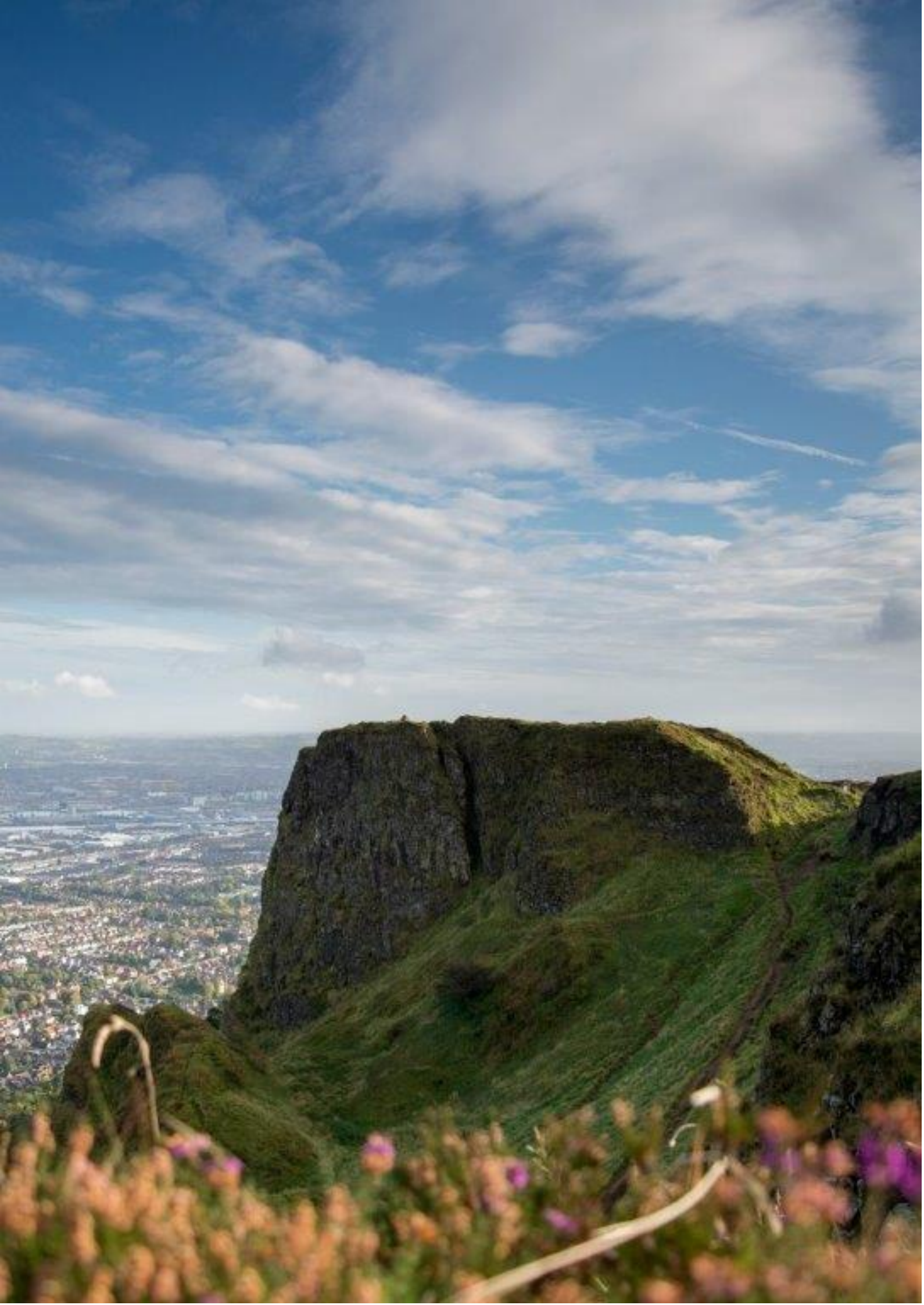




Belfast Local Development Plan

Technical Supplement 10
Public services
August 2018





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1.0 Introduction

Purpose of this document

- 1.1 This technical document has been prepared to draw together the evidence base that has been used to inform the preparation of the Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) 2035. It is one of a suite of topic-based technical supplements that should be read alongside the LDP to understand the rationale and justification for the policies in the draft Plan Strategy.
- 1.2 The document builds upon the suite of 18 thematic topic papers published alongside the LDP Preferred Options Paper (POP), which established the baseline position at that time (January 2017) and identified the key issues to be addressed by the LDP. This technical document therefore updates this baseline position and, along with the previous topic paper, sets out the evidence base that has informed the relevant policies within the draft Plan Strategy.
- 1.3 Again, this document forms part of a series of thematic reports to accompany the draft Plan Strategy. Whilst each of the technical supplements can be read separately, there are inevitably important related matters and background evidence within other documents also.
- 1.4 It should be noted that the evidence base collected to inform the LDP also forms the basis for additional assessments and appraisals required as part of the plan preparation process, most notably the Sustainability Appraisal. By combining the evidence gathering stages for both the Sustainability Appraisal and LDP, we aim to streamline the documentation produced and avoid duplication. It will also help to ensure that sustainable development is embedded in the planning process and that the Sustainability Appraisal is one of the main drivers informing the preparation of the LDP.

Planning and public services

- 1.5 The planning system operates in the public interest and seeks to address the current and future needs of society, including public services. These include services relating to health and education, as well as wider community services. In particular, within an overall strategy to grow the economy and population of Belfast, planning has a role to play in facilitating the provision of additional services to meet growing needs and changing demands.
- 1.6 The provision of most public services, including health and education, does not lie within the remit of the Council and is primarily the responsibility of government departments and statutory bodies. The private sector is however playing an increasingly important role. The Council also maintains lands and buildings for community uses and provides support and assistance to a wide range of community groups.
- 1.7 Need for public services changes and generally increases to reflect changing demography. In addition, Belfast's regional role as a centre of specialised services leads to greater pressures and expectations for better quality and more efficient facilities. If Belfast is to continue to grow as an attractive place to live in, invest and do business, then our public services need to be continually adapting and improving. This is likely to have some implications for the LDP, including in terms of land use allocations and providing a policy framework against which to assess future development proposals.

