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Our 100 Goals for Belfast City Council

Fair Funding for All
1. Continuing to work towards open and transparent funding decisions. We want to end party-political carve-ups of funding streams and unaccountable allocations of large sums of ratepayers’ money.

2. Ensuring that future funding programmes are run by open competition and advertisement, ensuring that money is allocated to those who are most deserving. This would involve significant changes to any future Local Investment Fund (LIF) scheme and Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) scheme programmes.

3. Support the simplification, consolidation and streamlining of all Council funding mechanisms.

A Stronger Economy
4. Securing the devolution of regeneration powers to Belfast City Council.

5. Promoting improved cooperation between Belfast and surrounding Council areas to create a dynamic economic driver as part of the delivery of the Belfast Region City Deal.

6. Promoting the City Centre and local High Streets – unfortunately, the high street will not be the same as it has been in the past and we will need to reconsider what we want it to look like. This will mean a mix of shops, cafes and restaurants, residential properties and non-retail businesses. This will help to ensure vibrant community economies, despite trends towards out-of-town retail centres and internet shopping. The strategy to develop town centres and high streets would include:
   • bringing in other new and innovative models of funding and investment;
   • providing easier access for cars and public transport to local high streets and town centres, including promoting free short-term parking; and
   • prioritising town centres, rather than out-of-town retail centres, as the preferred sites for retail and business development.
7 Pushing for an Independent Review of the Non-Domestic Rating System, with a specific focus on how to amend the rating system to better support local businesses, start-ups and SMEs.

8 Supporting and developing economic hubs within Council areas, using community planning to link small businesses and social enterprises with further education colleges.

9 Creating a Small Business Champion to promote the needs of small and medium sized businesses.

10 Provide additional support for small businesses and help develop sectors such as cyber security, fintech and film-making.

11 Supporting the regeneration of the city centre by encouraging more people to live in the city centre, including by developing brownfield sites. Supporting funding of key infrastructure projects in the city centre, including The Transport Hub and York Street Interchange and also backing initiatives such as Operation Hope. This would also see the surrounding area improved and thereby maximise beneficial economic and social outcomes for all.

12 Consulting around the issue of a derelict land tax.

13 Committed to inclusive growth within our city and support that, as far as permissible, this Council should increase the value of social impact clauses. We support the development of a social value strategy.

14 Promoting the development of a dynamic Eastern Corridor, linking Dublin, Belfast and towns and cities in between, by working with Central and local Government in the Republic.

15 Supporting the development of a high-speed inter-city rail link between Dublin and North West with a hub in Belfast.

16 Undertaking a consultation on pedestrianisation of Belfast city Centre.

17 Promoting a café culture across Belfast, using regeneration and community planning powers to facilitate this.

18 Refocusing relationships with sister cities to encourage economic and cultural mutual benefits.

19 Supporting the recently introduced Belfast Employment Academies, which provide specialist training to help people to get a job, in areas such as child-minding and hospitality and want to it rolled out to a wider range of sectors.
Cleaner, Greener Neighbourhoods

20 Introducing glass recycling across the entire Belfast Council area and standardising the current recycling collection model to lead the way in recycling rates for Northern Ireland Councils.

21 Support the pledge for an additional one million trees in Belfast within 15 years.

22 Providing additional resources for the reusable nappy programme.

23 Campaigning to see Councils become Carbon Neutral, recognising their responsibility to be leaders in sustainability and recycling, and setting an example for other businesses and households in the district to follow.

24 Pushing for Council facilities to end single-use plastics by 2022 and should consider how they can incentivise businesses in their districts to do the same.

25 Councils can play a significant role in reducing their own environmental impact and developing renewable energy on public buildings in their area. By setting this important example, we can also make it clear that Northern Ireland is committed to reducing our environmental impact. The Council should make sure that its buildings are well-insulated and Alliance will push for it to examine whether their properties are suitable for solar or wind energy. This will help stimulate green investment in the area and will also reduce the Council’s energy bills in the long run.

