	£141,422	£210,566	£235,118
Total	£6,868,426	£7,300,209	£7,391,996

Breakdown of contributions to Community Support Plan budget

Planned budget	Belfast City Council's contribution	%	DSD contribution	%	Total
2008/9 budget	£5,549,528	81	£1,318,898	19	£6,868,426
2009/10 budget	£5,826,950	80	£1,473,259	20	£7,300,209
2010/11 budget	£5,856,790	79	£1,535,206	21	£7,391,996
2011/12 budget	£5,706,733	78	£1,569,443	21	£7,408,413
Total	£22,940,001	80	£5,896,806	20	£28,969,044

Source: Development Department

Geographical breakdown of expenditure

The following section gives information on expenditure by Community Services on each of its main service areas for each of the years of the previous Community Support Plan. It has also been broken down by geographical area across Belfast.

2010 to 2011

Service	North	South	East	West	Citywide	Total
Council community centres & neighbourhood office (23 sites) and Community Support	£825,761	£904,966	£519,415	£428,624	£428,624	£3,107,390
Community-managed community centres	£22,310	£22,184	£14,091	£46,572	n/a	£105,157
Play centres & Play Development*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£740,960	£740,960
Grant schemes						
Revenue grants	£213,311	£71,838	£130,516	£348,275	£21,812	£785,752
Capacity	£173,834	£209,779	£87,775	£183,884	£11,000	£666,272
Play scheme	£53,500	£17,100	£32,410	£68,770	n/a	£171,780
Community chest	£6,500	£1,800	£2,300	£6,800	n/a	£17,400
Advice and information standard grant	£97,224	£48,077	£59,812	£115,032	£35,580	£355,725
Advice supplementary grant	£128,424	£63,484	£79,038	£151,965	£63,561	£486,472
Projects	£24,929	£3,500	£4,950	£20,975	n/a	£54,354

Note: Play development moved from a centre specific approach in 2009/10 and thus figures can no longer be gathered on an area basis.

2009 to 2010

	North	South	East	West	Citywide	Total
Council community centres & neighbourhood office (23 sites) and Community Support	£846,914	£940,963	£505,777	£883,391	£362,565	£3,539,610
Community-managed community centres	£19,905	£11,617	£19,601	£49,298	n/a	£100,421
Play centres & Play Development	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	*£629,237	£629,237
Grant schemes						
Revenue grants	£207,777	£141,748	£228,291	£321,252	n/a	£899,068
Capacity	£135,799	£190,680	£81,954	£213,081	n/a	£621,514
Play scheme	£42,800	£25,500	£30,500	£67,376	n/a	£166,176
Community chest	£11,546	£7,500	£6,720	£38,844	n/a	£64,610
Advice and information standard grant	£92,877	£45,912	£57,160	£109,903	£33,983	£339,835
Advice supplementary grant	£132,767	£65,630	£81,711	£146,292	£48,579	£474,979

| Projects | £18,974 | £11,480 | £10,735 | £24,755 | n/a | £65,944 |

2008 to 2009

Service	North	South	East	West	Citywide	Total
Council community centres & neighbourhood office (23 sites) and Community Support	£872,222	£1,053,542	£601,132	£1,059,474	n/a	£3,586,370
Community-managed community centres	£31,827	£335,336	£84,811	£238,303	n/a	£690,277
Play centres & Play Development	£139,713	£102,419	£136,001	£53,633	£164,977	£596,743
Grant schemes						
Revenue grants	£129,343	£28,512	£133,116	£208,553	n/a	£499,524
Capacity	£111,394	£182,738	£81,954	£143,221	n/a	£519,307
Play scheme	£37,100	£25,900	£35,100	£64,800	n/a	£162,900
Community chest	£3,600	£1,200	£1,800	£5,090	n/a	£11,690
Advice and information standard grant	£90,172	£44,575	£55,496	£106,702	£32,994	£329,939
Advice supplementary grant	£126,387	£62,477	£77,784	£149,556	£46,245	£462,449
Projects	£17,986	£3,500	£8,500	£19,450	n/a	£49,436

Appendix 3: Regional and urban policy environment

In determining the design and content of the Community Support Plan, the council has examined both the policy and strategic context of our work and the wider city and area level socio economic context.