2.0 Planning Context

National and Regional Policy

2.1 The draft Programme for Government 2016-2021 seeks to improve wellbeing for all by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth. As part of this, it sets out a number of objectives of direct relevance in the delivery of public services, including:

- We have a more equal society;
- We enjoy long, healthy, active lives;
- We give our children and young people the best start in life; and
- We have high quality public services.

2.2 The regional planning policy context is provided by the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) and regional Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and guidance. A summary of these documents as they pertain to public services and planning policy is provided in the following sections.

Regional Development Strategy

2.3 The RDS provides the strategic context for the delivery of community facilities including education and health care recognising appropriate service provision at different spatial levels. Aims include the promotion of development which improves the health and wellbeing of communities, including easy access to appropriate services and facilities. The RDS recognises the role public services can have in determining the economic competitiveness of Northern Ireland and provides the strategic environmental context for the delivery of them.

2.4 The metropolitan area of Belfast is one of the key components of the RDS's Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG). SFG3 enhances the role of Belfast as the regional capital with focus on administration, commerce, specialised services and cultural amenities.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

2.5 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) was adopted in September 2015 to consolidate and simplify planning guidance. The SPPS sets objectives to:

- Promote sustainable development in an environmentally sensitive manner;
- Tackle disadvantage and facilitate job creation by ensuring the provision of a generous supply of land suitable for economic development and a choice and range in terms of quality, size and location to promote flexibility and meets specialised needs of specific economic activities;
- Support the re-use of previously developed economic development sites and buildings where they meet the needs of particular economic sectors;
- Promote mixed use development and improve integration between transport, economic development and other land uses, including housing whilst ensuring compatibility and availability by all members of the community; and
- Ensure a high standard of quality and design for new economic development.

Planning Policy Statements and Guidance

- 2.6 The RDS and SPPS are complemented by Planning Policy Statements. These cover a wide range of planning topics, including natural heritage, housing, economic development, access, flooding and open space. In addition, there is regional supplementary planning guidance in the form of Development Control Advice Notes (DCANs), which are non-statutory planning guidance intended to supplement other policy documents, including PPSs. The following are of particular relevance to this document.
- 2.7 DCAN 9 Residential and Nursing Homes provides advice regarding a home or institution providing for the boarding, care and maintenance of children, old people, persons under disability, a convalescent home, nursing home or hospital and cites planning considerations as location, siting, traffic aspects, amenity, design, layout and landscaping. Advice is that residential and nursing homes should will be located in cities, towns and villages where services are readily and conveniently available.
- 2.8 DCAN 13 Crèches, Day Nurseries and Pre-school playgroups considers provision in urban and rural areas, residential areas, industrial locations and commercial areas. It cites planning considerations as the scale, potential nuisance and disturbance, visual impact, access arrangements, car parking provision, proliferation and possible mitigating factors.

Local Policy Context

- 2.9 The current planning policy context at a local level is complex as a result of a successful legal challenge to the adoption of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015. There are therefore five existing development plans that relate to parts of the Belfast district, alongside draft BMAP. All of these documents will be superseded at the adoption of the new Belfast LDP 2035.

Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001

- 2.10 The current development plan for the majority of the Belfast district is the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001, which was adopted in December 1989. The area covered by the plan included the whole of the administrative area of the former Belfast City Council area, together with the urban parts of the former district council areas of Castlereagh, Lisburn and Newtownabbey as well as Greenisland and Holywood.
- 2.11 The purpose of the BUAP was to establish physical development policies for this broad urban area up to 2001, clarifying the extent and location of development and providing a framework for public and private agencies in their investment decisions relating to land use. Although alterations were made in 1996, the BUAP is now largely out-of-date and was formally superseded by the BMAP in September 2014. However, BMAP was quashed as a result of a judgement in the court of appeal delivered on 18 May 2017, meaning that the BUAP 2001 remains the statutory development plan for most of the council's area.

The Lisburn Area Plan 2001

- 2.12 The change in council boundary as a result of the local government reform on 1 April 2015, and the subsequent quashing of BMAP, means that the Lisburn Area Plan 2001 remains the statutory development plan for a small portion of Belfast's district around Dunmurry. Adopted on 4 July 2001, the Lisburn Area Plan sought to establish physical development policies for

Lisburn and its surroundings up to 2001. However, as work on the development of BMAP had commenced at the time of adoption, an element of provision had been incorporated so that the area's reasonable housing development needs could continue to be met with some certainty until such time as the successor BMAP was in place.

Lagan Valley Regional Park Local Plan 2005

- 2.13 The quashing of BMAP also means that the Lagan Valley Regional Park Local Plan (adopted in 1993) was re-instated as the statutory development plan for the Lagan Valley Regional Park (LVRP). It sets out the strategy and policies associated with the protection and enhancement of the natural and man-made heritage of the LVRP. Its main objectives are to conserve the landscape quality and features of the Lagan Valley and to enhance recreational use by the public.

Belfast Harbour Local Area Plan 1990-2005

- 2.14 The quashing of BMAP also means that the Belfast Harbour Area Local Plan (adopted in 1991) was also re-instated as the statutory development plan for Belfast Lough and its foreshores, encompassing land east of the Belfast to Larne railway line and west of the Sydenham By-Pass and the Belfast to Bangor road. It was prepared within the strategy set out in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 and underlines the importance of the harbour area to Belfast and to the Northern Ireland economy.

North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995

- 2.15 A small section of the Belfast District at Knocknagoney was subsumed into Belfast as part of local government reform in 2015. The quashing of BMAP means that this area reverts back to the original North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995 (adopted 1989).

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015

- 2.16 Although formally adopted in 2014, this process of final BMAP adoption was declared unlawful as a result of a judgement in the court of appeal delivered on 18 May 2017. This means the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001 and the other Development Plans provides the statutory plan context for the area. However, BUAP was published in 1990, nearly 30 years ago. The Belfast City Council Plan Area has undergone massive transformation since then, particularly in the city centre. The formal development plans which apply are dated and silent on many of the planning issues pertinent to needs of current planning decision making. In recognition of this unique circumstance and taking account of the short term transitional period in advance of the adoption of the Local Policies Plan it is important to provide clarity in relation to the application of planning policy.
- 2.17 Draft BMAP, in its most recent, post-examination form remains a significant material consideration in future planning decisions. It was at the most advanced stage possible prior to formal adoption. Draft BMAP referred to throughout the LDP Draft Plan Strategy documentation therefore refers to that version. However, the council has also had regard to the provisions of the draft BMAP which was published in 2004, the objections which were raised as part of the plan process and the Planning Appeals Commission Inquiry report.
- 2.18 The SPPS's transitional arrangements provide for continuity until such times as a new LDP for the whole of their council area is adopted to ensure continuity in planning policy for taking planning decisions.

