

# One Year On



*Planning for a Healthy City*



City Health Development Plan



June 2003

## Acknowledgements

Belfast Healthy Cities expresses its gratitude and warm thanks to all the organisations who have completed templates and provided case studies for this report:

Belfast City Council  
Department for Regional Development  
Eastern Health and Social Services Board  
Learning City Forum  
Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Special thanks go to the lead agencies, to members of the Strategic Planning Groups, to members of the Learning City Forum and to Belfast Healthy Cities' staff: Victoria Creasy, Health Development Manager, Jonna Monaghan, Information Development Officer and Caroline Scott, Programme Support Officer.

## Foreword

Integrated planning for health development requires action by more than one organisation and on more than one level. The City Health Development planning process in Belfast, a key requirement for cities designated to Phase III of the World Health Organisation's European Healthy Cities Network, led to the publication of *Planning for a Healthy City* in February 2002. Organisations within the city signed up to the Charter of Commitment and undertook to work towards the implementation of the plan and the actions outlined.

This report is a summary of action taken by these organisations and lead agencies on the four broad strategic themes since February 2003:

- Mental wellbeing for young people
- Transport, environment, planning and housing
- Lifelong learning
- Integrated information

Information contained in the report has been provided by the lead agency identified under each action in *Planning for a Healthy City*. Additional information from the Annual Reporting Templates (ART) completed by lead agencies can be downloaded from Belfast Healthy Cities website [www.belfasthealthycities.com](http://www.belfasthealthycities.com).

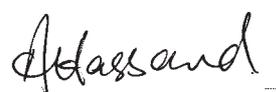
Increasing focus on health and quality of life within each sector is a core element of *Investing for Health*, the Northern Ireland Executive's policy to implement the priority of "working for a healthier people". Creating healthier people requires new approaches to planning. Integrated planning for health development requires new structures that support collaborative work and integrated action on

## Foreword

the challenges that affect health, and the sharing of new approaches is of key importance in the learning challenge.

This report and the additional publications, *Contacts for Older People* and the *Quality of Life Matrix*, resulting from *Planning for a Healthy City* provide evidence of integrated action for health development within the city. However, mainstreaming a strategic integrated approach within the current political and administrative infrastructure still remains a challenge for government departments and organisations working to improve the health of the people of the city.

We would like to express our thanks to Belfast Healthy Cities' partner organisations for their contribution to this report and to all organisations within the city who are working to create healthier people.



Andrew Hassard  
Chairman



Joan Devlin  
Programme Director

## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

The Strategic Planning Group on Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing consisted of representatives from organisations whose work includes these areas:

*Belfast City Council, Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan Team, North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, South and East Belfast Social Services Trust, Roads Service, University of Ulster, Queen's University of Belfast, Eastern Health and Social Services Board, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Belfast Regeneration Office, Department for Regional Development and Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.* For each action, an organisation with a remit in the specific area at hand was chosen as lead agency.

### ACTION ON TRANSPORT

**Lead agency:** Department for Regional Development

Action on transport has focused on improving public transport and promoting walking and cycling as healthier options for both individuals and the environment.

#### Travel Plans

Workplace Travel Plans, for example, explore alternatives to travelling to work in a car, and encourage employees to use greener, cleaner and healthier modes of getting to work. They also encourage employers to provide facilities for those walking or cycling, such as showers and bicycle stands. Awareness seminars, presentations and meetings have taken place with senior management from University of Ulster at Jordanstown, Belfast City Council Gasworks, and Belfast City Centre Management Company, to explore the value of

## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

developing a Workplace Travel Plan at each site. As a result, the University of Ulster at Jordanstown now has a Travel Plan, while a Consultant's Report has been commissioned identifying a practical and realistic way forward for the Gasworks Site. The Belfast City Centre Management Company, for its part, has indicated willingness to participate in a Belfast City Centre Travel Plan Group. Each participating organisation has clearly identified the value of partnership working to secure complementary goals and objectives.