The political, economic and social environment within which the Community Support Plan is developed and implemented is dynamic and contains both opportunities and as well as threats to the community sector. The global economic crises and the impact on the regional economy has increased unemployment, reduced employment, levels of economic inactivity and declining investment. Gross Value Added (GVA) in Northern Ireland was -4.5% in 2009, 0.8 in 2010 but is estimated to rise to 1.8 in 2011 (PWC, 2010[1]). Unemployment has risen to 6% in 2010 and although PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) suggest that it is likely to increase into 2011 (62,000).

The PWC (2009[2]) review of public finances also suggest that if the Executive is to continuing delivering services at current cost it faces a present shortfall of between £575m and £750m in the three years, post-2011. Oxford Economics (2010[3]) point out that these cuts will have a disproportionate effect on Northern Ireland as 31% of employment is in public services compared with 26% nationally. Their review suggested that the reductions will be in the order of £1.2bn by 2015/16. Government funding to the community and voluntary sector accounts for £260m or 45% of the sectors income of which 72% is from non-departmental public bodies. Oxford Economics point out that it is this part of government that is likely to bear the brunt of cutbacks making the sector vulnerable to reductions in core funding, community based programming and anti-poverty measures.

This has also had a severe impact on welfare expenditure, especially in Northern Ireland. Government reforms which aim to freeze spending, decouple benefit uplift from the Retail Prices Index and change eligibility rules is likely to take £450m out of welfare payments in Northern Ireland. Nationally, Government ultimately aims to take out up to £28bn in social welfare in the UK over the next three years, which is likely to further deplete benefit spending in Northern Ireland. The council's concern is that cuts in public services, welfare benefits and anti-deprivation measures will place more emphasis on community development and self-help solutions. Our strategic priority, whether we are in a recession or not, is to develop a sector that is well structured, skilled and with the necessary resources to tackle socio-spatial exclusion and deliver council objectives for better equipped, engaged and more resourceful communities.

In Britain the policy response is increasingly shaped by the development of the Big Society and New Localism. Belfast City Council feel that the emphasis on communities taking control of services and facilities that affect their lives is important but there are limits to such strategies. We feel that careful support for the sector and its capital base is vital but is best managed in a partnership way and at a pace that community organisations want and are capable of moving. The four central objectives of our Community Development strategy explains the need for a mix of development activities in which one size does clearly not fit all circumstances.

Part of being an engaged community is to have the information to be able to influence council policies and programmes so that investment is integrated in coordinated and financially efficient ways. This Total Place thinking is a feature of our emerging strategy and as this Support Plan

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1 PriceWaterhouseCoopers [PWC] (2010) *Northern Ireland Economic Outlook*, Belfast, PWC.

2 PriceWaterhouseCoopers [PWC] (2009) More For Less: Towards Innovative Ways of Bridging Northern Ireland's Funding Gap, Belfast, PWC.

3 Oxford Economics (2010) Cutting Carefully: How Repairing UK Finances Will Impact Northern Ireland, Belfast, NICVA.

shows, council has effective systems for looking at what finances flow into each area and to ensure that these are integrated with other resources, programmes and policies. As we move toward Community Planning this type of single conversation and engaging communities in decisions about how resources work in their neighbourhood will become a more prominent feature of community development. The shift to an outcome approach underscores our concern with measuring what has changed and not just how change happens.

The policy context

Whilst the transfer of power to local authorities has been delayed to 2015, the DoE's Local Government Reform - Consultation on Policy Proposals published in November 2010 identified a number of significant opportunities to strengthen the relationship between council and the community sector including:

- The development of community planning that would address in an integrated fashion the wider needs of the district;
- A move to more effective partnership working including an explicit commitment to work with the community sector; and
- The introduction of a power of well-being so that councils have the flexibility to take action on issues and problems that are not addressed by other agencies.

This Community Support Plan sets in place a framework to help prepare both council and the sector for these new planning, policy and organisational arrangements.

