Title of the Campus: The City Centre for Everyone
Organizer(s) Names: International Federation for Housing and Planning
Partner Organization(s):

• The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)
• Ulster University (UU)
• Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)
• The Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment for Northern Ireland
• The Academy of Urbanism (AoU)
• Belfast City Council

UTC Date: Wednesday, 31 May 2017 to Friday, 2 June 2017
Location / Venue: Belfast City Hall, Donegall Square West, Belfast / Ireland
Urban Thinkers Campus in figures:
The International federation for Housing and Planning is pleased to report that our Urban Thinkers Campus on “The City Centre for Everyone” held 31st May – 2nd June 2017 in Belfast, was a great success:

The objective of the Belfast Urban Thinkers Campus (UTC) was to assist the implementation stage of the New Urban Agenda by focusing on several of the World Urban Campaign’s “The City We Need” principles, namely how to make cities more 1) socially inclusive and engaging; 2) affordable, equitable and inclusive; 3) economically vibrant and inclusive; and 4) safe, healthy and promoting well-being.

“The City Centre for Everyone”

A prevailing issue seen in many cities, is that lower income communities, often located in a ring around the city centre and often burdened with high levels of unemployment and deprivation, generally do not benefit from the nearby economic prosperity and social, educational and health facilities at the core of the city. The city centre and communities at the circumference tend to feel detached and segregated from each other. And there is a sense of threat of new occupants in the city centre. Belfast is one such city challenged with just this, and thus the “The City Centre for Everyone” was the focus of the UTC Belfast. Belfast is a post-industrial city with a ring of communities encircling the city centre. While Belfast has reasonably good social housing, the communities are not thriving. Both the City Council and the university, have identified the problem of the integration of these communities with the city centre, new private housing and student housing. Due to Belfast’s history, and a general sense of distance with the city centre, still today Belfast has trouble integrating its communities in the city centre. The emphasis of this UTC was to get an understanding of why this is happening and how this problem is to be addressed, and to identify solutions which could foster some sense of integration of communities with the city centre. This UTC gathered expertise from the UK and Ireland together with an array of international expertise to focus on knowledge exchange and possible best practices relevant to Belfast in particular, and applicable in similar scenarios.
The Urban Thinkers’ Thoughts

The 3-day UTC event comprised of presentations, discussions, study tours, and informal conversations, resulting in an agreed upon Action Plan. Urban Labs were the vehicles for gathering the thoughts and inputs of our experts and participants, and coming up with relevant scenarios, and for drafting the main action points. Here are some of the points addressed:

To ensure people of all ages in inner cities can access education and employment, there is the need for more and better visibility, to inform on employment opportunities; better coordination, to facilitate the sharing of information; partnerships, to work collaboratively towards the shared goal of enhancing long-term employment outcomes and economic growth; and anticipate future changes in employment: arising from technological advances and the redundancy of certain jobs / roles as a consequence of this.

To ensure inner city communities feel more physically integrated into the city, and that affordable housing is delivered alongside private housing and student housing in an inclusive and equitable city, Belfast City Council and the social housing groups should consider ways of spreading the social housing across the city to avoid concentration; focus on mixed use to create new vibrant urban fabric for the citizens; create a communications strategy to promote citizens’ engagement and participation; assess best case practices as a source of inspiration.

To ensure the health and wellbeing of inner city communities there is a need to raise awareness and promote health and planning, as well as to promote more effective local planning. Planning should be acknowledged as a key tool enabling the health and well-being of citizens. Planning legislators should incorporate legislation pertaining to health into the planning system for a more effective adoption of health led planning approaches. Academia should use its experts and its authority to promote health in planning, strengthen health and well-being components within planning degrees, and contribute to the growing evidence base of how the built environment can influence health and the effectiveness of planning interventions on this issue. The City Council should develop a delivery plan to improve life expectancy, and commit to proactively engaging with planners, and to raise awareness of planning impact, as well as to increase capacity building.

To ensure ‘citizens response’ in the successful implementation of urban policies, empowering the citizens of Belfast to participate effectively in decision-making processes is a must to deepen the ‘Civic Capital’ of the City of Belfast. This calls for engendering a sense of belonging and ownership among all the inhabitants, fostering social cohesion, inclusion, and safety in peaceful and pluralistic societies, where the needs of all inhabitants are met.
This also calls for commitment to sustainably leverage natural and cultural heritage in cities and human settlements, which are of deep value to the citizens of the city and the region. To enhance the links between inner city neighbourhoods and their city centres, there is the need to prevent urban sprawl, and to prevent the suburban flight of culturally- and economically- active community members. Many cities, but Belfast in particular, are faced with significant physical barriers to movement for some inner city communities. In Belfast the Westlink and the East Side ‘shatter zone’ keep communities physically isolated and inward-looking. For Belfast there is also the need to overcome psychological and cultural barriers. The removal of physical barriers is a first step to overcoming this. Also, the need to create equable ‘meeting spaces’ for all communities is paramount. The municipality should also consider using integrating civic/public uses within new development proposals as a catalyst.

