We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their colour.

- Maya Angelou

Spirit of South Belfast
A Cultural Strategy

South Belfast
A unique place within Northern Ireland. A stone's throw from the city and yet a world apart. Named as a whole, but made up of so many diverse parts.

The very Spirit of South Belfast

The spirit of South Belfast.

But whose culture is it?

It is not simply about changing to copy one or the other.

Culture is not a commodity to be exchanged or traded.

But who is it for?

The Spirit of South Belfast is not for the few. It is a project of the many.

Culture is for everyone. It is not about ownership. It is about enjoyment and appreciation. It is not about competition. It is about coming together.

The story of South Belfast is not a singular tale. It makes up a complex tapestry, unique to South Belfast. It is not just about copying or trading. It is about enjoyment and appreciation. It is not about competition. It is about coming together.
At the time of writing (March 2016) there are a number of items worth noting, all of which will impact upon SOUTH and the development of this Plan.

- Belfast City Council is requesting feedback on their Draft Cultural Framework, 2016-2020. Their cultural framework has four key themes: Distinctly Belfast; Inspiring Communities, Attracting Audiences, and Strengthening the Sector.
- The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) is currently reviewing feedback and responses to its Consultation, November 2015 – February 2016, on its Cultural and Arts Strategy, 2016-2021.
- DCAL will cease on Friday 6th May, and will be absorbed into the new Department for Communities as of Saturday 7th May, following the recent Departmental Bill (Northern Ireland) 2016, which sees the 12 central government departments reduced to 9. This public administration shuffle will inevitably have some impact on the way neighbourhoods and communities access government.
- The new Programme for Government will follow an outcomes based accountability model, and will no doubt include themes on alleviating poverty and tackling social exclusion and improving community and race relations. It is therefore important that any new SOUTH Cultural Forum which was to be formed out of this Plan be mindful of the above.

### SOUTH BELFAST COMMUNITY HUB

A key element that came out of the first workshop was the need for a space (physical or virtual) that all South Belfast residents, visitors, community organisations could access. There was the distinct impression that there was no inclusive community space for SOUTH, and this did hinder communication and progress somewhat.

There was much discussion about this within the workshops, in terms of how it might work. A key issue for many groups was lack of coordination and communication across SOUTH. Community groups in the workshops stated that they didn’t feel as though they had a grip on what was going on across SOUTH, and also there was still the need for substantial

### THEMES

Three strategic themes underpin the Vision within this Plan. At the second ethnic minority workshop held on 1st March 2016, this Plan was called a Strategy of Hope. People hope that this Plan may bind them together, that those who are normally excluded will be bought into the centre, and that race, ethnicity and identity will make no difference to inclusion.

The three themes are:

1. **PARTICIPATION**
   - Bringing people together and connecting the dots across SOUTH.
   
2. **PEOPLE**
   - Recognising the value of people as individuals and collectively.
   
3. **PLACEMAKING**
   - Making sure the distinct identity of SOUTH is celebrated.

### AIM

To develop cultural, arts and heritage facilities that contribute to SOUTH’s sense of place and physical character by:

- Supporting communities to encourage high quality and innovative design.
- Enhancing and utilising SOUTH’s green and open spaces for recreational and community use.
- Ensuring that culture plays a key role in the regeneration of SOUTH.
- Respecting and enhancing the historic built environment for the benefit of all SOUTH’s communities.

### AIM

To ensure that culture, arts and heritage are significant contributors to improving people’s lives by:

- Ensuring that local communities are linked into the digital sphere, to overcome digital disadvantage in the digital divide.
- To increase lifelong learning opportunities for all age groups and within communities and neighbourhoods.
- To improving communication and information sharing across SOUTH, by way of a community portal, that people and communities can tap into, and
- To ensure effective engagement with statutory agencies within all communities, by way of capacity building and mentoring where necessary, to ensure community engagement.

### AIM

To build vibrant and cohesive communities across SOUTH by:

- Improving access to participation for all residents across SOUTH in a variety of cultural and arts opportunities.
- Strengthening the recognition of cultural heritage within our communities and to foster a sense of belonging across SOUTH.
- Developing a strategic approach to events marketing to ensure all communities can benefit from the opportunities within SOUTH.
- Building upon the existing infrastructure to sustain partnerships between the community and cultural sectors, including overcoming protective attitudes towards funding and fostering a spirit of collaboration between the diverse SOUTH communities.

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**CULTURAL FRAMEWORK FOR BELFAST ACTION PLAN 2016-2020**

**Placing culture, arts and heritage at the heart of Belfast’s ongoing narrative.**

**CULTURAL FRAMEWORK FOR BELFAST ACTION PLAN 2016-2020**

**Removing barriers to participation to ensure all sections of the community can engage with culture and heritage.**

**CULTURAL FRAMEWORK FOR BELFAST ACTION PLAN 2016-2020**

**Developing shared cultural space, celebrating and promoting local cultures and communities.**