We noted earlier the effects of national cuts in public expenditure. Indeed, the Northern Ireland Budget Consultation Document 2010 showed that current Department Expenditure Limits (DEL) will be reduced by 8.0% (£9.886.7 to £9.985.4) between 2010/11 and 2014/15 but that capital DEL will fall by 40.1% (£1.222.9 to £808.8) over the same period. However, the Budget statement also contains opportunities such as the expansion of the Green New Deal in an investment programme designed to deliver energy efficiency measures which is a sector that the community sector has a strong track record in creating jobs, social enterprises and quality services. The council also notes that current DEL within DSD is £521.1m in 2010/11 and will be £523.4 in 2014/15 but that capital DEL will decline from £269.6 to £190.3 over the same period. Clearly, the development of a more sustainable and robust sector is a central plank of this Community Support Plan.

Community Services staff play an important and active role in the delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal across the city. Our participation on Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships has helped to identify and shape local priorities, integrate council services at NRA level and fund, through our grant aid, projects and programmes that support regeneration across the city. The council's SNAP Unit has also synthesised the priorities established in each sub-sectoral Strategic Regeneration Frameworks that provides an important link with community development funding in each quadrant of the city.

As a council we have participated in early workshops for the development of DSD's evolving Urban Regeneration and Community Development policy. Whilst we await the publication of the consultation document we commend the strategic direction of the approach and see this Community Support Plan complementing it in a number of ways:

- Our emphasis on connected communities by stressing the need for engaged and partnership methods of working;
- We highlight the potential of growing the asset base of the sector and the role of the social economy in developing its resilience, whilst appreciating it will not be for everyone; and
- Linking the work of the sector to more targeted and agreed priorities for local development by reviewing the role of our centres and skills base of community development and out-reach workers.

The Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan [BMAP] suggests that four Major Employment Locations [MELS in Titanic Quarter, Purdysburn, Mallusk and Blaris/Lisburn West] will be significant sites for jobs, training and investment. As we noted our strategic approach recognises that we need to better connect our most disadvantaged communities with these areas by strengthening their skills base, levels of engagement and capacity for enterprise based service delivery. The council is in the process of developing our Belfast Master Plan that will integrate physical planning with social and economic priorities for the city and here there are important opportunities to use community based solutions to tackle exclusion and create a more shared and connected city.

Similarly, DETI's Social Economy Enterprise Strategy 2011-14 highlights the potential of community businesses in service delivery and in achieving the government's equality objectives. Here, we aim to up-skill and up-scale the sector in particular to improve the delivery of the council's major capital projects including the North Foreshore, Renewing the Routes, Connswater Community Greenway and the redevelopment of Dunville and Woodvale Parks. The council's Capital Gates process is specifically designed to ensure that our major projects take proper account of our stakeholders and for the social as well as the environmental impact of our work.

One of the key impacts of the community sector in Belfast is the way in which it is closely tied to a range of equality groups and aims. We see the Community Support Plan strengthening the delivery of the OFMDFM Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI) strategy and we will work closely with our Good Relations Unit to create a more shared, peaceful, welcoming and open city. Similarly, as a council we have prioritised children, young people and Travellers and know that community development approaches are vital in supporting these sectors in ways that mainstream programmes often cannot.

Implications

The economic recession will have a disproportionate effect on the most disadvantaged communities and it is important that robust forms of community development help make people, areas and sectors more resilient and enterprising.

The cuts in public spending will also negatively affect the most excluded but our strategy and this Community Support Framework acknowledges that there are limits to the extent to which communities can form successful social enterprises. Community infrastructure needs to be developed and maintained in the multi-layered way we suggest in our emerging strategy.

However, this funding and economic climate highlights the need to integrate resources (especially those of council) effectively and efficiently and initiatives such as the single conversation and Total Place planning have value in implementing this Support Plan.

The Community Support Plan has relevance for the successful delivery of regional strategies in planning and economic development as well as the emerging themes in the Department's forthcoming Urban Regeneration and Community Development strategy.

Similarly, it is an essential component in the delivery of the council's Corporate Plan and related programmes in environmental regeneration, health, social renewal and community safety.