This Urban Thinkers Campus was held in partnership with the Belfast City Council; the Royal Town Planning Institute; the Town and Country Planning Association; Ulster University; the Royal Society of Ulster Architects; the Academy of Urbanism; the Ministerial Advisory Group; the Commonwealth Association of Planners; the Institute of Civil Engineers; and the Irish Planning Institute. 34 professionals in the fields of urban planning, economic development, architecture, housing, urban governance and leadership participated as Speakers and Urban Lab Leaders, sharing their knowledge, raising questions, and challenging the participants to express their concerns and their visions, in order to identify potential solutions through a collective effort and to agree in actions that will assist in making cities more cohesive, inclusive and fair to everyone. Over one hundred delegates attended the event. There was good representation from key stakeholder groups including: NGOs, Public Sector, Private Sector, Academics, Students, Community Leaders, Politicians and Civil Society.

Introduction to the Campus

The International Federation for Housing and Planning, together with its partners hosted an Urban Thinkers Campus in Belfast, from May 31st to June 2nd, on the overall theme of “The City Centre for Everyone”.
The objective of the UTC was to assist the implementation stage of the New Urban Agenda by focusing on several of the World Urban Campaign’s “The City We Need” principles, namely how to make cities more 1) socially inclusive and engaging; 2) affordable, equitable and inclusive; 3) economically vibrant and inclusive; and 4) safe, healthy and promoting well-being.

In some cities, lower income communities, located in a ring of social housing around the city centre and often suffering high levels of unemployment and deprivation, do not generally benefit from the nearby economic prosperity and social, educational and health facilities the city centre has to offer. They tend not to feel part of the city centre and are often segregated from each other. The choice of holding this Campus in Belfast, was due to the fact that Belfast is a good example of just that. The City Council and the relocated city centre university have both identified the problem of integrating these communities with the city centre and with new private and student housing.

Belfast has a proud Victorian heritage and prospered in the 19th and early 20th centuries due to shipbuilding, linen manufacturing and other engineering industries until the post WW2. As these industries were relocated within the world economy Belfast suffered inner city unemployment. In the post-industrial era, a relatively high proportion of households became dependent on state benefits and the amount of long-term unemployment became a major social issue. The city suffered from a continuing population decline accentuated by the Troubles which started in the late 1960s. The decline was driven in part by a general exodus from Northern Ireland caused by lack of jobs and later, by escalating sectarian divisions. Due to the violence that dominated inner-city, many companies chose to locate in industrial estates outside the city boundaries. Also, the impact of the Troubles on quality of life and the shortage of well-paid jobs meant that more highly skilled workers tended to leave, and the working class inner areas of the city became more dominated by worklessness. Middle class residents moved to the suburbs to avoid the sectarian divisions and by the 1970s/1980s the city centre was avoided except for day time office employment. As part of the response to the Troubles a new central housing agency was set up to provide social housing. Later in the 1980s Housing Associations were set up to build new social housing and the central housing authority continued to manage their existing social housing stock and provide oversight to the Housing Associations. Now in inner city Belfast social housing is of high quality but the inner city is clearly divided into Protestant and Catholic communities with little intermixing except in the city centre itself.
Today Belfast still has problems in integrating its inner-city communities with each other and with the city centre. Thus, the emphasis of this UTC was on understanding why this is still the case, how could this problem be addressed, and to find solutions to ensure communities feel integrated with the city centre. This UTC gathered expertise from the UK and Ireland as well as from across the world with the intention of focusing on best practices and learning from these examples.

The UTC was held in partnership with the Belfast City Council; the Royal Town Planning Institute; the Town and Country Planning Association; Ulster University; the Royal Society of Ulster Architects; the Academy of Urbanism; the Ministerial Advisory Group; the Commonwealth Association of Planners; the Institute of Civil Engineers; and the Irish Planning Institute.

Thirty-four professionals in the fields of urban planning, economic development, architecture, housing, urban governance and leadership participated as Speakers and Urban Lab Leaders, sharing their knowledge, raising questions, and challenging the participants to express their concerns and their visions. Over one hundred delegates attended the event. There was good representation from key stakeholder groups including: NGOs, Public Sector, Private Sector, Academics, Students, Community Leaders, Politicians and Civil Society.

Summary of all sessions

Housing for Everyone in the Central City
Eileen Patterson, Director of Communities, Radius Housing Association
Ian Snowden, Director of Housing NI Department for Communities

The session of the UTC started with a presentation of the different challenges that the City of Belfast faces, highlighting the most crucial issues that the city has to overcome in order to create a liveable city centre and a city centre for everybody.

Addressed issues:

- Residential segregation
- Accommodating new homes
- Housing improvement and reuse of empty homes
• New social and affordable housing challenges
• Housing intervention as a driver for regeneration

Outcome
Future housing in the central city needs:

• Careful planning
• Commitment and investment
• Key city centre sites

City’s challenges:

• Attract people to live in the centre
• Plan for more than housing
• Infrastructure and services need to be there
• Connectivity and community engagement vital
• Essential to have “shared space” i.e. space that both communities can use together
• ‘Homes for All’ should be the objective.

Planning4people: Time to Reinvent Social Town Planning
Kate Henderson, CEO of Town and Country Planning Association
This session raised the question of how social town planning can be reinvented, emphasising that recognising and respecting human needs is the real challenge of planning but also a crucial element to work towards social justice, wellbeing and create healthy cities.