26 Seeking to put renewable energy in the Council’s community planning processes, we will also work with other parts of NI’s government to promote solar panels within the planning system and for new developments. Greening our expansion, ensuring that any new development has appropriate development of green spaces and cycling infrastructure.

27 Supporting the development of more Carbon neutral homes as part of any planning strategy, in order to protect the environment and reduce fuel poverty.

28 Continuing to support a Green New Deal and promote the creation of a circular economy so that more recycling of materials can take place in Northern Ireland, creating and sustaining employment.

29 Supporting a Low Carbon Commissioner post to be introduced in the Council.

30 Ensuring the proper measurement of air quality across the city and develop action plans to guarantee that we maximise the health and ecological benefits of clean outdoor air.
Introducing a joint strategy between the Department for Infrastructure and Council to ensure that grass cutting on public routes is regularly undertaken. Continue an audit of existing spaces requiring maintenance, support the use of sponsorship by private businesses and developer contributions to improve green areas and back the introduction of environmentally friendly measures, such as wild flower planting, to reduce maintenance costs.

Ensuring the protection of Council owned green spaces, including the upgrading of parks and open spaces to maximise park usage, including possible pop-up cafes, independent retail and leisure opportunities

Increasing initiatives to adopt unused land for allotments and ensure a new application process for the upkeep and development of allotments.

Increasing dog-friendly spaces in our parks to allow animals to exercise safely and increase dog friendly values.

Pushing for the Council to lead in sustainable transport, ensuring meeting venues are as accessible as possible by public transport.

Prioritising animal welfare and seeking to tackle cruelty against animals. We want increased powers for Councils to deal with animal welfare issues such as wildlife crime, puppy farms and the use of snares. We remain committed to a ban on hunting with dogs. We will continue to support a ban on circuses with wild animals on Council land.
Enhanced Active Travel and Leisure

37 Campaigning for equality on leisure provision across the city to address the current underinvestment in East and South Belfast seen in the lack of 3/4G football pitch provision, floodlit facilities and lack of leisure centres.

38 Supporting the inclusion of a footbridge across the Lagan as part of the City Deal and in order to enhance walking and cycling provision.

39 Supporting the development of a citywide cycling facility, including a BMX track and velodrome.

40 Backing the expansion of the Belfast Bikes scheme – We will further develop the ‘Belfast Bikes’ scheme, with stations planned in a wider range of locations. We will seek to fund this through private sponsorship where possible.

41 Aiming to develop the Department for Infrastructure’s Cycling Strategy, we want to see investment in further cycle lanes, safe cycling storage and cycling advice and free lessons to continue to promote cycling within Belfast, including introducing first-class cycling infrastructure within the North Foreshore Giants Park.

42 Supporting extended usage of greenways by providing improved lighting provision, including along the Comber Greenway, and realisation of the health and tourism potential of Greenways across the region and where possible with connectivity to the rest of the island.

43 Supporting the Ciclovia event and considering consultation on occasional traffic free Sundays. We propose the development of a Belfast cycling map in conjunction with other interested parties.

44 Promoting and expanding Park and Ride facilities, taking cars out of towns and freeing town centres to be active travel areas (walking, cycling and public transport) in a way which doesn’t create overflow parking problems in residential areas.

45 Supporting spread of additional electric car charging points.

46 Promoting the development of an integrated active living and leisure programme across Belfast and set an ambitious target to increase the numbers actively participating in sporting activities, including support for minority sports, as well as developing an initiative to give everyone a free leisure activity for each person in the City.

47 Supporting the introduction of Belfast Rapid Transit, second phase (BRT2), to include the North and South of the city as part of the City Deal.

48 Supporting the continued development of the Zoo, including auditing the potential for further development of space and buildings within the Zoo area.
Reforming Restrictive Laws

49 Lobbying for Councils to be given responsibility for on-street parking so that they can take a more strategic approach to parking, which takes account of the number of disabled parking bays and the number of electric car charge points required, as well as issues around residents’ parking and problems with parking on pavements.