As the Travel Planning process has developed at each site, the list of participating partners has broadened with the inclusion and willing participation of other agencies - including Translink, whose participation will enable the partners to identify existing public transport services and address the potential for additional provision to reduce unrestrained car travel. Early indications are that car use will be reduced by willing commuters, cyclists and pedestrians. There have been some difficulties in securing funding to initiate the Travel Plans, but these are currently being addressed. This initiative will be commended to other public sector organisations based in Belfast, where there is huge scope for making an impact on travel behaviour through such initiatives.

### Walking

Providing and maintaining an attractive environment for people who walk is a vital element in tackling inequalities and promoting health and wellbeing, and the Department for Regional Development has introduced three new Quality Walking Corridors in Belfast. Quality Walking Corridors include features such as improved pedestrian crossing

## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

facilities, additional crossing points, additional dropped kerbs and tactile paving. Footway reconstruction and resurfacing is also undertaken often for Quality Walking Corridors, along with measures to prevent cars and other vehicles from parking on footways.

The first Quality Walking Corridor was developed between Queens Elms Halls of Residence and Belfast City Centre, and anecdotal evidence shows it is now both safer and easier to use. Next steps now being considered include additional pedestrian signing, improvements to the junction at Dublin Road/Bruce Street, and the upgrading of the pelican crossing at the Europa Hotel. Two additional Quality Walking Corridors have also been started, from Antrim Road and Crumlin Road to the City Centre, and from Newtownards Road and Albertbridge Road to the City Centre. Work on these two routes will continue subject to the availability of finance.

### Public Transport

Making the decision to take the bus is largely influenced by time considerations, as undue delays to the journey will act as a discouragement. Quality Bus Corridors are designed to counteract this: they mean that bus passengers benefit from faster journey times as well as high quality bus shelters at a number of stops. The infrastructure for two new Quality Bus Corridors on the Newtownards Road Corridor and the City Express route was completed by the Department for Regional Development during the year.

### Cycling

The year 2002-2003 saw considerable movement towards making Belfast a city for cyclists. The Department of

## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

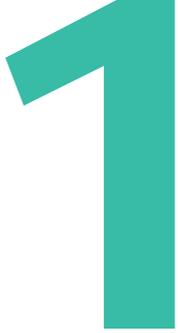
Regional Development Roads Service has introduced measures to provide better access to the National Cycle Network, including:

- Providing a cycle-link from High Street, via Queen's Square, to the National Cycle Network on Donegall Quay.
- Beginning the implementation of a link from the National Cycle Network across Queen Elizabeth Bridge towards the Odyssey. Material has already been bought for this, and it will be completed by the end of 2003.

This is a continuing process and additional links will be provided in the coming years.

The six councils in the Belfast Metropolitan Area have been contacted with a view to setting up Working Groups to look at the development of cycle networks in their area, and the response has been extremely positive, with all six councils keen to support and encourage cycling in their areas. This work has been carried out in consultation with the Belfast Cycle Routes Group, which is chaired by the Roads Service and consists of representatives from Belfast City Council, Sustrans, Laganside, Translink, Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative, and Green Action.

The Belfast Cycle Routes Group (BCRG) are also actively involved in progressing the provision of a cycleway between Holywood Arches and Victoria Park, using a mix of on-road and off-road paths. This will include providing links missing from the cycleway currently in existence, as well as improving the design. The BCRG would also like to see the path fully lit along its entire length, and the cost implications of this are being considered. In the longer



## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

term, it is anticipated that this cycleway will be further extended.

As part of the consultation process on this action, Belfast City Council's Access Officer made a presentation to the East Belfast Environmental Forum, where the proposal was well received.

An Environmental Improvement scheme for Lombard Street and Rosemary Street includes provision of covered cycle stands, and the Roads Service, on behalf of Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO), started to design these stands. However, Roads Service could not maintain their involvement in this particular project due to time and personnel resources, and BRO have now employed consultants to implement the scheme. Roads Service will look for other opportunities in Belfast to provide covered cycle stands.