Addressed issues

• How can we make places better?
• What are the social objectives of the planning system today?
• How can we reunite planning with public health?
• Does planning have a role in tackling poverty?
• Is it time to re-think the social purpose of planning?

Outcome

• Planning is mainly linked with economic growth and has been disconnected from people´s lives
• Social purposes should be a basic part of the planning process
• The need for affordable and sustainable housing touches every single community
• Creating better places is about understanding the impact of the physical environment on our health and wellbeing
• Political responsibility is essential

Health, Wellbeing and Planning for the Inner City
Trudi Elliot, CEO of Royal Town Planning Institute
This session focused on the cities’ challenges being directly linked with the health and wellbeing of a community. Facts, statistics and different case studies revealed that wellbeing is a crucial element of sustainable growth.

Addressed issues
• Rapid urbanisation
• Poor housing
• Decline and depopulation
• Pollution
• Ageing population
• ’Lifestyle’ diseases
• Food deserts

Outcome
• Local plans tend to neglect poverty
• Planning has a key role in poverty reduction and contributes to health and wellbeing
• Embed poverty and inequality within UK devolution initiatives
• Promote integrated, outcomes-led strategies at local government level
• Put pressure on governments to include into their agendas issues such as poverty and equality
• Not only chasing the new technologies but also need to connect them to local communities

Widening Access and Building Skills: Opportunities for the Inner City
Dr. Duncan Morrow, Director of Community Engagement, Ulster University
The session focused on the problems that the City of Belfast is called to deal with and the role of Ulster University in this process. Ulster University aims to contribute in making the city centre more attractive and liveable by relocating one of its main campuses from the suburbs into the city centre and
by involving all the different stakeholders in this process, including
neighbouring inner city communities.

Addressed issues
City’s challenges:

• Segregation of inner city living by religion background and neglected areas
• Working class in the inner city while the middle class moved out to suburbs
• Day time population in city centre is double the night time population
• Inner city and suburbs have different local governments
• Inner city areas are characterised by lack of mobility
• The city centre operated only from 9am to 5pm during the Troubles period. Consequence: no residential history in the city centre.
• The design of the city separates many of the working-class communities for the city centre and each other

Outcome
What does it mean for a most contested but also most vacant area (like the city centre of Belfast) when a university comes in for the access and for the way that the city operates?

• A building project, a culture project for the university but also a culture project for the city
• 13,000 people will access on a daily bases a currently neglected zone between where people live and where people do business
• Different stakeholders with different demands and needs must be heard
• Global access, interconnections, collaboration, creating partnerships with local and national authorities are essential
• The university will attract young people into the city centre and create a permanent flow of talents
• The university acts not only as an educational provider but also as an employer

Integrating People and Place
Andrew Haley, Landscape Architect and Chair of the Ministerial Advisory Group
The session highlighted the contradictions between the statistics on communities’ challenges and the reality that these communities ‘experience.
Addressed issues
What is the picture of Belfast?

• The need to narrow down from the big picture of the city into the local areas, into the details and the complexity of characteristics that a city has
• Belfast is a city characterised by contradictions: need to understand these contradictions
• The challenge is to rationalise the statistics with the reality that people living in an area experience
• Different ways to ‘see’ and deal with places
• Connectivity problems between the different areas of the city

Outcome

• Need to create room for discussion
• Engage the different stakeholders
• Need to understand the statistics and integrate them with people’s perspectives
• Working together to gather the evidence, develop the knowledge and the intelligence from the data and then integrate this with the real experiences of those who are part of making the changes happen
• Need a political, social and community leadership alliance

Community Connectivity with the City- Dublin Case Study
Ali Grehan, Dublin City Architect
In this session, the ‘Hidden Rooms’ project, conducted in Dublin, was presented. The focus of the project was on enabling people to regenerate their neighbourhoods.

Addressed issues
How do we enable people to regenerate their built environment?
The four steps to work with city planning:

• Invitation: the community calls all the different stakeholders to identify and work on the existing challenges
• Need for community’s commitment to make the process functional and beneficial
• Preparations
• Public workshop
• Outcome: a strategic vision, not a prescriptive plan
• Implementation

Outcome

• Planning: need to apply a holistic approach, interdisciplinary knowledge is essential
• Planning should be objective
• Special places need special treatment
• Maintain democratic decision-making processes
• Pursue public and private funding

The City for all: The New Culture of Urbanism
Kevin Murray, Planning Consultant, Director of the Academy of Urbanism

The need to build a new culture of urbanism and to challenge the conventional way of thinking was the baseline of this session. Different case studies of mixed-used public spaces in different cities were presented to highlight the fact that a city’s infrastructure can have multiple uses and serve different needs.