Appendix 4: A socio-economic analysis[4]

Belfast has changed remarkably in the last 10 years as growth and investment have created new jobs, developments and infrastructure to assist the city's long term renewal. Whilst we have already noted the impact of the recession, the Community Support Plan aims to build on these developments and address wider shifts in the spatial economy, where we feel a strong community development approach has an important role to play. The diagram below shows that the pattern of Invest NI assistance has tended to shift over time to the east and the south of the city in particular. North and west Belfast tend to have the greatest concentrations of social deprivation, interfaces and economic problems. They are more divided and disconnected from the central business district and new opportunity sites in places such as the Gasworks and Titanic Quarter. It is also the case that east and south Belfast experience intense levels of poverty but this highlights the need to take a strategic approach to community development, which is expressed in the 4 dimensions of our emerging strategy.
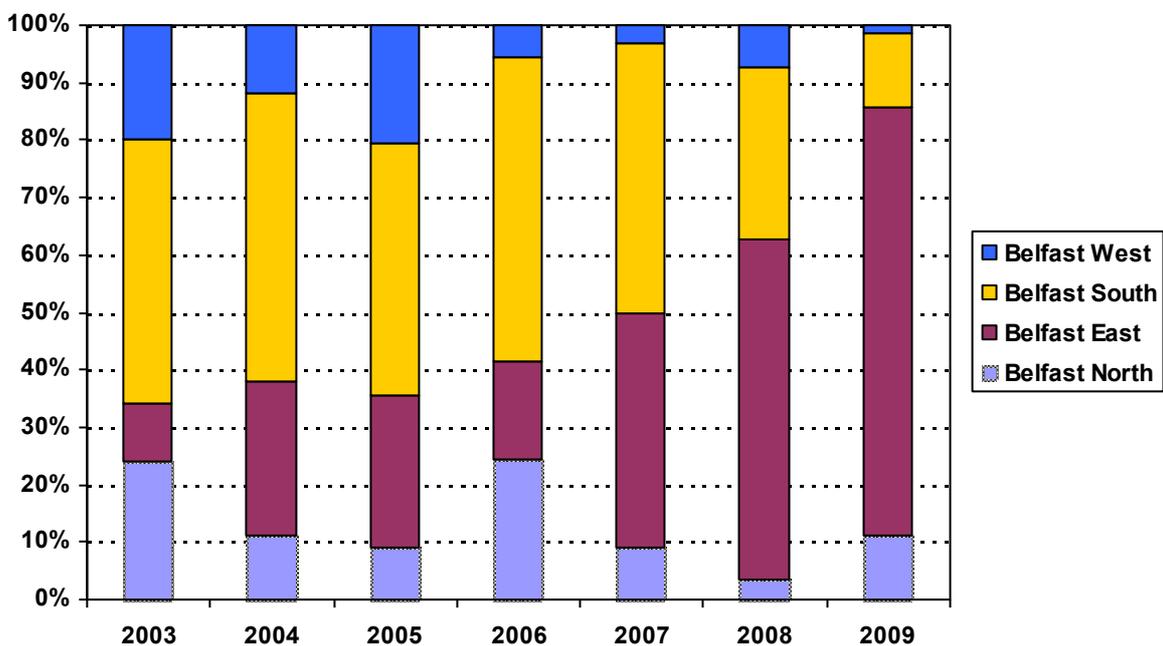
The Community Support Plan is underpinned by an extensive evidence base that provides a richer picture of the changing character of the city and the particular implications for community development. The council's SNAP Unit has complied a socio-economic and demographic profile of Belfast's four quadrants that emphasises the need for a citywide approach whilst at the same time responding to the distinctive needs of each community.

A citywide approach

The table below shows that there are more than 1,200 community and voluntary sector organisations in Belfast and a high proportion have a community based structure or community development purpose across the city. The concentration of organisations in south Belfast reflects in part, the distribution of headquarter organisations in that part of the city. The analysis shows that in the most disadvantaged areas in the north and west have strong community based groups and there is a presence of organisations addressing the needs of children and young people, one of the council's key target groups.

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[4] Local area facts and figures supplied by the council's **Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme**

Area	No. groups	%	Ratio per 1000 people	Community structure %	Community development %	Children and young people %
North	369	29.9%	4.4	41.2%	7.2%	14.0%
South	428	34.7%	6.9	16.8%	7.2%	14.0%
East	187	15.2%	2.8	33.7%	11.8%	12.3%
West	250	20.3%	1.6	48.8%	12.8%	12.0%
Belfast	1234	100%	1.6	33.1%	-	-

The analysis presented below is, in part, based on the CENI Social Assets index, which uses a range of variables to compute a score from 1-5 reflecting the social capital strength of each quadrant. Below we measure the percentage of each quadrant with a score over 3 indicating a strong community sector against one. The analysis shows that:

North and west are the most segregated areas and have the strongest levels of internal or bonding social capital but both have the lowest level of bridging social capital with groups outside their area. West has a strong linking social capital indicating effective links with the policy and political community although north and east have comparatively weaker scores.