### **ACTION ON ENVIRONMENT**

**Lead agency:** Belfast City Council

Among the actions were included three which were specifically aimed at promoting integrated planning and intersectoral working. These related to establishing multi-sectoral groups, where decisions would be made by representatives from different statutory and community organisations working collaboratively. The three groups were a Multisectoral Air Quality Forum, which would strive to improve air quality and increase co-ordination of action; a Community Recycling Forum, which would promote recycling in local communities (see Case Study), and an Intersectoral Open Space Forum, which would improve the

## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

co-ordination of relevant statutory bodies' action in the maintenance of public open space in residential areas. The successful establishment of these three groups would, respectively, lead to: better air quality; greater opportunities for local communities to decide when and where they would like recycling facilities to be available, as well as how such facilities should be maintained; and improved maintenance of public areas.

### Pollution

The Air Quality Forum will be established at a slightly later date than initially anticipated. A key role for the Forum will be to consult on action plans for the management of air quality, which will in turn form a response to an ongoing review of air quality. The establishment of the Forum has been postponed as this review is not yet completed.

### Open Space

Belfast City Council has been pursuing ways of improving the maintenance of public open space in residential areas as an integral part of its concerted efforts to create a more attractive City. In this regard, it has not been necessary to establish an Intersectoral Open Space Forum as originally envisaged, since a network group reporting to an All-Party group of elected Members dealing with this issue has proved to be an effective mechanism for developing options to address the matter. Two specific initiatives have emerged from this so far. The first is a formal agreement between the City Council and the Housing Executive whereby the Council has assumed responsibility for litter removal from both streets and grassed and planted areas which the Housing Executive had previously engaged contractors to maintain.

## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

Early indications are that an improved environment is being achieved. A second proposal, which is at an earlier stage of development, is to establish a partnership between local communities and the statutory service providers (BCC, DRD and NIHE) to bring about community-led environmental improvement schemes. These partnerships would address a wide range of issues including creation of new green open spaces, improvements to roads and footpaths and intensive clean-ups of all open land.

### Sustainability

Belfast City Council has been exploring the development of an educational demonstration project to raise awareness of – and encourage – sustainable living, in order to meet an action outlined under the Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing theme. The project was seen as an excellent opportunity for the Council to investigate ways of improving health and wellbeing through the promotion of sustainable development, while it was also seen as a means of developing its working relationships. The Council identified the potential for developing a run-down vacant dwelling in one of its parks as a sustainable living demonstration project. The aim was to illustrate the importance of home design and lifestyle choices, encourage sustainable construction, energy conservation, waste minimization and recycling, and promote eco-friendly gardening and home safety, according to a concept the Council has developed working closely with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the academic sector. While competing priorities for funding have prevented further development of this project, the work completed to date has succeeded in opening a new area of collaboration between the Council and the Housing Executive, and has



## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

served to highlight shared objectives in the area of sustainable development. Alternative means of progressing this or a similar project are currently being explored.

### **CASE STUDY: Waste Management**

A Community Recycling Forum, comprising Belfast City Council, Bryson House and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, was established in Autumn 2002. This Group is currently working to identify and develop Bring Sites for local communities to use for recycling, and has set a target of 30 sites by Christmas 2004. The approach is being designed to foster local community ownership of the sites and will be supported through educational programmes in local primary schools. In addition to improving rates of recycling the new Bring Sites will facilitate easy local access and promote behavioural change.

While a key outcome of this action should be improved rates of recycling within communities in Belfast, there have been additional positive outcomes as the relationship between the partners has been strengthened and good communication channels established.

The Forum has now begun to discuss criteria for siting with the Planning and Roads Services, and it is hoped that once the success of Community Consultative steps and the Sites is established, further organisations and partners can be introduced.



## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

### **CASE STUDY: Safer Routes to School**

Finding ways to encourage children to travel to school using healthy and sustainable travel methods, as well as ensuring their safety while doing so, were key issues raised during the consultation process, which informed *Planning for a Healthy City*. The Strategic Planning Group on Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing looked at ways to address this, and is monitoring the Department for Regional Development's project to promote walking and cycling to school.

St Joseph's College, Ravenhill Road, Belfast, was identified as a school, which was willing to participate in and commit to the Safer Routes to Schools initiative, and so was well placed to participate in the pilot project. An Inter-Agency Management Team was set up to lead the project, and external consultants prepared a report identifying issues, barriers and opportunities to be addressed by the Team. Each partner organisation is now willingly and very positively engaged in identifying and costing their respective areas of responsibility and is working to develop a St Joseph's College School Travel Plan.