Addressed issues

• A new culture of urbanism
• The challenge of conceptualising the project and not having the same approach to all the different case studies
• Community’s and heritage trust
• Rethink road allocation to provide more space for public transport, cycling and walking
• Rethink public access and public space

Outcome

• Involving the community helps in building confidence
• Need to create public spaces as meeting points and a place for everyone
• Multiple uses of the existing infrastructure
• Better access in the different areas of a city and friendlier mobility
• In case there is not space for an alternative vehicle arrangement, shared slow flow space and people friendly slow vehicle environments might be the only solution
• A friendlier mobility solution might also include using the car
Optional Sessions

The third day of the UTC in Dublin was concluded with three optional sessions on:

- The Development and Integration of the new Dublin Institute of Technology Campus in Inner Dublin, Dr Paul Horan, Head of Campus Planning DIT
- Radical Thinking on Inner City Dublin and the Cohesive City, Dr Conor Skehan, lecturer at the Planning School DIT
- New Ideas to Re-Stitch the Central City, Ali Grehan, Dublin City Architect

All three speakers mainly addressed the importance of ensuring community engagement in the planning and decision-making process to achieve the change that the community aims for. Planners should be able to understand and respect the momentum of the communities they are called to work for and with. The sessions also raised awareness on the need for better collaboration and co-ordination amongst the different stakeholders, the need to build partnerships and to have a vision and a clear strategy.

Key outcomes of the UTC

Education, Employment and Employability

Led by: Ulster University and Belfast City Council
Chair: Dr Neale Blair, Faculty Partnership Manager, Ulster University

The discussion pointed the fact that education, employability, and economic growth are all interlinked and require an on-going dialogue to ensure that people have the skills necessary to access employment opportunities. To unlock the potential of young people there is a need to recognise and differentiate between employment and employability, and that being ‘work-ready’ is not simply about having qualifications, but it is also dependent on having the ‘right’ attitude towards employment (and employers). There is a need to identify the skills necessary to enable steps towards employment, and let this inform the development of interventions with an awareness of how local communities can be assisted to reap the economic and social mobility benefits.

Action Points
1. Visibility: a lot of innovative and effective initiatives are being delivered across Belfast, however they need to be better promoted;
2. Coordination: need to have a joined-up platform to facilitate the sharing of information;
3. Partnership: continuous dialogue across all stakeholders – individuals, employers, and education providers.
4. Learn from elsewhere: national and international case study examples can be helpful in refining programmes in Belfast, e.g. online employer platform.
5. Anticipate future changes in employment: arising from technological advances and the redundancy of certain jobs/roles.
6. Use all tools available (particularly in the public sector): e.g. powers relating to developer contributions to ensure that local communities benefit from large scale development projects.

Housing: Social and Tenure Mix and Integration

Led by: International Federation for Housing and Planning
Chair: Anette Galskjøt, CEO IFHP

Two different housing groups presented projects accomplished in Belfast with a focus on shared housing. In Northern Ireland, this term means a mix of both Protestant and Catholic occupiers. International inspiration from Gothenburg and Berlin was given for comparison. Social housing projects in Belfast are subject to strict regulation which dictates who will live in the social housing based on need and allocation of points to reflect various aspects of ‘need’. The housing associations therefore have little influence on the mix of tenures in their developments and there is a risk of concentration of a certain religious group of tenants in new housing with no real integration. Urban Lab 2 discussed various ways of breaking up the concentration of social housing to be able to create new diverse and integrated neighbourhoods.

Action Points

1. Smaller developments spread across the city. Belfast City Council and the social housing associations should consider ways of spreading social housing across the city to avoid concentration, i.e. smaller developments of 25-30 houses which may be integrated in existing neighbourhoods. Also, focusing on mixed use to create a new vibrant urban fabric. Citizens’ engagement and participation is very important here and an extensive communications strategy should be developed. Also, it should
be researched what the ideal percentage of social housing in any given area is. Looking at co-benefits of this strategy as well as unintended consequences should be analysed.

2. Cooperation between Northern Irish housing groups and housing groups from abroad. Belfast City Council and the housing groups may find it valuable to engage with housing groups from the UK and other countries to study best practice from these countries. IFHP could be a neutral platform for such interchange and cooperation.

Health and Wellbeing of Inner City Communities
Led by: Royal Town Planning Institute and Town and Country Planning Association
Chair: Trudi Elliott, CEO RTPI

The discussion was focused on planning as a key delivering tool for the health and wellbeing. Some of the key principles on how to create and plan for healthier cities were discussed, namely that planning legislators should make promoting health legally enforceable in the planning system. To achieve healthier cities, car dependency, good transport planning, access to food and resources, amongst other issues need to be addressed. Belfast is part of the World Health Organisation healthy city partnership, and is therefore piloting a number of initiatives (e.g. focus on child friendly places; walkability assessment for healthy ageing) and looking for evidence based solutions to become a leader in healthy cities.

Action Points

1. Raise awareness and promote health and planning. The organizations involved should increasing their knowledge regarding health and wellbeing in planning, incorporate it into current and future work and in government consultations, host events/conferences that raise awareness on planning and health;
2. Promote more effective local planning. Academia should use its position and experts to do so, and strengthen health and wellbeing components within planning degrees. Contribute to the growing evidence base of how the built environment can influence health;
3. Promote the role of good urban design in creating health and well-being (e.g. New York City parks without borders);
4. Support development of ways to implement the New Urban Agenda locally;
5. Take action on health and wellbeing. Belfast Healthy Cities will develop & pilot engagement tools and innovative ways to integrate health into the built environment;
6. Increase capacity building by producing learning materials (e.g. online learning modules).

