



BELFAST CENTRE STAGE AT WHO HEALTHY CITIES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



Belfast City Councillor Colin Keenan, Vice Chair of the Health and Environmental Services Committee

The World Health Organization Healthy Cities International conference in Athens has heard tributes to work delivered in Belfast to improve the health and wellbeing of its citizens.

The Athens gathering is examining health in the city and city living, inequalities and the impact, which all government policy has on the health of the population. The Belfast delegation, which includes two elected representatives, Councillor Colin Keenan and Councillor Matt Garrett will participate in a programme that shares global learning and expertise. Staff from Belfast Healthy Cities will also present case studies citing good practice in Belfast.

Belfast Healthy Cities, in its role of WHO European Healthy Cities Secretariat has also contributed to the organisation of the event.

Belfast City Councillor Colin Keenan, Vice Chair of the Health and Environmental Services Committee, Belfast City Council was invited by the World Health Organization to address the official conference opening session alongside representatives from cities across the globe, which is attended by more than 600 people from 54 countries.

Cllr Keenan highlighting the importance of Healthy Cities to Belfast said, "In Belfast we value the unique and direct link to the World Health Organization afforded by Belfast Healthy Cities and we are proud that the work done in Belfast continues to be cited at events such as this.

"This work is absolutely vital, tackling health inequality and promoting the importance of health policies across all Government bodies. So too is the way in which that work was undertaken. Belfast Healthy Cities was the first 'partnership model' involving central Government Departments and agencies, the local council, voluntary organisations, citizens groups and members of the public. The organisation quickly established itself as a non-sectarian, inclusive and effective body. It is important to stress that since those early days Belfast Healthy Cities has continued to attract support and input from all levels of Government.

That is something we hope will continue as Northern Ireland continues to evolve and as we move towards a new system of local Government delivery in April 2015."