This work has encouraged partners to commit fully to the Safer Routes to Schools concept, and has demonstrated the value of inter-Departmental initiatives in linking and co-ordinating diverse, yet complimentary objectives. The partnership has been developed to include the Healthy Schools Co-ordinator as well as representatives from the pupils' group at St Joseph's. Early indications are that a successful School Travel Plan will be developed at St Joseph's, and the school is confident that more children will make their journey to school using healthier, more sustainable modes of travel.

## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

### **ACTION ON PLANNING**

**Lead agency:** Belfast City Council

**Sustainability - Arterial Routes Project**

Four areas along main roads into Belfast City Centre have been identified as priorities for development under the Arterial Routes Programme, which aims to regenerate these areas and create innovative, sustainable communities. The areas were identified following a mapping study undertaken during 2002, in collaboration with the five Belfast Area Partnerships. This action is led by Belfast City Council, working with Belfast Regeneration Office, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Belfast Area Partnerships. All five Area Partnerships have signed a Service Level Agreement committing to update data every six months.

The areas comprise a 0.75 km stretch along Donegall Road, from Broadway roundabout to the intersection with Daphne Street in south Belfast; a stretch of 1 km along Lower Antrim Road/Lower Shore Road between the intersection of Whitley Street and Lower York Street and the intersection of Fife Street and York Road in north Belfast; a 0.75 km section of Lower Newtownards Road from Bryson Street intersection to Hunt Street in east Belfast, and a 1 km stretch of Lower Falls Road from Divis Street to the intersection with Cavendish Street in west Belfast. A priority in the Shankill area remains to be confirmed.

Belfast City Council is developing neighbourhood plans for the five areas, and the aim is to develop these plans alongside the Council's City Wide Masterplan which is due to be completed in September 2003. The programme will, however, be a long term undertaking. The Council continues

## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

to collaborate closely with the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan Team.

### **CASE STUDY: Quality of Life Matrix**

**Lead agency: Belfast Healthy Cities**

A key Planning action was the production of a Matrix which could be used to assess whether or not policies and plans promote quality of life and contribute to reducing inequalities. Such a Matrix would use a set of objectives, considered appropriate for Belfast, to place quality of life issues at the centre of new policy development.

Belfast Healthy Cities was identified as the lead agency for this action, and representatives from Belfast Healthy Cities worked closely with representatives from Belfast City Council and the Eastern Health and Social Services Board to design and produce the Matrix. The Queen's University of Belfast and the University of Ulster also contributed their expertise. The Group developed a Matrix using Environmental Impact Assessments from across Northern Ireland, alongside Strategic Environmental Assessments from Kent, Lancashire and Exeter. Planning representatives from other European countries also had an input, through the World Health Organisation City Action Group on Healthy Urban Planning, of which Belfast Healthy Cities is a member. The final Matrix can be used to assess quality of life issues in relation to land use plans.

Since the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) Team were in the process of drawing up a land use plan for the six council areas in the Belfast Metropolitan Area (Belfast, Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and North Down), the Matrix was designed in such a way that



## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

it included assessment of quality of life issues specific to this area. The Matrix was completed in December 2002, and in January 2003 it was formally submitted to the BMAP Team to be considered when the team carries out assessments of BMAP.

Although the Quality of Life Matrix was developed to be used with a land use plan in a specific area, the framework can be used to develop a more general Matrix. Copies of the Matrix are available from Belfast Healthy Cities.

### **ACTION ON HOUSING**

**Lead agency:** Northern Ireland Housing Executive

#### **Fuel Poverty**

The City Health Development Planning process highlighted cold homes and cold-related illnesses as important issues to be tackled, and the Housing Executive have undertaken to help alleviate fuel poverty through the delivery of a range of Energy Conservation schemes in Belfast. This has included the Warm Homes Scheme, implementation of Housing Executive heating policy, and Fuel Poverty Projects Community Energy Schemes.