Community Leadership and Participation in City Governance
Led by: Queens University Belfast
Chair: Dr M. Satish Kumar, School of the Built and Natural Environment, Queens University Belfast

Empowering the citizens of Belfast to participate effectively in decision-making processes is a must to deepen the ‘Civic Capital’ of the City of Belfast. This calls for engendering a sense of belonging and ownership among all their inhabitants, fostering social cohesion, inclusion, and safety in peaceful and pluralistic societies, where the needs of all inhabitants are met.

Action Points

1. Building trust in urban decision making and create transparent accountable systems.
2. Ensuring decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen.
3. Starting with small projects and identify the low hanging fruits for implementation.
4. Mapping of capacity-building initiatives on the ground for both governmental bodies and citizens to contribute and influence urban planning schemes.
5. Action Plans emphasising co-design and ownership of urban plans and projects across public, private and people’s partnership (PPPP).
6. Acknowledging key projects contributing to urban fabric and community empowerment.
7. Heritage and prosperous streets - revaluing heritage.
8. Development of civic leadership for the City by targeting primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions in Belfast.
9. Promoting asset-based approach to skill development and thereby organising inclusive community involvement.
10. Empowering the citizens of Belfast to participate effectively in the decision-making processes.
11. Engendering a sense of belonging and ownership among all inhabitants, fostering social cohesion, inclusion, and safety in peaceful and pluralistic societies, where the needs of all inhabitants are met.
12. Commitment to sustainably leverage natural and cultural heritage in cities and human settlements, which are of deep value to the citizens of the city and the region.

13. The critical role of language and culture in the rehabilitation and revitalization of urban areas, thereby strengthening social participation and the exercise of citizenship.

14. Application of new technologies in the creation of smart cities for efficient delivery of services, one cannot ignore the critical digital divide which remains embedded across the poorer parts of Belfast.

**Physical Integration of the City Centre with the Inner City**

Led by: Academy of Urbanism  
Chair: Kerri Farnsworth, Academy of Urbanism

Preventing urban sprawl, and the loss of culturally- and economically- active residents to the suburbs, is an issue in many cities but notably Belfast. Retaining and attracting a diverse resident and business community is key. Belfast in particular, is faced with significant physical barriers to movement for some inner-city communities. In Belfast the Westlink and the East Side ‘shatter zone’ ensure that some communities remain physically isolated and inward-looking. The Lab was unified in the view that physical integration alone of the city and inner city does not and will not work. Long-term investment in both horizontal and vertical activation & animation is needed.

**Action Points**

1. Intensification and Densification of the inner city. Local planning authorities should be reinforcing this through the planning process and policy, and by encouraging the societal mindset shift that may be needed to achieve this.

2. Removing the Physical Barriers. Belfast needs to address the city’s spatial barriers, and consider trialling low-cost temporary solutions. Consideration also needs to be given to connections to radial routes, and connectivity between transport hubs. For Belfast, there was a need to overcome psychological and cultural barriers too, but removing any physical barriers which may underpin these is a first step.

3. Importance of Quality of the Built Environment. The quality of the design and upkeep is paramount, with both being an ideal opportunity for a true 2-way transparent engagement with citizens in co-creation and long-term
custodianship. Cost-efficient interim uses can be a part of this drive, and a great way to test drive ideas with residents.

4. “Slow Urbanism”. A slower, organic rate of change in the city facilitates and supports behavioural change. More critically it allows citizens the time and space to develop trust with the promoters of new development.

5. Activation and Animation of Spaces & Places. In Belfast, the need to create equitable ‘meeting spaces’ for all communities is paramount. The municipality should also consider using integrating public uses within new development.

6. Transparency in Investment Decisions. A key factor in gaining community buy-in the new city spaces and places is facilitating involvement and ownership of the decision-making process. Participatory budgeting would be the ideal scenario. Investment options should be assessed against a range of criteria including socio-economic and community considerations.

Conclusion & way forward

The 3-day UTC event comprised of presentations, discussions, study tours, and informal conversations, resulting in an agreed upon Action Plan. The Urban Labs focused on 5 topics that guided the discussions and that culminated in the proposed Action Plan. The discussions touched many interesting points and created good action points and a long-term commitment for partners to work together.

To ensure people of all ages in inner cities can access education and employment, there is the need for more and better visibility, to inform about employment opportunities; better coordination, to facilitate the sharing of information; partnerships, to work collaboratively towards the shared goal of enhancing long-term employment outcomes and economic growth; and anticipate future changes in employment: arising from technological advances and the redundancy of certain jobs / roles as a consequence of this.

To ensure inner city communities feel more physically integrated into the city, and that affordable housing is delivered alongside private housing and student housing in an inclusive and equitable city, Belfast City Council and the social housing associations should consider ways of spreading social housing across the city to avoid concentration; focus on mixed use to create a new vibrant
urban fabric for the citizens; create a communications strategy to promote citizens’ engagement and participation; assess best case practices as a source of inspiration.