It should be also emphasised that each area has extensive stocks of physical capital with many parks, leisure centres and community facilities operated by Belfast City council. Maximising the use of this estate is a key focus of our Community Development strategy and this Support Plan.

The SNAP Unit has identified council expenditure across the four quadrants which shows that actual and per capita investment is largest in the most disadvantaged areas. In north and west, 8 out of the 10 wards are in the 10% most deprived in Northern Ireland respectively and these have investments of 18.9 and 19.7 per head of population respectively.

The alignment of council expenditure with the intensity of problems is an approach that we aim to build on in this Community Support Plan and by identifying the distribution and types of investment we will develop locally based integrated planning as we progress towards Community Planning.

Area	% Bonding over 3	% Bridging over 3	% Linking over 3	No of physical assets	Council £	Per capita	Wards in top 10%	Wards
North	55.3	0.0	17.0	95	£1,585,151	18.9	8	10
South	16.7	22.2	27.8	68	£833,563	13.4	2	10
East	24.3	2.7	21.6	60	£815,102	12.0	3	13
West	76.7	3.3	53.3	52	£1,076,278	19.7	8	10

North Belfast and Greater Shankill

Building the core population of the city, densifying the urban area and maximising the use of assets and infrastructure is a strategic aim of the council and one in which community development can play a significant role. The population of North Belfast was 83,362 in 2008, which represents a decline of 3.3% since 2001. Within the north of the city 9 of the 17 wards are in the most disadvantaged in Northern Ireland and 51.4% of the quadrants population live in these wards. A lower proportion of North Belfast school leavers (41.8%) achieved at least 2 A-Levels grades A*-C (or equivalent) compared with 49.2% for the city as a whole. Similarly, North Belfast has more school leavers entering further education (30.8%) and fewer entering higher education (31.0%) than the rest of the city (27.1% and 38.3% for Belfast respectively). This has also an impact on a declining physical environment, poor health and alienation of young people. Suicide deaths were high in North Belfast (24 in 2008) accounting for 2.8% of all deaths in the area and 40% of suicides in Belfast.

According to the 2001 census 43.1% of the population are from a Catholic background and 54.0% Protestant and the area has more interfaces than any other part of Belfast. Moreover, the number of interfaces has increased since the Belfast Agreement in 1998 as levels of segregation intensified in this part of the city. The interplay between poverty, territoriality and a poor environment makes investment and economic growth much more difficult.

However, North Belfast has a number of competitive advantages given its proximity to the central business district, the motorway network and the railway and council is investing significantly in the North Foreshore development. It is important, as with other capital schemes, that the community sector can take advantage of this development and better connect council assets including the Zoo, Belfast Castle and Alexandra Park to the user community.

North Belfast and Shankill in figures

Demography
- The population of North Belfast is around 83,362
- Around 18.9% of the population in North Belfast are aged over 60/65. This is higher than the Belfast average of 17.6%. The percentage of younger residents (under 16) is 22.0% (the Belfast average is 19.8%)
- The total net external in migration in Belfast was around 7,039 people. Around 16.6% of these people settled in the North of the city (Parliamentary Constituency PC).

Crime
- The highest incidents of notifiable offences recorded in 2009 were violent crime against the person (29.7%) and criminal damage (26.3%)
- Within Belfast North (PC) racist incidents have increased from 74 in 2006/07 to 81 in 2009/10, and remain the 2nd highest in Belfast

Deprivation
- Of the 17 wards in North Belfast 9 of these are in the 10% most deprived in Northern Ireland
- The 3 most deprived wards in North Belfast were the Newlodge, Shankill and Crumlin ranked 3, 4 and 6 respectively.