On a local level there are a number of initiatives within Belfast City Council Area which promote partnership and community development. The Beechmount Project is aimed at improving the energy efficiency of some 2,500 houses occupied mainly by low-income householders. The scheme has received funding of £1.44m from the Department for Social Development (DSD) and £300,000

## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

from Northern Ireland Electricity. It is administered through a Project Board, chaired by the Housing Executive and includes representatives from the DSD, Bryson House and the local community. To date 1,406 households have received insulation measures under the scheme and 339 householders have received fully controlled natural gas central heating systems. A further 300 NIHE properties have received natural gas heating systems.

The Willowfield/Bloomfield project is similar to the Beechmount scheme, and it is funded and administered in exactly the same way as Beechmount. Work commenced on site in Willowfield/Bloomfield early in 2001. To date 2,138 householders have received insulation measures under the scheme and 12 have received natural gas central heating systems.

The Beechmount Project highlighted many of the problems in alleviating fuel poverty. Of the 2,500 dwellings in the area many households did not improve energy efficiency. Some did not meet the eligibility criteria, many were content with their existing heating system, others did not wish controls fitted and some did not wish to face the disruption involved in having work carried out.

Whilst housing and energy efficiency policy can provide people with the opportunity to remove themselves from fuel poverty, it does not follow that all households will avail of this assistance through personal choice.

### Traveller Accommodation

During the City Health Development Planning process, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive was identified as lead

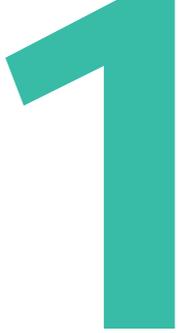
## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

agency in promoting group-housing schemes for Travellers in Belfast, which would provide health gains to the travelling community. Two potential locations have been identified for this, on the Glen Road and the Monagh Road. The schemes will consist of residential housing developments with additional facilities and amenities specifically designed to accommodate extended families on a permanent basis. Following considerable consultation with the Traveller families and surrounding communities, agreement has been reached on the design for the site layouts and the house types. Provision has been made within each scheme for a community house, work areas, and playspace.

Both schemes had originally been programmed to commence last financial year. Due to a range of problems, including design issues, land assembly and a change of nominated Housing Associations, there have been delays in commencing both schemes. This has been a major disappointment for the Traveller community.

The Glen Road scheme is due to commence in early summer 2003, and the Monagh Road scheme in late spring 2004. In the meantime, a number of interim measures have been taken to improve the health of the Travellers' families in these areas. The Housing Executive, in partnership with Northern Ireland Electricity, provided a mains electricity supply for families on the Glen Road site, and the Department for Social Development carried out considerable health and safety remedial works to toilets on the Monagh Road site, along with associated cleaning-up.

It is anticipated that the Housing Executive will have responsibility for Travellers' accommodation, and this has



## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

acted as a catalyst for an integrated multi-agency group focusing on a wide range of issues relevant to Travellers, which aims to improve the health and social wellbeing of all members of the Traveller community in north and west Belfast. While the lead partner in this group is the Housing Executive, the group comprises a wide range of representatives from statutory, community and voluntary organisations and Traveller Support Groups, including members of the Traveller community. The annual review has demonstrated a number of positive impacts, including greater involvement of Travellers in decision-making, and some evidence of success in alleviating disadvantage. Shared learning and experience of the Group has also developed throughout the process.

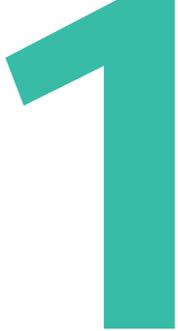
## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

### **CASE STUDY: Community Safety**

The need for improved access to services for vulnerable tenants on Housing Executive Estates was identified in *Planning for a Healthy City*. To this end, the Housing Executive has appointed ten Neighbourhood Wardens in the most disadvantaged estates within the Belfast Area.