50 Delivering changes to the High Hedges legislation to stop complainants having to pay for genuine cases. In the interim, we will support Council reducing the upfront charges for complainants.

51 Supporting changes of the Sunday trading laws to increase opening hours for city centre businesses.

52 Supporting and lobbying for reform of the licensing laws to make them fit for purpose.

53 Lobbying for tougher enforcement mechanisms for private and public nuisances. Supporting the introduction of innovative solutions to tackle issues such as dog fouling and fly-tipping.

54 Backing increased Landlords regulation. We want to see the NI Assembly:
   • Introduce legislation to improve the regulation of the private rented sector, focusing on increasing security of tenure, improving standards in poorer homes and reducing up-front fees.
   • Introduce a regulatory mechanism for letting agencies.

55 Ensuring that the Belfast Houses in the Multiple Occupation Subject Plan is fully implemented so that no additional licences are granted in areas over 30% and will work towards lowering the percentage of HMOs in problem areas.
City of Culture for All

56 Supporting the Council-run Bonfire Management Programme which promotes responsible bonfires, allowing communities to express themselves in line with their traditions, while also prohibiting the burning of tyres, images of individuals and emblem; and preventing damage to property. We would also encourage the use of beacons as an environmentally friendly mechanism for bonfires.

57 Introducing a Poet Laureate for Belfast City Council.

58 Supporting the introduction of a fair festivals framework to encourage tourism and the growth of our creative economy.

59 Supporting the growth of the grass-roots arts sector within Belfast through long-term, strategic investment of art organisations and artists. Ensuring the celebration of local talent and promotion of home grown artists both within NI and further afield.

60 Supporting the development of a second major tourist attraction.

61 Supporting arts provisions that aim to nurture an arts sector that is accessible for young people to participate in and to enjoy.
Open, Transparent and Accessible

62 Proposing the webcasting of all Council committees.

63 Promoting an innovative and forward-thinking approach to open data, making more effective use of the currently held data sets of Council statistics. We will liaise with industry leaders to utilise these data sets in ways which will promote openness of information, tourism benefits and both investment and learning opportunities.

64 Introducing the development of a strict policy on costs on travel and accommodation by Councillors and Council staff, to ensure value for money and to help build public confidence that develop links elsewhere that are beneficial for ratepayers.

65 Supporting Councillor expense claim forms, declaration of interest forms and attendance statistics being placed on Council website.

66 Backing all communications being provided in alternative formats and proactively seek to ensure sign language is promoted by providing training in BSL and ISL to all of our customer facing staff and Councillors.

67 Supporting effective and meaningful consultation happens between the Council and all stakeholders, paying particular attention to Section 75 groups and recognising the cultural barriers which may have prevented such consultation in the past.

68 Promoting the Digital Hub concept so that Belfast is leading the way in terms of digital capacity of its citizens. We will support and encourage schemes that help raise the digital literacy of our ratepayers. We will help to promote the ongoing work of the Council and its partners in increasing the capacity of everyone to access digital education and training. We will work closely with innovative projects to support ongoing and emerging opportunities for upcoming digital industries and employment streams.

69 Supporting a user-friendly Belfast based planning portal with apps.

70 Supporting and lobbying for the introduction of third party appeals for planning applications to ensure that both developers and objectors have similar rights to appeal decisions.

71 Lobbying for changes to planning legislation to avoid additional hot food bars within 400 metres of schools.
An Equal City for All

72 Supporting and campaigning for the introduction of Marriage Equality in Belfast.

73 Introducing more family friendly facilities at all Belfast City Council sites, including changing places and breastfeeding welcome programmes.

74 Establishing a Disability Forum in every Council area to ensure people with disabilities have a voice and are involved in the planning of Council services.

75 Supporting the concept of social prescribing to help tackle loneliness and increase community engagement, particularly for the elderly and hard to reach.