- 2.19 BUAP contains fewer zonings or designations than draft BMAP and delineates a city centre boundary which has expanded significantly since then by virtue of the application of Draft BMAP. The council therefore intends to use a number of the existing designations contained in the draft BMAP, insofar as it relates to the Belfast City Council Plan Area, to form the basis of decision making until the LDP is adopted in its entirety. A list of the existing draft boundaries and designations is contained in Appendix A of the LDP Draft Plan Strategy.
- 2.20 In relation to public services, the strategic vision in draft BMAP for Belfast city is to promote it as the regional capital and major focus for regional administration, commerce, specialised services, cultural amenities, employment and development opportunities. The draft BMAP strategy for education, health, community and cultural services comprises the following elements:
- To facilitate the delivery of service provision within the BMAP area; and
 - To highlight as appropriate requirements for new service provision through key site requirements.

Policy CF1 relates to the ‘Protection of land for Education, Health, Community and Cultural Facilities’ It states that planning permission will not be granted for alternative uses on lands identified for such facilities.

Proposal BT148 relates to health and identifies the following sites for health use:

- BT148/01 Lincoln Avenue
- BT148/02 Andersonstown Road
- BT148/03 Agnes Street
- BT148/04 Grove, York Road
- BT148/05 Holywood Arches
- BT148/06 Lisburn Road

Proposal BT149 relates to education and the following sites are identified for education uses:

- Primary - BT149/01 St John’s/St Gall’s/St Catherine’s, Lanark Way
- Higher and Further Education - BT149/02 Springvale, Springvale Road

The Belfast Agenda

- 2.21 The Council assumed responsibility for community planning in 2015 following local government reform. This is a process whereby councils, statutory bodies and communities work together in partnership to develop and implement a shared vision for their area, to make sure that public services work together with communities to deliver real improvements for local people. The Belfast Agenda, which is the adopted community plan, sets out a joint vision and ambitions for Belfast’s future, as well as outlining priorities for action over the next four years.
- 2.22 The vision for Belfast in 2035 set out in the Belfast Agenda is:
- “Belfast will be a city re-imagined and resurgent. A great place to live and work for everyone. Beautiful, well connected and culturally vibrant, it will be a sustainable city shared and loved by all its citizens, free from the legacy of conflict. A compassionate city offering opportunities for everyone. A confident and successful city energising a dynamic and prosperous city region. A magnet for talent and business and admired around the world. A city people dream to visit.”*

- 2.23 Delivery of this vision is based on a number of strategic outcomes, together with ambitions to be achieved by 2035, including an additional 66,000 residents living in the city. The LDP is recognised within the Belfast Agenda as one of the key tools available to shape the physical future of Belfast in a sustainable way. Its development is described as one of several immediate priorities, under the theme of City Development, where it explains that the LDP will be vital to the delivery of the outcomes in the Belfast Agenda. Councils must take account of their current Community Plan when preparing a LDP. The LDP provides a spatial expression of the community plan, linking investment and delivery to the land use planning system.

Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy

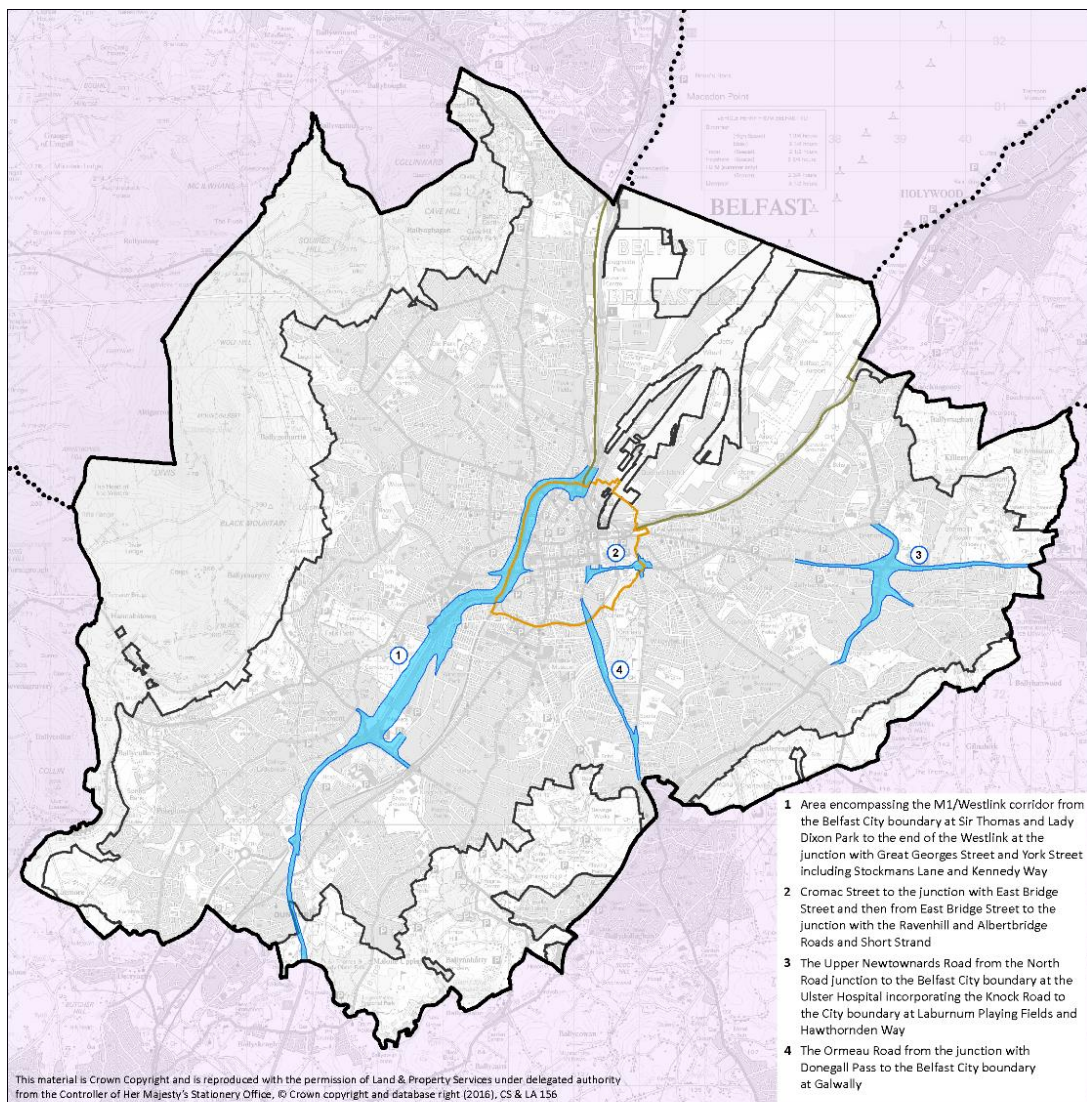
- 2.24 This Strategy sets out Belfast City Council's ambition for continued growth and regeneration of the city core to 2030 and contains policies to guide decision making and key projects to drive economic growth and deliver social benefits. The principles of this strategy include: increasing the employment and residential population; managing retail; maximising tourism; creating a learning and innovation centre and a green centre; city connectivity and shared space and social impact.
- 2.25 The Strategy also identifies five special action areas within the city centre to include social and cultural activities and public realm. The City Centre Investment Fund of approx. £19m has been established to kick-start projects in conjunction with the private sector that demonstrate an economic return. A further £4m fund has been established for projects that can demonstrate a social return.