Wardens' duties fall into four main categories:

- **Environmental Management:** Wardens ensure that estates are kept free of illegal dumping, litter and abandoned vehicles, as well as monitoring the condition and use of open spaces. They do this through co-operation with environmental health officers, other council staff and in-house staff.
- **Housing Management:** Wardens carry out daily inspections of void properties, provide accompanied viewing to prospective tenants, check for abandoned properties, and take repair requests from those tenants unable to contact their local district office.
- **Tenancy Conditions:** Wardens seek to ensure that all tenants can have quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their homes. As all tenants are required to abide by their General Conditions of Tenancy, Neighbourhood Wardens will frequently be the first point of contact in the reporting of anti-social activity.
- **Support Service:** Wardens also provide advice and assistance on a wide range of housing-related matters, including home safety service standards and energy conservation. They call with elderly and vulnerable residents providing an important point of contact for very isolated residents.



## Actions under the theme of Transport, Environment, Planning and Housing

All residents were advised of the role and duties of the Neighbourhood Warden, and on how to access this service. All wardens also received intensive induction training before commencing work. They are on duty from 9am to 5pm, spending up to 90% of their time on the estates for which they are responsible, and can also be contacted by mobile telephone.

Central to the success of this service is the extent to which wardens are accepted into communities. To date the wardens are working well with local people to resolve local issues, and have also developed relationships with other agencies, including local community groups and council staff, to address illegal dumping and litter on estates, and with schools, to tackle anti-social behaviour often aimed at the most vulnerable in society. There has been very positive feedback from many of the communities in which the Wardens are based.

The Housing Executive received a commendation from the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit for the positive contributions to working with the elderly made by a Warden in south Belfast. In partnership with Engage with Age, the Warden acted as the catalyst in the formation of two senior citizen groups in the south Belfast area.

# 2

## Actions under the theme of Mental Wellbeing and Young People

Actions on the theme of mental wellbeing were agreed by a Strategic Planning Group which had representatives from organisations working closely with young people. The organisations represented were:

*Eastern Health and Social Services Board, North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, Barnardos, Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Opportunity Youth.* Different organisations were nominated to lead each action.

### **Prospectus on personal development training: steps towards good mental health**

**Lead agency:** Belfast Healthy Cities and Learning City Forum

*Planning for a Healthy City* identified a need among young people in Belfast to be able to access tools for improving their mental wellbeing. From this, the Strategic Planning Group on Mental Wellbeing and Young People developed the idea of a Prospectus which would give information on training available for young people in Belfast in the area of personal development – for example, training on relationships, personal development and sexual health. The Learning City Forum and Belfast Healthy Cities came together in partnership in order to develop this.

As a first step towards the prospectus, a Planning Day was held at Springvale Millennium Outreach Centre in August 2002, and representatives of 70 organisations working in this field were invited. At the event there were lively

# 2

## Actions under the theme of Mental Wellbeing and Young People

discussions around the usefulness of such a Prospectus, and around what it might look like. At the end of the morning, 12 people signed up to a Working Group to produce a Prospectus. The organisations represented were *AWARE Defeat Depression, Belfast Door Project, Belfast Institute for Further and Higher Education, Eastern Health and Social Services Board, Educational Guidance Service for Adults, The Hype Project, Investing for Health, Opportunity Youth, Relate NI and the South Belfast Partnership Board.*

At the Group's first meeting it was agreed that the Prospectus should be aimed at Youth Workers, and would be developed alongside an information flyer in the format of a credit card, telling young people how to access the prospectus. The Group met regularly, working collaboratively to develop a template for gathering information on training, and to gather completed responses from as many relevant organisations as possible. Youth Workers were invited to look at three alternative draft versions of the Prospectus, to find out how useful they thought it would be, and what formats would work best. The feedback from the Youth Workers was used to agree the final format of the publication.

A final draft publication was sent to key organisations for approval during June 2003. The Prospectus will be published in July, and circulated to schools and organisations who work with young people in August/September.

The partnership process used in developing this Prospectus has provided the participating individuals with opportunities to forge new and useful relationships with people from other organisations, and has also helped build on existing relationships.

# 2

### Actions under the theme of Mental Wellbeing and Young People

The Belfast Healthy Cities and Learning City Forum partnership now plan to make good use of the expertise and contacts they have gained from this work, by developing a similar Prospectus for parents.