Economic activity
- A slightly higher than average percentage of North Belfast's population are long-term unemployed (1.8% of the working age population compared to the Belfast average of 1.6%)
- 13.5% of the population aged 16 and over in North Belfast were claiming Income Support in 2010. This compares to the Belfast rate of 10.4%
- Just over two fifths (41.8%) of total school leavers achieved 2 or more A-levels (or equivalent) in 2009 according to the school leavers survey. This is lower than the Belfast figure of 49.2%.
- According to the 2009 census of employee jobs there were 41,018 jobs in North Belfast which is 20.8% of all Belfast jobs.

Health
- Deaths due to suicide or undetermined intent accounted for 2.8% of all deaths in North Belfast in 2009. This is higher than the Belfast figure of 2.3%
- Life expectancy in Belfast North (PC) is lower than the Belfast average for both males and females. In the North it is 72.6 for males and 79.1 for females where as the comparable figures for Belfast are 73.4 and 79.6 respectively.

Housing
- According to the 2001 census approximately 50.9% of houses are owned. This is the lowest number of homes owned outright, with a mortgage/loan or shared.
- In the same area a further 49.1% homes are rented mainly from private parties, from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) or Housing association
- Note however that the results of the 2011 census may alter these figures.

South Belfast

There is an estimated 62,550 people living in South Belfast and it has one if the most varied social profiles in the city with pockets of concentrated deprivation sitting along side wealthy neighbourhoods. The area contains some of the city's anchor institutions including Queens University, research based hospitals and a concentration of small to medium sized service enterprises. This knowledge based economy has attracted significant investment, a growing middle-class, residential gentrification (especially in the apartment sector) and a high level of religious mixing. The council's Gasworks complex has helped to further expand investment opportunities to the south of the Central Business District whilst at the same time providing a model of sustainable urban development. South Belfast also contains some of the city's most significant amenity assets including parks, open space, theatres, schools, shops, restaurants and sporting facilities.

Two of the 10 wards fall within the most deprived 10% wards in Northern Ireland and 15.9% of the south Belfast population reside in these areas. A significant thrust of our Community Development strategy is to connect communities via partnership working and social enterprises to the investment sites and opportunities in the south of the city.

People in south Belfast feel safer in their neighbourhoods during the day than in any other part of the city (96.1%) but there are concentrations of anti-social behaviour, especially in the university precinct where there is a large number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). Here, the council's work with Community Wardens and the development of a strong community development partnership has significantly reduced the incidents of Anti Social Behaviour. This is complemented by our Alleygating initiative and in the next two years we aim to install 128 gates in south Belfast in response to local demand.

South Belfast in figures

Demography
- The population of South Belfast is around 62,550
- Around 14.9% of the population in South Belfast are aged over 60. This is lower than the Belfast average of 17.7%. The percentage of younger residents (under 16) is 14.8% (the Belfast average is 19.8%). A high proportion of the population are aged between 16 and 59/64 (69.6%) compared to the Belfast average (62.5%)
- The total net external in migration in Belfast was around 7,039 people. More than half of these people (52.9%) settled in the South of the city (PC).

Crime
- The highest incidents of notifiable offences recorded in 2009 was violent crime (24.5%)
- In Belfast South (PC) racist incidents have increased from 93 in 2006/07 to 163 in 2009/10, and remain the highest in Belfast -note that Belfast South includes a high proportion of the city centre

Deprivation
- Of the 11 wards in South Belfast 2 of these are in the 10% most deprived in Northern Ireland
- The most deprives wards in South Belfast were Shaftesbury and Blackstaff ranked 22 and 42 respectively.

Economic activity

- A slightly lower than average percentage of South Belfast's population are long-term unemployed (1.0% of the working age population compared to the Belfast average of 1.6%)
- The level of people on income support is low. 5.5% of the population aged 16 and over in South Belfast were claiming Income Support in 2010. This compares to the Belfast rate of 10.4%
- Almost two thirds (64.7%) of total school leavers achieved 2 or more A-levels (or equivalent) in 2009 according to the school leavers survey.
- According to the 2009 census of employee jobs there were 89,387 jobs in South Belfast which is 45.4% of all Belfast jobs.

Health
- Deaths due to suicide or undetermined intent accounted for 1.9% of all deaths in South Belfast in 2008. This is lower than the Belfast figure of 2.1% and is the second lowest in the city
- Life expectancy in Belfast South (PC) is higher than the Belfast average for both males and females. In the South it is 76.6 for males and 81.8 for females whereas the comparable figures for Belfast are 73.4 (males) and 79.6 (females).