To ensure the health and wellbeing of inner city communities there is a need to raise awareness and promote health and planning, as well as to promote more effective local planning. Planning should be acknowledged as a key tool enabling the health and well-being of citizens. Planning legislators should incorporate legislation pertaining to health into the planning system for a more effective adoption of health led planning approaches. Academia should use its experts and its authority to promote health in planning, strengthen health and well-being components within planning degrees, and contribute to the growing evidence base of how the built environment can influence health and the effectiveness of planning interventions on this issue. Belfast City Council should develop a delivery plan to improve life expectancy, and commit to proactively engaging with planners, and to raise awareness of planning’s impact on health, as well as to increase capacity building.

To ensure ‘citizens response’ in the successful implementation of urban policies, empowering the citizens of Belfast to participate effectively in decision-making processes is a must to deepen the ‘Civic Capital’ of the City of Belfast. This calls for engendering a sense of belonging and ownership among all the inhabitants, fostering social cohesion, inclusion, and safety in peaceful and pluralistic societies, where the needs of all inhabitants are met. This also calls for commitment to sustainably leverage natural and cultural heritage in cities and human settlements, which are of deep value to the citizens of the city and the region.

To enhance the links between inner city neighbourhoods and their city centres, there is the need to prevent urban sprawl, and to prevent the suburban flight of culturally- and economically- active community members. Many cities, but Belfast in particular, are faced with significant physical barriers to movement for some inner-city communities. In Belfast, the Westlink and the East Side ‘shatter zone’ keep communities physically isolated and inward-looking. For Belfast, there is also the need to overcome psychological and cultural barriers. The removal of physical barriers is a first step to overcoming this. Also, the need to create equitable ‘meeting spaces’ for all communities is paramount. The City Council should also consider using integrating civic/public uses within new development proposals as a catalyst.
As a concluding remark and following on the Action Plan, discussions and on the Urban Labs proposals, it is recommended that there is commitment by the City of Belfast, and all the other lead partners to the UTC, to the suggestions made. These will impact the communities, promote a better integration between the city and its citizens, and help to advance and implement UN Habitat’s New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal number 11.

On the basis of the UTC outcomes, what are your recommendations to National Governments and other Stakeholders, including local and subnational governments, in order to effectively contribute to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda?

By 2050 the world urban population is expected to double thereby making urbanisation one of the most transformative trends in human history. The fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in this context becomes far more relevant and critical. The New Urban Agenda (NUA) sets the framework on how cities should be planned and managed to promote sustainable urban development. The principles of the NUA - ‘Leaving No One Behind’, ‘Ensure Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Economies’ and ‘Ensure Environmental Sustainability’ are built around the SDGs, of which SDG11 aims to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. It was pointed out during the UTC that as of now the Belfast Local Development Plan remains silent on SDG 11 and arguably promotes a largely investor and developer driven vision of the city. For cities, such as Belfast, which is rapidly being cosmopolitanised beyond the traditional “orange and green”, it is imperative that the principles of the NUA and the SDGs are integrated in the City’s vision.

Also, high on the agenda is the issue of good urban governance. This includes three principle groups of actors: government, the private sector and civil society. It recognizes that decisions are made based on complex relationships between many actors with different priorities. It is the reconciliation of these competing priorities that remains at the heart of the NUA. Urban governance is inextricably linked to the welfare of the citizenry and provides a platform which will allow citizens to improve their social and economic conditions.
This is a measurable feature of the NUA. Therefore, the successful implementation of the NUA calls for endorsement of good urban governance. This is based on the acknowledged principles of sustainability, subsidiarity, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability, civic engagement and citizenship, and security, and that these norms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

The principle of ‘subsidiarity’ is crucial here and aims to ensure that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen and that constant checks are made to verify that action at the local government level (in this case Belfast City Council) is justified. This calls for the greater participation of all stakeholders to reinvigorate trust in the urban process. Such form of decentralization and local democracy should improve the responsiveness of policies and initiatives to the priorities and needs of citizens in the city. In this regard, ‘equity’ of access to decision-making processes and the basic necessities of urban life are critical for the successful delivery of local plans and aspirations, as it is the case of the evolving Local Development Plan for Belfast. At the same time, ‘efficiency’ in the delivery of public services and in promoting local economic development is without doubt necessary for the future development of the city. In all this the call for ‘transparency and accountability’ of decision-makers and all stakeholders must be reiterated. Without ‘civic engagement and citizenship’, the NUA (and the evolving Local Development Plan for Belfast) remain a passive exercise. Indeed, living together in the City of Belfast is not a passive exercise and all stakeholders must actively contribute to the common good.

Local and national policies should complement each other. Dealing with making the cities more 1) socially inclusive and engaging; 2) affordable, equitable and inclusive; 3) economically vibrant and inclusive; and 4) safe, healthy and promoting well-being is a shared and inter-related responsibility. In this sense, it is recommended, for an effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda that local governments:

- Develop pilot engagement tools;
- Public hearings, workshops, discussions and feedback on local plans;
- Increase their knowledge of New Urban Agenda, social challenges, areas challenges, citizen’s participation etc.;
- Sharing knowledge with the different stakeholders. Bring together the public sector, private and civil society;
- Support research;
• Fair allocation of urban spaces;
• Housing projects, careful planning of new housing and how that can become part of the existing community;
• Increase access to basic urban facilities;
• Increased economic opportunities

And that, national governments:

• Work closely with local and other national governments, and research institutes, to identify best practices;
• Develop national planning and urban design policies;
• Develop policies to ensure youth can become fully integrated in the labour market;
• Add into their agendas poverty reduction programmes.