#### **Improving standards for working with young people**

**Lead Agency:** Eastern Health and Social Services Board

The Eastern Health and Social Services Board has also initiated action in the area of Young People and Mental Wellbeing, setting up a Working Group to examine best practice and agree protocol standards for organisations and individuals who work with or provide services to young people. Shortly after the Group began its work, it became clear that work on a National Services Framework for Children, being produced in England, would include child and adolescent mental health services. It was decided to examine the standards emerging from this process, as well as existing standards produced by the Health Advisory Service in England, to see how applicable they would be to Belfast and Northern Ireland. The Group has now secured funding to enable an audit to be carried out in Belfast to pilot the use of the standards already developed and standards being developed in England.

While a good start has been made on this, it is likely to take longer than originally envisaged to achieve the outcome. Over the next year, work will commence on further actions outlined in *Planning for a Healthy City*, including producing a strategy for training and development which addresses the needs of all employed and voluntary staff working with young people, and training staff in application of protocol standards and guidelines.

# 2

## Actions under the theme of Mental Wellbeing and Young People

### **Improving quality of life opportunities for younger people leaving care**

**Lead Agency:** Eastern Health and Social Services Board

Responsibility for the development of services to children and young people who are in care, being prepared for leaving care or who have left care, is now with one of the multi-agency and intersectoral Joint Strategic Planning Groups which were developed by the Eastern Area Children and Young People's Committee (CYPC) to co-ordinate the development of services to all children who are in need within the EHSSB area.

The development of an intersectoral Joint Strategic Planning Group responsible for services to children and young people in care has enabled a number of specific projects to be taken forward:

In partnership with the education and library boards, posts have been funded for teachers who will give additional support to children who are in care; this is expected to increase the educational achievement of children in care and enable a higher proportion of them to leave school with GCSE qualifications.

A project has also been developed, and will commence during Summer 2003, for the provision of housing and support services for young people who are homeless. This has been achieved in partnership with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, North and West Belfast HSS Trust and South and East Belfast HSS Trust. The Council for the Homeless and the Simon Community are fully involved in the planning and monitoring of the project. The project will

# 2

## Actions under the theme of Mental Wellbeing and Young People

complement the Housing Support Project for Adults which is managed by Extern.

While the number of agencies with whom the EHSSB works in the Joint Strategic Planning Groups has not increased, there has been increased collaboration and improved understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities. Also, a new area of work has been a contractual arrangement with VOYPIC (Voice of Young People in Care) to develop and co-ordinate a consultation process with young people. This will facilitate meaningful discussion with these young people about the support and assistance they need prior to and after leaving care.

These projects and service development have only just begun and as yet it is too early to assess whether or not the intended outcome has been achieved.

During the next 12 months, new legislation (The Children's (Leaving Care) Act 2003) will be introduced which places a greater responsibility on the Boards and Health and Social Service Trusts for meeting the needs of young people. The Joint Strategic Planning Group is currently assessing the impact of this on service delivery, and the associated resource implications. Young people will be involved, through VOYPIC, in this assessment of service need.

# 3

## Actions under the theme of Integrating Information

**Lead Agency:** Belfast Healthy Cities

The Strategic Planning Group on Integrating Information included representatives of the main statutory and voluntary organisations whose work impacts on older people:

*Age Concern Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council, Bryson House, Eastern Health and Social Services Board, Engage With Age, Help The Aged, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, North and West Trust, Office of the First and Deputy First Minister, South and East Trust, Voluntary Service Belfast.*

The actions agreed under the area of integrating information included

- producing a publication aimed at elderly and vulnerable people, which would give older people information on services in a way which meets their needs, rather than the needs of the individual organisations who provide the services
- developing an IT solution to link existing websites of partner organisations, so information on a variety of topics could be accessed through one website

Initial plans to adopt a life-events approach to producing the information were reconsidered when feedback from other initiatives using a life-events model showed that this approach was not popular, and people preferred more traditional approaches. A Directory format was agreed, which would include issues relevant to older people in alphabetical order, and identify organisations who provided

# 3

## Actions under the theme of Integrating Information

information on each issue. A 'yellow pages' at the back of the Directory would provide contact details for all organisations listed.

The Directory went through a two-stage pilot, which included focus-groups that considered the draft document at an early stage and made comments on its format and content. The second stage involved piloting the revised document with older people through the North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, and Engage with Age (South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust), both of whom were members of the Group.

Suggestions made were taken into consideration and the Directory was published in June 2003.

A sub-group of the Strategic Planning Group, met to develop a website which would correspond to the Directory. This website, Belfast Seniorlinks, can be found at [www.belfastseniorlinks.com](http://www.belfastseniorlinks.com), and provides direct links to websites of organisations listed in the Directory. Belfast Seniorlinks can be accessed through the websites of all the organisations represented on the Strategic Planning Group.

# 4

## Actions under the theme of Lifelong Learning

### Lead agency: Learning City Forum

Belfast: A Learning City Forum is a key example of developing strategic linkages, where key stakeholders come together to promote Belfast as a learning city. Belfast City Council established the Belfast City Learning Forum in 1999 in order to market Belfast as a Learning City. The Forum, which comprises representatives from the Education and Training Sector, was established to promote lifelong learning opportunities across the City and aimed to maximise access to learning opportunities for all the citizens of Belfast.

Since the establishment of the Forum a reassessment of the strategy was carried out in April 2002, and this resulted in a revised strategy.

Significant progress has been made within this revised strategy, and a number of successes have been achieved thereby highlighting the successful partnership working within the Forum.

### Marketing and Promotion

#### Adult Learners' Week Events Guide

In May 2003 an Events Guide was designed and distributed to 145,000 homes across the City and Castlereagh areas to ensure every citizen had an opportunity to participate in the fantastic range of learning opportunities taking place during Adult Learners' Week from 10 – 16 May.

#### Online Information

During the year 2002-2003, a website for Belfast Learning City was developed as a means of profiling Belfast as a

## Actions under the theme of Lifelong Learning

learning city on a regional, national and international level. The website [www.belfastlearning.com](http://www.belfastlearning.com) provides comprehensive information on the range of providers and learning opportunities that exist within the city.

### Learning for Life Brochure

Funding has been secured from Belfast City Council to publish a user-friendly brochure documenting the learning and training opportunities available in Belfast and to use real-life stories of adult learners to demonstrate the benefits of returning to learn. It is anticipated that this brochure will be published in August / September 2003.

### Local Learning Ambassadors

This project, which is led by Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education (BIFHE) aims to provide neighbourhood support for potential or new risk learners, in North and West Belfast. It is hoped implementation should commence in October 2003. Learning City Forum will help to identify opportunities for rolling this programme out across the city.

### Promotion and Marketing of Belfast as a Learning City

Key aspects of the Learning City are the promotion of the Learning City under the Learning City Forum logo, as well as the launch of the revised strategy and on-line information in June 2003.

Another key aspect of the marketing and promotional activities will be the promotion of leading edge practice through the design and delivery of a range of seminars and conferences on lifelong learning initiatives.

An invitation has already been received from the Learning City Network giving the Forum the opportunity

# 4

## Actions under the theme of Lifelong Learning

to showcase Belfast by hosting a 'Seeing Is Believing' event in 2003.

### Collaboration Between providers

#### Collaborative Projects Fund

In order to stimulate and promote further collaboration between Learning City Forum members, a special collaboration fund has been established by Belfast City Council. Such a fund will replicate the innovative approach successfully implemented two years ago by Forum members, which demonstrated, in a practical manner, the benefits of joint working through innovative, added-value projects.

It is anticipated this fund will commence in June 2003, when Learning City Forum will ask Forum members to submit proposals for funding and successful proposals will be ready to commence in October 2003.

#### Citizenship Education Programme

The Workers' Educational Association in collaboration with Belfast City Council designed a programme to engage the citizens of Belfast in an educational programme about their city. The programme assesses how the city is developed, where the city is now and how the city will develop in the future. Fifteen courses have been undertaken and a citizenship and creativity event was held in the Waterfront Hall on 26 November 2002.

## Notes