Housing
- According to the 2001 census approximately 54.5% of houses are owned;
- In the same area a further 45.5% homes are rented mainly from private parties, from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) or Housing association.
- Note however that the results of the 2011 census may alter these figures.

East Belfast

East Belfast had an estimated population of 67,217 in 2008, which has declined by 2.0% from 2001. The area has been significantly affected by de-industrialisation and redevelopment of the inner-city in particular but there are also significant pockets of concentrated disadvantage mainly linked to public sector housing estates in the outer quadrant. Three out of the 13 wards are within the 10% most disadvantaged in Northern Ireland containing one-fifth of the east Belfast population. Despite the pace and scale of economic restructuring there are 39,231 employee jobs, almost 20% of all Belfast jobs. As noted earlier, east Belfast received £549.7m of assistance from Invest NI in 2008/9 and the council has invested £10m in the Titanic Quarter Signature Project.

There is a challenge to community development work to ensure that these investments have an impact on the most disadvantaged communities and neighbourhoods. This also relates to significant urban assets including the City Airport, iconic leisure infrastructure (Ravenhill, the Odyssey and the Oval) and major urban parks. Community-led regeneration, such as in the Connswater Community Greenway supported by £4.2m from the council exemplifies best practice in this area.

East Belfast in figures

Demography
- The population of East Belfast is around 67,217
- East Belfast has the oldest population in Belfast with 19.8% of residents aged 60 and over (the Belfast average is 17.7%), whereas the percentage of younger residents (under 16) is 18.3% (the Belfast average is 19.8%)
- The total net in external migration in Belfast was around 7,039 people. 21.0% of these settled in East Belfast compared to 52.9% in the South of the city (in relation to PC areas).

Crime
- The highest incidents of crime in 2009 were violent crime against the person (27.6%)
- Racist incidents have decreased within Belfast East Parliamentary Constituency from 56 in 2006/07 to 50 in 2009/10

Deprivation
- Of the 13 wards in East Belfast 3 of these are in the 10% most deprived in Northern Ireland
- Ballymacarrett ranked 18 in Northern Ireland, the Mount 25, and Woodstock 39.

Economic activity
- A lower percentage of East Belfast's population are long-term unemployed (1.1% of the working age population compared to the Belfast average of 1.6%)
- Approximately 6.6% of the population aged 16+ in East Belfast were claiming Income Support in 2010. This compares to the Belfast rate of 10.4%
- More than a half (51.0%) of total school leavers achieved 2 or more A-levels (or equivalent) in 2009 according to the school leavers survey
- According to the 2009 census of employee jobs there were 39,231 jobs in East Belfast which is 19.9% of all Belfast jobs.

Health
- Deaths due to suicide or undetermined intent accounted for 1.4% of all deaths in East Belfast in 2008. This is lower than the Belfast figure of 2.3%
- Life expectancy in Belfast East (PC) is higher than the Belfast average. In the East it is 76.2 for males and 81.4 for females whereas the comparable figures for Belfast are 73.4 and 79.6 respectively.

Housing
- According to the 2001 census a high proportion (64.2%) of homes are owner occupied (owned outright, with a mortgage/loan or shared)
- In the same area a further 35.8% homrees are rented mainly from private parties, from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) or Housing association. This is the smallest proportion across all 4 areas.
- Note however that the results of the 2011 census may alter these figures.

West Belfast

West Belfast had a population of 55,376 in 2008 which represents a decline of 3.4% from 2001. The quadrant has a younger age profile with nearly one-quarter (23.8%) aged 0-15 compared with 19.8% in Belfast as a whole. It is a predominantly Catholic population (95.9%) and 7 out of the 10 wards are in the top 10% of disadvantaged wards. 69.2% of the area's population live within these 7 wards. Long term unemployment as a proportion of the working age population in West Belfast is 2.4% compared to 1.6 in Belfast as a whole.

In common with other disadvantaged areas the population experiences lower health standards than the Belfast as a whole. Life expectancy in Belfast West (PC) is 70.2 years for males and 77.0 years for females which is the lowest of all Belfast quadrants. Along with these socio-economic problems comes a range of interlinked social problems. For example, the number of births to teenage mothers was higher in west Belfast (96, 10.9% of all births in the area) than for the city as a whole (297, 7.7% of all births in Belfast). Moreover, there were 16 suicides in 2008 representing 26.7% of the city's total and 3.0% of all deaths in the area.

However, west Belfast also has a number of strong community and cultural assets such as Culturlann and there are 4 Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs) covering most of the quadrant. Major assets such as the Belfast Hills and the Royal Victoria Hospital demonstrate the potential of the area's physical and employment resources. Here, the council is also investing in Dunville and Woodvale Parks and community development approaches will be critical in ensuring that these are regenerated in sustainable ways.

West Belfast in figures

Demography
• The population of West Belfast is around 55,376
• West Belfast has the youngest population in Belfast with 23.8% of residents below 16 years of age (the Belfast average is 19.8%), whereas the percentage (15.6%) of older residents (60 plus) is low (the Belfast average is 17.7%)
• The total net in external migration in Belfast was around 7,039 people. 9.5% of these settled in Belfast West (PC) compared to 52.9% in the Belfast South (PC) of the city.

Crime
• The highest incidents of crime in 2009 was violent crime against the person (25.8%)
• Racist incidents in Belfast West (PC) have decreased from 19 in 2006/07 to 16 in 2009/10, and remain the lowest in Belfast
• The Community Safety Partnership Audit has revealed that anti-social behaviour is the most problematic issue for residents in West Belfast.

Deprivation
• West Belfast is the most deprived area in Belfast – with the Whiterock ward being the most deprived in Northern Ireland
• Of the 10 wards in West Belfast 7 of these are in the 10% most deprived in Northern Ireland

Economic activity
• A higher percentage of West Belfast's working age population (2.4%) are long-term unemployed compared to the Belfast average of (1.6%)
• 16.8% of the population aged 16+ in West Belfast were claiming Income Support in 2010. This is higher than the Belfast rate of 10.4%
• Almost half (46.5%) of total school leavers achieved 2 or more A-levels (or equivalent) in 2009 according to the school leavers survey
• According to the 2009 census of employee jobs there were 27,294 jobs in West Belfast which is 13.9% of all Belfast jobs.

Health
- 3.0% of deaths were recorded as suicide or undetermined intent in 2008. This is higher than the Belfast figure of 2.3%
- Life expectancy in Belfast West (PC) is the lowest of all other areas of the city (70.6 for males and 77.1 for females).

Housing
- According to the 2001 census approximately 55.0% of houses are owned;
- In the same area a further 45.0% homes are rented mainly from private parties, from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) or Housing association
- Note however that the results of the 2011 census may alter these figures.

Implications

Despite the recession, the spatial economy of the city has changed remarkably over the last decade with some places doing well in terms of investment, jobs and services whilst at the same time others have become more disadvantaged. This Community Support Plan aims to take a strategic citywide approach to developing the sector in order to tackle these uneven changes.

In particular, it is important that new investment sites, especially those supported by council, such as Titanic Quarter and the North Foreshore have positive social and community benefits.

There are communities that are increasingly disconnected from the opportunities in the city especially where deprivation, segregation and physical barriers create complex problems.

However, it is important that the cycles of deprivation and exclusion are addressed though community led regeneration and that neighbourhoods are supported with the social capital to develop better services, jobs and facilities.

Here, we have developed a clearer understanding about how council investment works on a community basis and it is important in developing engaged communities that we integrate our work with other agencies and sectors.

Development Committee as of March 2012

Alderman Christopher Stalford (Chairman)
Councillor Conor Maskey (Deputy Chair)
Alderman Tom Ekin
Alderman Bob Stoker
Councillor Janice Austin
Councillor Tom Hartley
Councillor Máire Hendron
Councillor Colin Keenan
Councillor Bernie Kelly
Councillor Brian Kingston
Councillor John Kyle
Councillor Nichola Mallon
Councillor Jim McVeigh
Councillor Caoimhín Mac Giolla Mhín
Councillor Máirtín Ó Muilleoir
Councillor Lee Reynolds
Councillor Gavin Robinson
Councillor Guy Spence
Councillor Andrew Webb
Councillor Gareth McKee