Monitoring & reporting

How do you intend to monitor the achievements and progress in the implementation of your action plan approved at your Campus(success indicators and other measures of achievement should be proposed)?

The action plan approved puts the focus on five aspects considered to be crucial to achieve sustainable growth and create a “city for everyone”. To determine whether the priority areas are producing the intended results, and to verify if any improvement actions are needed, the following monitoring plan is recommended.

1) Education, Employment and Employability

• Map and monitor the level of interest in opportunities available to inner city communities to develop their employability skills, supported by initiatives across the education spectrum for example innovations within higher education such as the ‘Ulster Edge’ award from Ulster University;
• Embed ‘employability’ across university courses;
• Support the design and delivery of innovative social economy partnerships, for example East Belfast Mission’s programmes to expand
horizons by giving opportunities to individuals to develop skills outside of their original ethno-religious environment;
- Use Belfast Harbour as an example of how to facilitate the access to employment and employability skills as a collaborator with the private sector; and create similar collaborations across the public and private sector;
- Belfast City Council to coordinate amongst all stakeholders to ensure awareness of opportunities.

2) Housing: Social and Tenure Mix and Integration

- Central government and its housing agencies to identify the current percentage of social housing, and research the ideal percentage of social housing in any given area;
- Belfast City Council and the housing associations to consider mixed tenure and mixed use alternatives;
- Create a cooperation platform led by IFHP between NI housing groups and housing groups from abroad.

3) Health and Wellbeing of Inner City Communities

- Assess and evaluate equity, e.g. detailed analysis of food insecurity; produce resource access maps; map air and noise pollution, and assess health and environmental inequalities;
- Adopt health led planning approaches and integrate environmental health with planning;
- Policies and practices to tackle car dependency, e.g. encourage increased modal share in commuting;
- Engage community involving all ages, to better assess health and wellbeing.

4) Community Leadership and Participation in City Governance

- Ensuring decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizens and that constant checks are made to verify that actions at the City Council level are justified.
- The City Council to develop a ‘citizen participation model’;
- Fiscal investment stimulating self-investment of tenants into their own houses;
- Conduct stakeholder analyses to consider as many voices as possible;
• Young Civic Leaders NI to inspire a new wave of urban planners and thinkers, and monitor their performance and levels of youth engagement;
• Create initiatives to ‘bring the classroom to the street’ to connect teaching practices with the surrounding urban environment;
• Use Pop-Up Urbanism initiatives as an experimental platform for data collection, inspiring collaboration and guiding design.

5) Physical Integration of the City Centre with the Inner City

• The City Council and the transport authority to prepare a strategic vision to address the city’s spatial barriers, and trialling low-cost temporary solutions;
• Monitor the integration level of public uses within new development;
• Development promoters to assess options for investment against socio-economic and community criteria, and make that criteria transparent and open to the public.
• Use GIS tools to analyse existing movement patterns and explain the rationale behind proposed new movement patterns to citizens.

Explain how you intend to share the results of your action plan with the WUC community and other partners in order to jointly implement the New Urban Agenda?

• The International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP) will publish an outcome report of “The City Centre for Everyone” which will be shared with the WUC community, as well as with the IFHP community and all the ones present at our UTC. In addition, to the outcome report, all the documents presented and discussed during the UTC will be available online at IFHP’s website.
• The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), partners of the UTC Belfast, will write a blog about the UTC and its outcome which will be available on TCPA’s webpage.
• TCPA will hold a series of workshops and report on developers and wellbeing. The report is expected to be published at the end of 2017/early 2018.
• RTPI will participate in the World Town Planning Day on the 8th of November 2017 where their focus will be on the action plan outcome of UTC Belfast Urban Lab 3: Health and Wellbeing.
• The Universities involved in UTC (Ulster University and Queens University Belfast) will use their position and their experts to promote a more effective local planning system, conduct sessions at UK conferences and participate in the Ireland Planning Research conference in 2017.
• The Bakke Graduate University, participating in the UTC, aims to conduct a follow up UTC later in 2017 to explore how we can move forward and create healthier cities.
• Belfast City Council is also committed to increase their knowledge based on the UTC outcomes and to write a blog on UTC.
• IFHP will organize a webinar session with Belfast City Council and all the lead partners in August (2017) to get their commitment to the action plan and do a follow-up every six months.
• Conducting a follow up event, in 5 years, in order to explore the extent of progress made, based to the current action plan, and reconsider and update, if needed, the action points - outcome and report back to UN-Habitat.