76 Ensuring all Council facilities provide free sanitary products to tackle period poverty.

77 Supporting the financing of an LGBT centre in Belfast.

78 Creating a youth friendly Council that has close links to the Belfast Youth Forum and other political youth initiatives, becoming a Council that provides young people with a platform to be heard and taken seriously and a Council that considers tangible issues that make a difference to the lives of young people.

79 Tackling homelessness and supporting a joint approach with organisations like the Housing Executive, the PSNI, the Welcome Centre and Homeplus NI to providing additional support for homeless people and rough sleepers during the winter months.

80 Developing a young women's initiative, along the lines of the #SheWillBe campaign, focused on changing the lives of young women and girls in Belfast, who experience the greatest disparities.

81 Supporting changes aimed at improving mental health provision, including Developing a Zero Suicide strategy, Safe Talk Training for all Council staff, host an official city event for World Suicide Prevention Day and the creation of Suicide/Mental Health Champions.

82 Backing the Women's Aid ‘Safe Places’ initiative – Council facilities should be ‘Safe Places’ where staff are aware of domestic violence and can signpost victims to appropriate services.

83 Continuing to build on our proposal to develop Belfast as a Dementia Friendly city by ensuring that the Council should take a lead in reducing suffering from dementia, making sufferers feel included and involved in their community and able to lead fulfilling and independent lives, as far as possible and for as long as possible.
A Shared City

84 Introducing “shared future-proofing”, a formal assessment of each policy the Council makes to analyse whether it harms or helps our move towards integration.

85 Implementing the cross party agreement making the grounds of City Hall and other public art more reflective of the diverse nature of the city.

86 Promoting Interfaith relations by supporting the right of all religious minorities to express their worship safely, and develop positive relationships between all religions, including secularists and atheists. Also to recognise the important role that faith plays within Belfast. Supporting the Council to implement a policy on Islamophobia and back definition of anti-Semitism.

87 Ensuring that the work of the Resilience Commissioner is expanded to include dealing with division in the city.

88 Promoting shared housing schemes as part of future developments.

89 Designing and delivering a Belfast Shared Space programme. This would allow the development of sustainable areas of shared space and build leadership in the area amongst participants.

90 Working with other levels of Government to ensure that arterial routes, which form people’s first impression of the city, are free of graffiti and sectarian symbols of territorial demarcation.

91 Supporting the maintenance of existing shared spaces and promote the development of new ones, ensuring that Council facilities are open to all sections of the community, breaking down divisions and reducing the need for duplication of services.

92 Developing further intergenerational relationship programmes.

93 Supporting the naming of Council facilities being undertaken in a manner which maintains neutrality and reflects locality.

94 Supporting a Day of Reflection organised by Council to remember victims of the Troubles on an annual basis.
A Safer City

95 Reducing hate crime by developing city and neighbourhood community safety programmes.

96 Working alongside Department of Justice and key stakeholders to secure the removal of peace walls across the city.

97 Backing Council having an active role in the implementation of the Executive’s plan to tackle paramilitary activity, by proactively engaging with all relevant statutory bodies and community organisations as part of the Community Planning process and adopting a protocol for engagement with those associated with paramilitary organisations, as well as implementing a zero-tolerance approach towards paramilitaries and community gate-keepers.

98 Emphasising our strong commitment to the rule-of-law, we believe that a shared future can only come about when local communities feel connected to and confident in their police force. We recognise that Councillors have a role in promoting the need to uphold the law and to ensure that policing is local. Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) can play a vital role in building relations with and confidence in police at local level.

99 Supporting PCSPs so that they are reflective of local communities and also reflect diversity in society, as well as assisting police in reaching ‘harder to reach’ groups generally. The Council has an important role in supporting this important work.

100 Supporting road safety in our communities and continuing to support the introductions of 20mph zones and other appropriate traffic calming measures. Supporting the Safer Routes to School programme.