3.0 Public Services Profile

Healthcare

- 3.1 Levels of health within Belfast are some of the worst within Northern Ireland, with lower life expectancy rates and a greater percentage of residents in receipt of at least one disability allowance than the NI average. Belfast contains the most deprived areas of NI with the highest concentrations of multiple deprivation located within the west Belfast wards of Andersonstown, Ladybrook, Finaghy and Falls Park. A full breakdown of spatial deprivation within the Belfast area is covered further within Technical Supplementm1 – Population Profile and Growth.
- 3.2 The 2017 sub-regional bulletin of the Health and Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System highlights the following health inequalities for Belfast:
- As seen regionally, deprivation related inequality was most evident in indicators relating to alcohol and drug use, suicide/self-harm and teenage births.
 - Both male and female life expectancy has increased across the period.
 - Widening gap in Belfast between deprived areas and others especially in alcohol related admissions and mortality; drug related admissions and mortality; lung cancer mortality; teenage birth rates; and self-harm admissions.
 - Cancer death rates in the most deprived areas are a sixth higher than in the overall Belfast Trust;
 - The death rate from suicide in Belfast is a quarter higher than the rest of NI;
 - The alcohol related death rate in Belfast Trust was around two-thirds higher than in NI;
 - Belfast has the highest teenage birth rate;
 - Belfast also has the greatest number of self-harm admissions to hospital within the region;
 - Belfast has the greatest number of deaths per 100,000 of the population from suicides; and
 - Belfast has the highest admission rate to hospitals from drug related illnesses.
- 3.3 Mental health problems in NI are 20-25% higher than in the rest of the UK and the largest cause of disability in NI with one in four experiencing a diagnosable mental health problem at any given time. 'Towards A Better Future: The Trans-generational Impact of the Troubles on Mental Health' estimates that approximately 213,000 people in NI are experiencing significant problems as a result of the troubles.
- 3.4 Air pollution poses a significant risk factor for a number of health conditions including respiratory infections, heart disease, COPD, stroke and lung cancer. There are four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) within Belfast along the arterial routes of the Westlink Corridor, Ormeau Road, Upper Newtownards Road and Cromac Street. There are identified as areas of poor air quality.

Figure 1: Air Quality Management Areas in Belfast



Air Quality

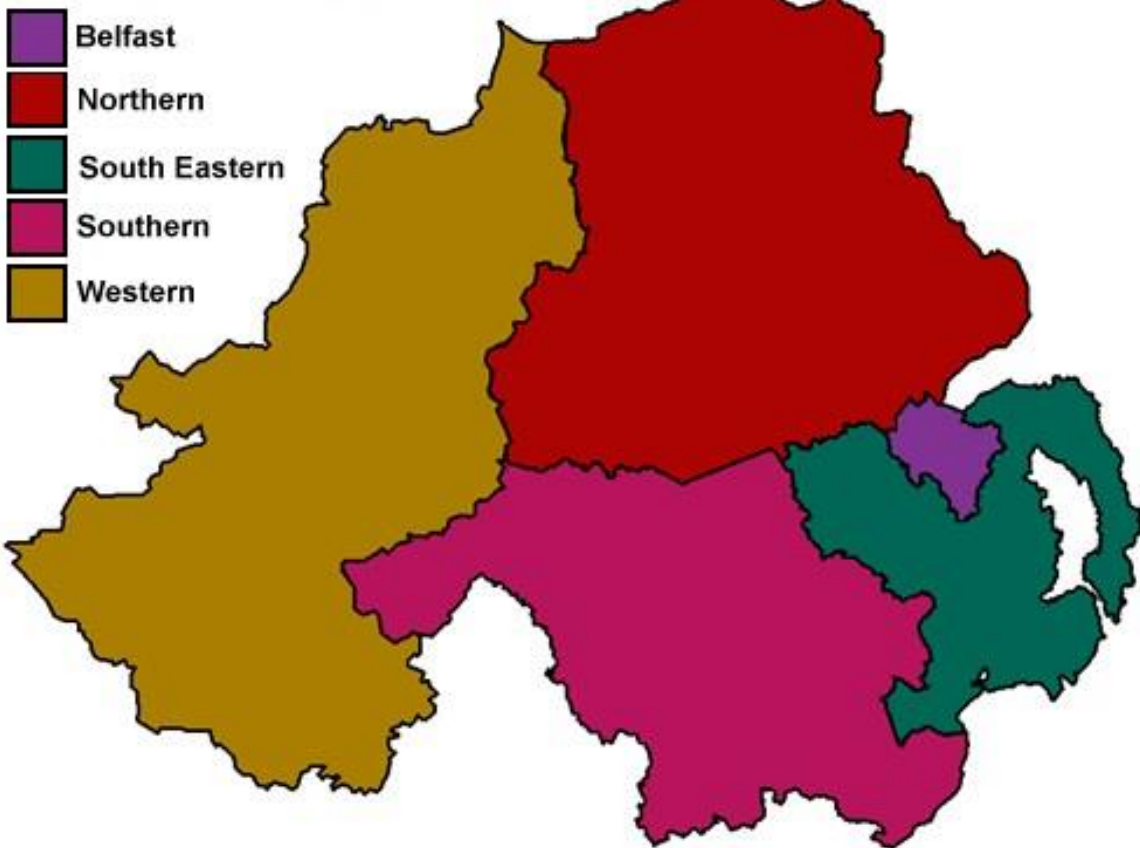
- Air Quality Management Area
- Council Area
- Metropolitan/Settlement Development Limit
- Belfast City Centre
- Belfast Harbour Area

Source: Air and Environmental Quality Unit, DAERA



Existing Healthcare Provision

3.5 Healthcare provision within Belfast falls into the remit of the Department of Health (DoH) and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT). As well as serving the local population, the BHSCT provides some specialised services to the whole population of Northern Ireland. Two-thirds of the population of Northern Ireland live within 40 minutes travel of the Royal Victoria Hospital, one of the main hospitals in Belfast. BHSCT has over 100 facilities, although some of these fall within the neighbouring Council district of Lisburn and Castlereagh.

Figure 2: Health and Social Care Trust Areas in NI**HSC Trust Areas***Source: HSCNI***Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Care**

3.6 Primary Health Care Services in Belfast include:

- 3 acute hospitals – Mater, Royal Victoria Hospital and Belfast City Hospital;
- Rehabilitation Services at the Musgrave Park Hospital;
- The Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital;
- The Dental Hospital;
- The Hospital for Sick Children (located within the Royal Victoria Hospital);
- Ambulance and Emergency services at the Mater and Royal Victoria Hospitals;
- 97 GP practices, 99 dental practices, 141 pharmacies and 69 opticians;
- Two out-of-hours centres provide GP urgent care services; and
- 7 wellbeing and treatment centres providing podiatry, physiotherapy, speech & language therapy, dental clinics and rehabilitation services.

3.7 Future capital projects to be implemented by the BHSCT include:

- An acute mental health inpatient unit of 74 beds at Belfast City Hospital;
- New children's hospital at RVH; and
- Replacement outpatient centre eye, ear, nose and throat building (phase 2C) RVH.

- 3.8 Secondary and tertiary services for adults are also provided by BHSCT, including emergency and elective inpatient care, day case and outpatient services. Continuing care and acute care for those people with a severe mental illness is provided in the Mater, Belfast City Hospital and Knockbracken Healthcare Park. More recently, a regional neuro-rehabilitation unit at Musgrave Park Hospital, an inpatient facility for children and adolescents with complex mental health problems at Forester Green and a new critical care building in the RVH have been opened.
- 3.9 Children's services include child health, family support and looked after services (including fostering, adoption and residential care), as well as specialist child and adolescent mental health services, including regional specialties, provided in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children and Forster Green.
- 3.10 An important role is also played by the voluntary, community and independent providers such as residential homes and by carers within local communities, homes and families.
- 3.11 Forster Green Hospital, Knockbracken and the Ulster Hospital are in close proximity to the Council boundary within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

Private Healthcare in Belfast

- 3.12 There are a number of private healthcare facilities within Belfast including Northern Ireland's largest group 3fivetwo, Musgrave House, H3, Northern MRI, Malone Private Clinic and the Ulster Independent Clinic, which has recently given granted planning permission for an extension. The council has also received pre-application notification for a health-led mixed use regeneration project on the 6.9ha site of the Kings Hall and Royal Ulster Agricultural Society's show grounds to the south of the city.

Future Needs

- 3.13 Befitting its status as the regional capital there are specialised services of the BHSCT that are used by persons across NI. This places additional demands on hospital beds, emergency services and waiting times within Belfast, whilst also trying to improve quality of service and providing increased specialisms for the region.
- 3.14 As life expectancy increases, leading to an aging population, the number of pensioners is predicted to reach 40% across NI by 2025, which will increase demand for health and community services, nursing and housing support. Many older people will have disabilities and reduced mobility so ease of access to community facilities, recreation and shops will be important as persons anticipate to live at home as independently for as long as possible.
- 3.15 Alongside an aging population there is expected to be increased prevalence of long-term conditions such as hypertension, obesity and respiratory diseases and the prevalent health inequalities in Belfast as previously highlighted.

Promoting Health and Well-Being

- 3.16 'Transforming Your Care (TYC) 2012' is an initiative of the former Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety aimed at improving the healthcare system in NI. Some of the key areas of transformational change include:
- The development of a new approach to family support and children in need;

- The development of home treatment services as an alternative to hospital for people with severe mental illness;
- Single points of access for a range of community services to streamline pathways to
- the right services in the right setting by the right person;
- The re-provision of residential care for older people to supported housing;
- The development of home-based rehabilitation services; and
- A major programme of re-configuration of strategic acute services across the hospital network.

- 3.17 This initiative aims to bring about an improved and more efficient health service concentrating on the individual firstly in terms of self-care and good health decisions and local services in order to take the strain from existing health care facilities. DSD/NIHE initiative 'Supporting People Programme' supports more than 17,000 vulnerable people each year in Northern Ireland to live independently through preventative measures and assisted resettlement from institutional settings therefore reducing pressure on health and social care.
- 3.18 The focus on home treatment services and supported housing as alternatives to hospitalisation and residential care may have implications for planning as people are cared for and make adaptation's to homes. In order for the objectives of 'Transforming Your Care' to be met planning service can assist in ensuring appropriate housing that meet the needs of an increasingly ageing population and vulnerable persons in need of support; providing easy access to community facilities and creating attractive recreational spaces to keep active.
- 3.19 Belfast City Council also support 'Belfast Healthy Cities' (BHC) in creating a healthy, equitable and sustainable City. Reducing health inequalities is a strategic goal for the World Health Organisation (WHO) European Health Strategy Health 2020 and, as highlighted, Belfast is the location of wards within the region with multiple deprivation and the greatest health inequalities. Present BHC initiatives are focusing on creating resilient communities such as creating child friendly places and promoting active travel.
- 3.20 Active and sustainable transport initiatives can also benefit health, including through exercise and improved air quality and this is supported by initiatives such as the Belfast Active Travel Plan, the proposed transport bus at Great Victoria Street and the Belfast Rapid Transit system.

Education

- 3.21 The new Department of Education (DE) came into effect in May 2016, assuming the roles and responsibilities of the former Department of Education and responsibilities in relation to children, young people and childcare, from OFMDFM. Additionally, the DE is responsible for oversight of the education provision for young people in custody in the Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre. The new Department for the Economy (DfE) also came into effect in May 2016, assuming most of the roles and responsibilities of former Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) with the exception of the Employment Service.
- 3.22 The Education Authority, Belfast Region is responsible for the delivery of services according to the policies and procedures of the former Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB). South Eastern and Southern Education Board are also responsible for some of the schools, which are located within the Belfast area. Different authorities are responsible for

addressing these issues depending on the schools sector and management type:

- The Education Authority is the managing authority for the controlled sector and as such is responsible for addressing issues in Controlled schools;
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) is the managing authority for the maintained sector and as such is responsible for addressing issues in maintained schools; and
- Individual voluntary grammar schools, grant maintained integrated schools and grant maintained Irish medium schools' Boards of Governors are responsible for addressing issues within their own schools.

3.23 There are 37 nurseries provided in the Belfast Region. There are 1,823 pupils currently enrolled (academic year 2017/18) in pre-primary schools within the BELB area. There are 100 primary schools provided in the Belfast Region this includes seven preparatory schools. There are 33,729 pupils currently enrolled (academic year 2017/18) in primary schools within the BELB area. There are 34 post-primary schools within the BELB area. There are 30,354 pupils currently enrolled (academic year 2017/18) in post primary schools within the BELB area. Source: NI School Census

Third Level Education

3.24 Third level education services are provided by Queen's University, Belfast; Ulster University in Belfast City Centre (with Jordanstown campus outside LGD boundary); Stranmillis College and St Mary's Teaching College. In 2016/2017 there were 50,960 persons enrolled at these facilities. In addition, Belfast Metropolitan Institute had over 30,000 enrollments in 2016/2017.

Future Development Proposals

3.25 There are a number of current and future development proposals in relation to education facilities in Belfast, including:

- Little Flower Girls' School: Area based proposals for future maintained post-primary provision – Amalgamated with St Patrick's College September 2017;
- St Patrick's College: Area based proposals for future maintained post-primary provision - Amalgamated with Little Flower Girls School September 2017;
- Mercy College, Ballysillan: Area based proposals for future maintained post-primary provision;
- Cliftonville Integrated Primary School: Increase enrolment;
- Holy Cross Girls' PS/Nursery Unit, Belfast: Establishment of a 26 part-time place nursery unit;
- Strandtown Primary School: Increase enrolment;
- Holy Family Primary School, Belfast: Establish a 52 full-time place nursery unit; and
- Ulster University: Extension/transfer to City Centre from Jordanstown.

Figure 3: Belfast Area Schools Profile (2017/18)

Management	Nurs.	Prim.	Preps.	Sec.	Gram.	Spec.	Ind.	FE	Total	Other	Grand Total
Controlled	18	44	0	4	3	9	0	1	79	0	79
Voluntary	0	0	7	0	14	0	0	0	21	4	25
Roman Catholic Maintained	19	36	0	10	0	1	0	0	66	0	66
Other Maintained	0	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	9	0	9
Controlled Integrated	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Grant Maintained Integrated	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
Total	37	93	7	17	17	10	0	1	182	4	186
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	98	98
Grand Total	37	93	7	17	17	10	0	1	182	102	284

Figure 4: School Census infographic (2017/18)

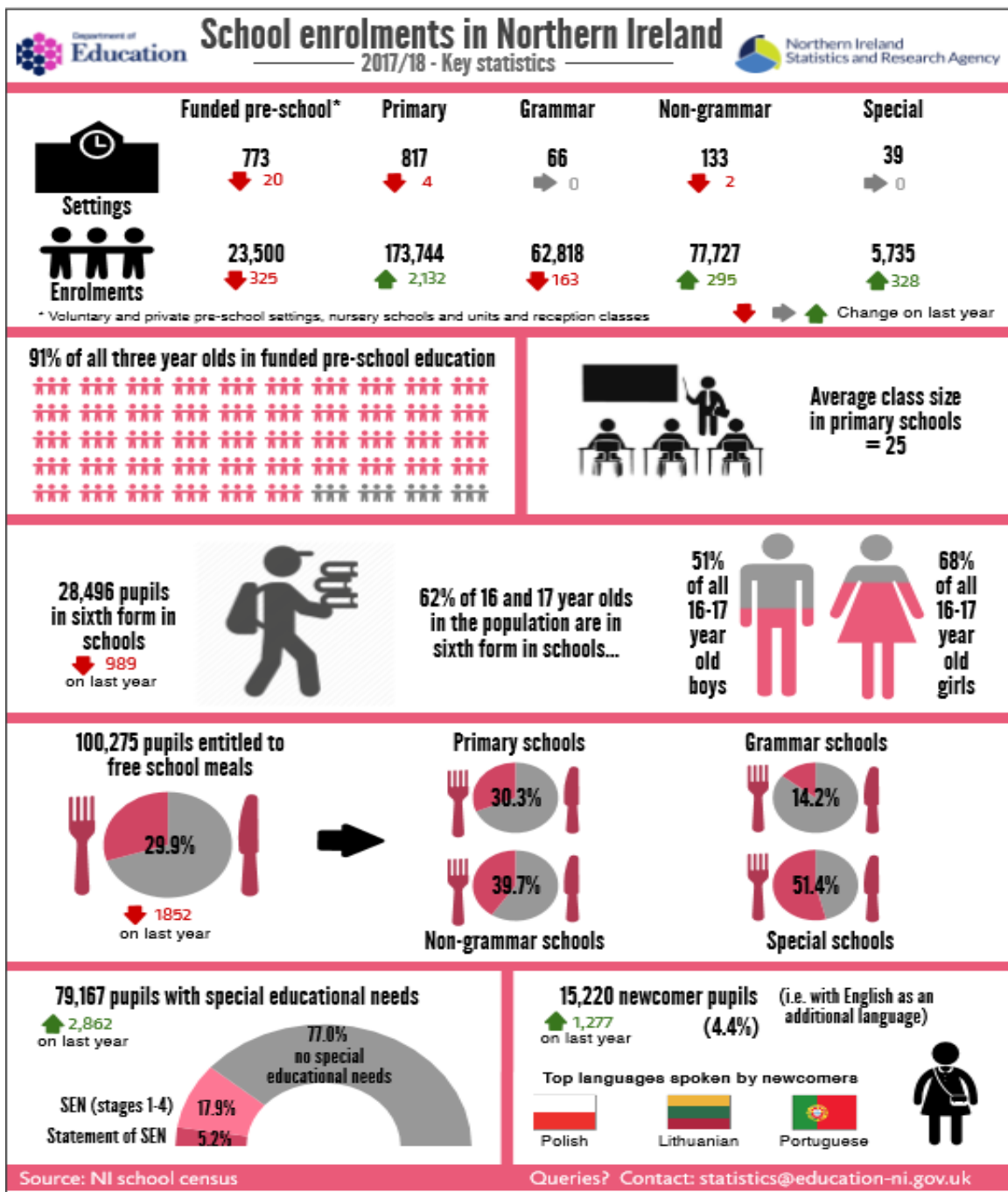
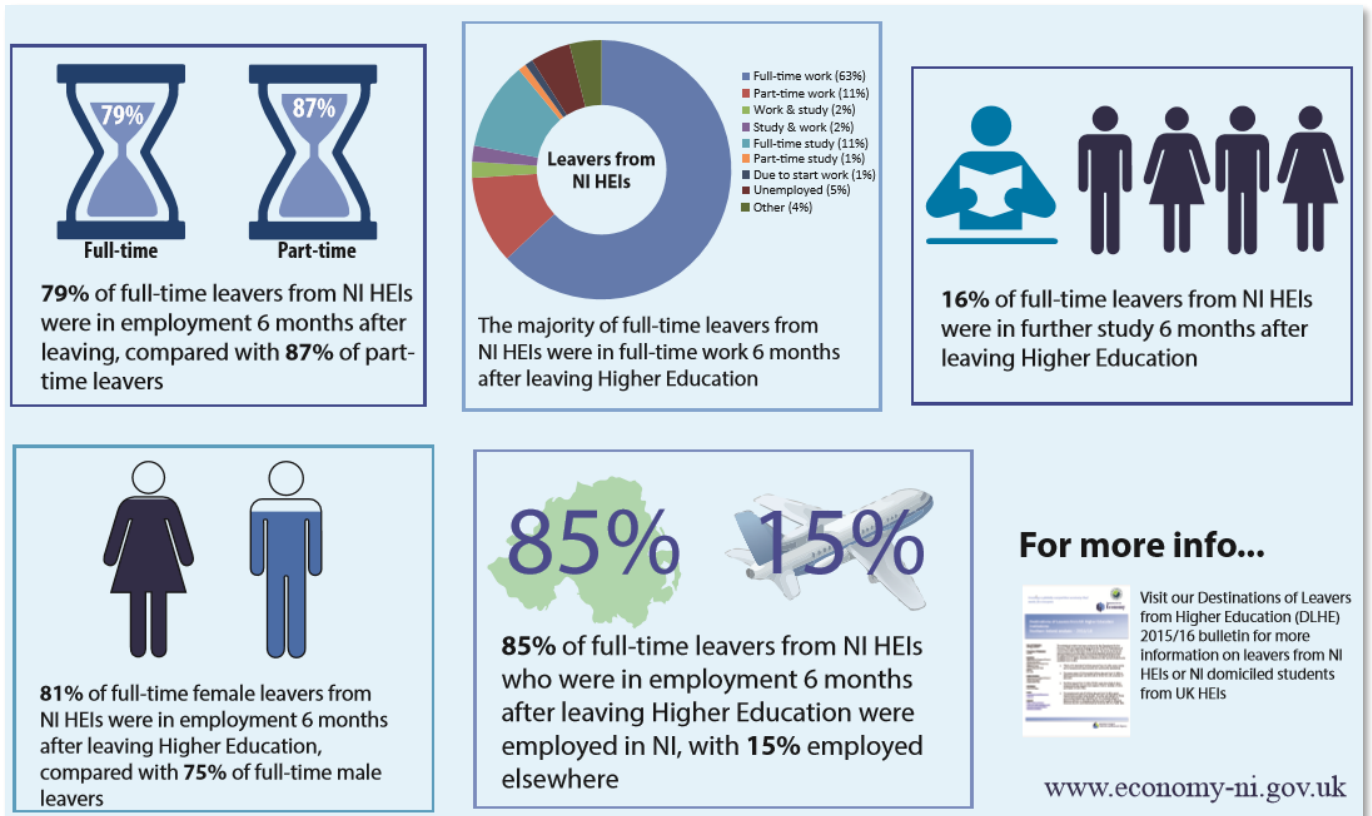


Figure 5: Higher Education Infographics



Community and Cultural Facilities

Community and Play Centres

3.26 The Belfast Agenda seeks to improve neighbourhoods and relations and provide fit for purpose services. Belfast City Council offers twenty-eight community centres (including independent centres funded by BCC) for various age groups and interests to meet, stay active, learn and volunteer. We also manage six play centres located at Avoniel, Ballysillan, Loop River, North Queen Street, Olympia and Whiterock offering after-schools clubs, Saturday clubs and seasonal schemes and manage 105 playgrounds across the City.

3.27 In addition to the above, there are numerous youth clubs and resources operating from schools, churches and other organisations, such as the YMCA, which offer:

- Childcare
- Health and fitness services;
- Youth programmes;
- Boy's Brigade and Girl's Brigade divisions run from religious buildings;
- Girl Guides and Scouts; and
- Private crèches / daycare facilities.

Leisure Centres

3.28 There are currently 15 leisure centres in Belfast, which are run by GLL under the 'Better' brand. As part of a leisure transformation and investment programme, the Girdwood Community Hub and Olympia Sports Village have been completed. Other major projects include an aquatic centre at the former Robinson Centre in east Belfast, Andersonstown

family fun leisure water complex and an outdoor centre of excellence on the site of the current Brook Activity Centre.

- 3.29 The Active Belfast project, which aims to promote healthy living and increase physical activity, has, alongside SportNI, invested in refurbishment of the indoor tennis and Ozone complex, Avoniel Leisure Centre, Belvoir Activity Centre, Falls Leisure Centre and the Grove Wellbeing Centre. A new spectator stand and 8 lane athletics track has been completed at the Mary Peters Track.
- 3.30 In relation to sport and recreation, facilities within Belfast include Casement Park and Windsor Park stadia, playing pitches, Belfast Bike public bike hire scheme, community greenways, allotments and other passive public and private recreational and leisure options. There are further details on these facilities in Technical Supplement 8 - Open Space and Recreation.

Libraries

- 3.31 Libraries NI is the body with overall responsibility for the provision of library services in Northern Ireland. Its primary duty is to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service for persons living, working or studying in NI.
- 3.32 There are 18 libraries in Greater Belfast as listed below. 12 of these libraries include areas of substantial levels of social deprivation within their catchment areas.
- Ardoyne;
 - Ballyhackamore;
 - Belfast Central (City Centre);
 - Chichester;
 - Colin Glen;
 - Cregagh Road;
 - Falls Road;
 - Finaghy,
 - Grove;
 - Holywood Arches;
 - Lisburn Road;
 - Newtownbreda;
 - Ormeau Road;
 - Shakhill Road;
 - Suffolk;
 - Tullycarnet;
 - Whiterock;
 - Woodstock; and
 - 2 mobile libraries.

- 3.33 Libraries offer many services to the population they serve including access to computers and IT services, providing study spaces, exhibition spaces, event space, facilitating social groups, learning and meeting rooms. Although many libraries have undergone refurbishments since 2009, there has been significant rationalisation of services with closures and opening hours reduced. Libraries can be invaluable social meeting spaces and the Belfast Central library provides special collections, archives and photographs of past and present cultural and community life.

Cultural and Arts Facilities

- 3.34 The Department for Communities has assumed most of the responsibilities of the former Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). This includes responsible for arts and creativity, museums, architecture and built environment policy.
- 3.35 “Ambitions for the Arts 2013-2018” is a five year strategic plan to champion the arts; promote access and create a resilient sector. Cultural and arts facilities can enrich quality of life,

promote inclusivity and create vibrant environments. Public art, workshops, galleries and exhibition spaces can create and enhance local distinctiveness and sense of place.

- 3.36 Belfast has a range of museums, heritage centres, theatres, cinemas and art galleries, which provides a thriving and vibrant cultural scene for our citizens and visitors. There are numerous facilities within local communities, such as the Belfast Activity Centre, Barnett's Demesne and the Culturlann.
- 3.37 Belfast has a rich diversity of historic buildings such as Crumlin Road Gaol and Parliament Buildings, and public parks, such as Botanic Gardens and Tropical Ravine. These are all part of our collective cultural heritage and should be welcoming and accessible to everyone.
- 3.38 The Titanic exhibition was the most popular visitor attractions in 2015 (NITB Belfast LGD Factcard) in NI. In addition, the Belfast City Council Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020 suggests the need for a maritime visitor experience and the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy proposes the need for contemporary visual art museum.

4.0 Draft Plan Strategy Policy Approach

- 4.1 The LDP Preferred Options Paper (POP) set out the proposed vision, key aims and objectives for the new Belfast LDP and the public consultation has indicated wide general support for the proposed approach. The overall structure of the draft Plan Strategy (DPS) generally retains the thematic approach used in the POP, set under an overall vision and development strategy.
- 4.2 Sustainable and inclusive development is at the heart of the LDP and the LDP is required to strike a balance in meeting the economic, social and environmental needs of the current population, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development to improve and enhance the balance between economic, social and environmental conditions to deliver economic success, and a better quality of life for people living in Belfast.
- 4.3 The POP identified a series of objectives to help deliver sustainable growth for Belfast. Whilst many of the objectives ultimately affect public services, insofar as the LDP can facilitate such services, the following objective is of particular relevance to this document:
- To improve access for all groups in society to public services through the design and location of new development.
- 4.4 In the POP, we proposed to include strategic policies to ensure that all new developments maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles, such as supporting active travel options and improving accessibility to local service centres and recreation facilities. We also proposed to protect and provide development opportunities for community, health, leisure, nurseries and educational facilities based on local need and in line with the projected population growth over the plan period, including by contributions towards new community infrastructure requirements arising as a result of development. Our preferred approach received significant public support in the POP consultation.
- 4.5 Following on from the POP stage, the DPS includes a number of strategic policies that over-arch the entire plan. These also relate to the overall vision and provide a link to the more detailed operational policies. They seek to improve health and wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion whilst also creating better places and more sustainable neighbourhoods.
- 4.6 Taking the above into account, the DPS has addressed the issues around public services generally through a policy on community infrastructure. There are also clear linkages to other policies, including those relating to healthy communities and higher education. The DPS acknowledges that adequate community infrastructure is essential, particularly planning for a growing population. It also recognises that new developments should contribute towards consequential new community infrastructure requirements as appropriate. The DPS also seeks to ensure good accessibility to existing and new facilities for current and future residents.

- 4.7 The DPS community infrastructure policy aims to protect existing community infrastructure to meet the needs of the city and the wider region. It also aims to ensure adequate provision for new and improved community infrastructure to meet changing needs. Therefore, the policy framework is to generally resist the loss of community infrastructure that meets current local needs, save in exceptional circumstances where the facility is not needed and another use can be justified.
- 4.8 As referred to before, the provision of most public services, including health and education, is primarily the responsibility of government departments and statutory bodies. Any assessment of future needs is carried out by the relevant body, including the City Council's community and neighbourhood services function. This will help to inform the next stage of the LDP, the Local Policies Plan, in the event that there are site-specific land use implications. In the meantime, any development proposals will be assessed against the relevant policy framework set out in the DPS.

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