UTC key speakers

1. Suzanne Wylie, CEO at Belfast City Council, United Kingdom.
2. Nuala Gallagher, Director of City Centre Development, United Kingdom.
3. Andrew Haley, Landscape Architect and Chair of the Ministerial Advisory Group, United Kingdom.
5. Kevin Murray, Director Academy of Urbanism and Chair of Scottish Planning Skills Forum, United Kingdom.
6. Paul Horan, Head of Campus Planning, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland.
7. Conor Skehan, Lecturer at the Planning School of the Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland.
8. Bo Aronsson, Senior Consultant, Gothenburg City Planning Authority, Sweden.
9. Flemming Borreskov, President of the International Federation for Housing and Planning, Denmark.
10. Diana Fitzsimons, Chair at Radius Housing, United Kingdom.
11. Eileen Patterson, Director of Communities at Radius Housing, United Kingdom.
12. Ian Snowden, Deputy Secretary of Northern Ireland Department for Communities, Ireland.
13. Kate Henderson, Chief Executive, Town and Country Planning Association, United Kingdom.
14. Trudi Elliot, Chief Executive, Royal Town Planning Institute, United Kingdom.

**List of Participants**

1. Gabriella Graziuso, Belfast City Council, U.K.
2. Emma Hanratty, Belfast City Council, U.K.
3. Gerry Millar, Belfast City Council, U.K.
4. Sinead O'Regan, Belfast City Council, U.K.
5. Garry Potter, Belfast City Council, U.K.
6. Ruth Rea, Belfast City Council, U.K.
7. Ciara Reville, Belfast City Council, U.K.
8. Martyn Smithson, Belfast City Council, U.K.
9. Phil Williams, Belfast City Council, U.K.
10. Suzanne Wylie, Belfast City Council, U.K.
11. Nuala Gallagher, Belfast City Council, U.K.
12. Kelly Mills, Belfast City Council, U.K.
13. Kevin Boyle, Belfast City Council, U.K.
14. Harry Parker, Belfast City Council, U.K.
15. Kate Henderson, Town and Country Planning Association, U.K.
16. Jordan Benson, Ulster University, U.K.
17. Neale Blair, Ulster University, U.K.
18. Ovgu Karelse, Ulster University, U.K.
19. Linda McElduff, Ulster University, U.K.
20. Gavan Rafferty, Ulster University, U.K.
21. Duncan Morrow, Ulster University, Ireland
22. Philip Gordon, Ulster University, U.K.
23. Owen Hawe, Ulster University, U.K.
24. Ahmed Odefunso, Ulster University, U.K.
25. Jas Atwal, the Academy of Urbanism, U.K.
26. Sean O'Leary, Irish Planning Institute, Ireland.
27. Andrew Haley, Ministerial Advisory Group, U.K.
28. Richard Kirk, Institution of Civil Engineers, Ireland
29. Trudi Elliott, Royal Town Planning Institute, U.K.
30. Marion Frederiksen, Royal Town Planning Institute, U.K.
31. Victoria Pinoncely, Royal Town Planning Institute, U.K.
32. Kevin Murray, Academy of Urbanism, U.K.
33. Kerri Farnsworth, Academy of Urbanism, U.K.

List of Partner Groups Represented:

1. Local and Subnational Authorities
2. Research and Academia
3. Civil Society Organizations
4. Business and Industries
5. Professionals
6. Trade Unions and Workers

List of organisations Represented:

1. Belfast City Council
2. Ulster University
3. BHATT Consulting
4. Queens University Belfast
5. Trinity College Dublin
6. ETH Zurich
7. Just Space
8. Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
9. Radius Housing Association
10. Belfast Metropolitan Residents Group
11. Arup
12. Northern Ireland Housing Executive
13. One2One Planning
14. Grangegorman Development Agency
15. The Holding Project
16. Sandy Row Community Forum
17. BPD Europe BV
18. Studio Lennaert
19. Belfast Healthy Cities
20. Citiesmode
21. Planning Integrity Ltd.
22. Dublin Institute of Technology
23. Strategic Investment Board SIB
24. Royal Town Planning Institute
25. Planning, Urban Design and Spatial Intelligence services (PUDSI)
26. Square Pit
27. Northern Ireland Housing Executive
28. South Belfast Partnership
29. Dublin City Council
30. City Reparo
31. Ministerial Advisory Group
32. Strategic Planning Division
33. Amec Foster Wheeler
34. International Federation for Housing and Planning
35. JPE Planning
36. Belfast Harbour Commissioners
37. Talkfunding
38. American Planning Association
39. Almus Property Partners
40. Belfast Metropolitan College
41. BBU
42. UN
43. Bakke Graduate University
44. Pinsent masons LLP
45. Gothenburg City Planning Authority
46. Youth Synergy and Development
47. Amey
48. Chartered Institute of Housing
49. ArtAttackInk
50. Clanmil Housing Association
51. Belfast Healthy Cities
52. University of Manchester
53. Deloitte
54. Turley
55. Irish Planning Institute
56. The Academy of Urbanism
57. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
58. Royal Town Planning Institute Institute
59. Successful Belfast
60. Northern Ireland Housing Executive
61. Shaw & Shaw Recruitment Limited
62. Landscape Institute Northern Ireland
63. Northern Ireland Department for Communities
List of countries represented:

1. Croatia
2. Denmark
3. United States of America
4. France
5. Germany
6. India
7. Ireland
8. Netherlands
9. Sweden
10. Switzerland
11. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

UTC photos: