Response to Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3 proposals

Belfast Healthy Cities





Belfast Healthy Cities

Our Vision

Our vision is to be a leader in creating a healthy and equitable city

Our Role and Mission

Our mission is to reduce inequalities in health and enable people who live and work in Belfast to achieve their full health and wellbeing potential by:

- Inspiring and facilitating innovative partnership action
- Sharing learning and leadership from WHO Europe
- Sharing evidence and building capacity on health equity and wellbeing
- Introducing and piloting innovative concepts and approaches
- Maximising partners' impact on health equity

We provide a direct link between Belfast and WHO Europe



Healthy Urban Environments

- A core theme of our work: aims to support people centred policy and decision making
- Child friendly and age friendly key sub themes demonstrating potential of people centred design
- Focus of work
 - Building capacity and sharing evidence on links between planning, design and health
 - Supporting collaboration between built environment and health professionals
 - Demonstration projects to explore elements of healthy places

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Rationale of response

- Focus of design should be on creating places that encourage and support a range of uses by a range of population groups
- Child and age friendly places offer seating, legible vistas, informal surveillance and safe access
- This response is intended to outline elements of healthy, people friendly and successful places and show examples of good practice





Place making and successful healthy cities

High quality places encourage people to:

- Meet and socialise: building social cohesion and promoting mental wellbeing
- Associate: creating shared space and encouraging links between generations
- Linger: promoting economic opportunities
- Enjoy the city: highlighting unique quality of place and attracting visitors

High quality open and public space is critical to support and encourage city centre living

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Flexible use of space – New Road, Brighton







Programming and place – Gillett Square, London





Play space now daily feature during school holidays



Play equipment stored in container – permanent feature of square













KidsSpace – a pop up child and family friendly city centre space

- Key event of Culture
 Night Belfast since
 2011
- 1000+ visitors







KidsSpace - feedback from parents&children

- 'Much more of this kind of activities – art & gardening workshops, juggling workshops, roller blade hire'
- Interactive street art and play structures dotted around – support street play
- 'Use what we have effectively' eg fountains in Custom House Square, play areas in big shops, pocket parks
- 'Child friendly spaces and events would attract us to the city'







Age friendly places – WHO checklist of essential criteria

Outdoor spaces and buildings

- ☐ Public areas are clean and pleasant.
- ☐ Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well-maintained and safe.
- Pavements are well-maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians.
- Pavements are non-slip, are wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level.
- □ Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability, with nonslip markings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing times.
- ☐ Drivers give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings.
- ☐ Cycle paths are separate from pavements and other pedestrian walkways.
- Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrols and community education.

- ☐ Services are situated together and are accessible.
- ☐ Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.
- ☐ Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.
- Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible.

Transportation

- ☐ Public transportation costs are consistent, clearly displayed and affordable.
- Public transportation is reliable and frequent, including at night and on weekends and holidays.
- ☐ All city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections and well-marked routes and vehicles.





Informal green space

- Creates attractive environment: encourages lingering and informal social interaction, enables free & active play
- Reduces air pollution: reduces health risks to people with respiratory and cardiac conditions
- Boosts productivity: helps concentration, offers stress relief for city centre workers
- Boosts property values and creates economic opportunities

Informal, flexible space is essential to invite variety of users and uses

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Building on success – informal use of City Hall grounds







Creative use of green space







Flexible green space – Peace Gardens, Sheffield







Softening hard landscape, inviting life - Leeds







Paris - Street Bollards as Micro Gardens









Network of Places

City should be network of places:

- Encourages movement through city: legibility and permeability
- Can offer sense of discovery: stand alone attraction and programming opportunity
- Promotes safety: encourages ownership, design can deter anti social behaviour

Creating different types of place is vital to invite and facilitate children, families, older people, visitors





Integrating interest – encouraging use







Flexible street furniture - Leeds









Incorporating active elements – Houston, Texas







Traffic Barriers used as football goals, in Sofia, Bulgaria







Lucerne, Switzerland Turns Trash Bins into Opportunities for Street Ball

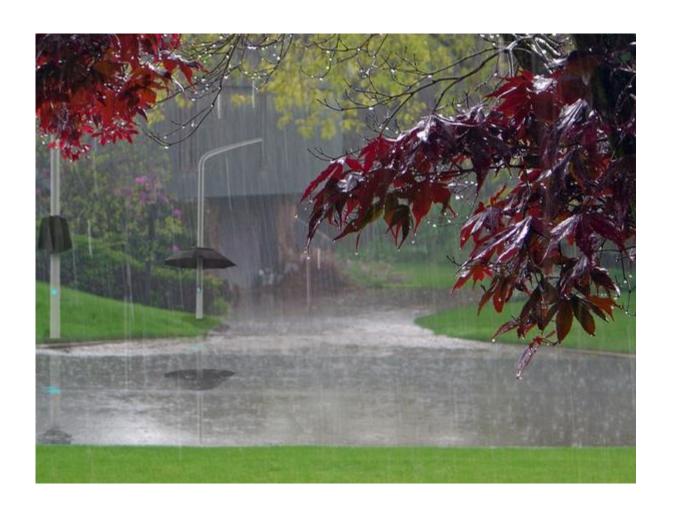








Lamp Posts as Rainy Day Refuge Umbrellas







Tree Planter Boxes as Public Platforms for Creativity in Toronto







Street Signs as Public Music Instruments in Ceara, Brazil









Street Library, Manhattan







Child friendly street furniture









Age friendly seating, Newcastle







The opportunity to create a liveable city centre

- Belfast Healthy Cities would urge that Streets Ahead Phase 3 is used to enhance the liveability and attraction of the city centre by:
 - Focusing on a green 'oasis' at Cathedral Gardens seating, lighting, green informal space
 - Exploring creation of elevation/mound within the gardens to encourage active play
 - Integrating playable elements, eg. sculptures to climb on, bollards that can be used as ball game goal posts
 - Providing basic facilities public toilet
 - Providing pedestrian and cycling priority on York Street
 - Exploring developing Royal Avenue as green corridor through city centre, enhancing existing street trees and seating

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