



**Belfast Climate Commission Terms of Reference
(December 2019)**

1. Background and Context

- 1.1. Belfast believes that a resource efficient, low carbon and climate resilient city will not only be a better place to live, work and visit; it will also be a more prosperous and resilient place, better placed to respond to future economic and environmental shocks.
- 1.2. Belfast is rising to this challenge and the Belfast Agenda demonstrates shared commitment to making Belfast a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city. A top priority is tackling climate breakdown and creating a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy, with well-paid employment, innovation and creativity at its core and a thriving social economy and healthy communities. While some progress has been made towards achieving city-wide carbon reduction targets, with Belfast City Council taking a leading role, many carbon reduction and climate resilience opportunities remain unrealised at a citywide level. Opportunities to reduce vulnerability to climate-related risks such as flooding also remain under exploited.
- 1.3. In the face of a challenging national policy context, the limitations on what Belfast City Council can achieve on its own, the declarations of a 'Climate and Ecological Emergency' in by the UK and Irish parliaments, the value in bringing together key city partners to form a Commission to mirror the UK Committee on Climate Change was recognised and Belfast Climate Commission will be formally launched in January 2020. The Commission will play a key role in place-based climate action necessary to achieve the UK Government's target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050.

2. Vision

Foster collaboration/Bring groups together:

- Bringing together key actors in the public, private and civil society sectors to promote, guide, monitor and review on-going climate and energy transitions;
- Act as a forum where organisations and individuals can exchange ideas, research findings, information and best practice on carbon reduction, energy transition and climate resilience.

Enabling positive choices:

- Help Belfast make positive choices on carbon reduction, energy transition and climate resilience;
- Belfast has this vision, and ambition to be a world-class, 21st century city;

- Belfast believes that a resource efficient, low carbon and climate resilient city will not only be better, more health and prosperous place to live, work and visit, it will also be better equipped to identify, cope and respond to future economic shocks.

Adding Value/Measureable Contributions:

- It will bring together different groups to develop a climate risk assessment and transition plan for the city/city region and for vulnerable communities and businesses within it;
- It will strengthen networks, build capacities, celebrate successes, transfer good practice and explore ways of raising the investment needed;
- Monitor the progress of the city towards meeting its carbon reduction targets and recommend options to keep the city on track.

Independent Voice in the City/ Evidence based Analysis and Advice:

- Advise on the assessment of the climate related risks and adaptation opportunities in the city and progress towards climate resilience;
- It is not intended or be a lobbying or campaigning organisation, and will instead have a clear focus on providing independent advice and bringing together organisations to collaborate on projects;
- Independent voice in the city, providing authoritative advice on steps towards a low carbon, climate resilient future so as to inform policies and shape the actions of local stakeholders, citizens and decision makers.

3. Scope

3.1. Belfast Climate Commission was formally established in December 2019 and its first phase runs until December 2020. Progress will then be reviewed and the second phase will run January 2021 to December 2021.

3.2. Belfast Climate Commission:

- Promotes leadership in the city (and city-region) on climate breakdown, encouraging stakeholders to take effective action now, while maintaining a long term perspective;
- Provides authoritative independent advice on the most effective steps required to meet the city's carbon reduction target so as to inform policies and actions of local stakeholders, citizens and decision makers;
- Monitors and reports on progress towards meeting the city's carbon targets and recommends actions to keep on track;
- Advises on the assessment of climate-related risks and adaptation opportunities in the city and on progress towards climate resilience;
- Brings together major organisations and key groups in Belfast to collaborate on projects that result in measurable contributions towards meeting the city's climate reduction target;
- Makes the economic case for project development, implementation and investment in low carbon and climate resilient projects in the city;

- Promotes best practice in public engagement and communication on climate breakdown and climate action and its impacts in order to support robust decision-making;
- Acts as a forum where organisations can exchange ideas, research findings, information and best practice on carbon reduction, low carbon energy transitions and climate resilience.

3.3. It is also important to be clear about what Belfast Climate Commission does not cover.

Although it engages with and has representation from the private sector and civil society, it is not intended to be a lobbying or campaigning organisation and instead has a clear focus on providing independent advice and bringing together organisations to collaborate on specific projects and work-streams. It may, however, act as an advocate for further devolved powers which would enable the city to achieve more.

3.4. Belfast Climate Commission is based on the geographic area Belfast City Council but also, where appropriate in its work, includes the 5 adjacent local authority areas of the Belfast Region City Deal (Ards and North Down, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Mid and East Antrim, Newry Mourne and Down, Antrim and Newtownabbey).

4. Deliverables

4.1. Belfast Climate Commission aims to achieve the following deliverables:-

- The collation of existing carbon reduction targets and measures for organisations across the city using an agreed methodology;
- Agreed strategic and shared priorities and opportunities for carbon reduction, low carbon energy transition and climate resilience across the city;
- To support Belfast, and Belfast Region City Deal, based organisations' understanding of the importance of energy and low carbon initiatives to the success of their business and helping overcome barriers to successful implementation. The aim is to facilitate the start of a pipeline of investable low-carbon projects within the city which will be supported by work to address perceived barriers to the availability of cost effective finance.
- Collaborations with other organisations to identify effective carbon reduction, low carbon energy transition and climate resilience measures, research and develop projects, and attract funding for project development and/or delivery;
- An annual report monitoring project delivery and evaluating progress across the city towards the city's climate reduction target and advising on future measures and updating data on emissions.

5. Membership

5.1. Membership of the Belfast Climate Commission is open to individuals representing key organisations from public, private and civil society sectors across the city/city region who can contribute to the development and delivery of a low carbon and/or climate resilient economy/society in Belfast. The balance of membership of the Commission reflects the need for cross-city representation and for it to address both climate mitigation and

resilience. Prior to appointment, members must have ensured that their participation in the Commission has been authorised at a senior level within their organisation.

5.2. The Commission will seek to be as inclusive as possible and proactively seek wider participation with its work.

5.3. Members of Belfast Climate Commission are recruited periodically via an open process.

Members are appointed on the basis:-

- That they are representative of a significant organisation or sector;
- That they will engage with their organisation and sector to promote the work of Belfast Climate Commission;
- That although some members will represent large organisations which can make a specific commitment, others may be able to represent their sector (e.g. housing / small businesses) but cannot make commitments on behalf of their sector;
- That they can deliver useful, accurate and timely data to Belfast Climate Commission;
- That they can demonstrate expertise, knowledge, leadership and skills to contribute usefully to the expert work of Belfast Climate Commission;
- That they can commit the required amount of time to Belfast Climate Commission;
- That they have access to good networks and connections that will add value to Belfast Climate Commission;
- That they are available to attend Belfast Climate Commission Strategy Group or Working Group meetings. Alternate representatives would not usually be allowed to attend. If a member is absent for three meetings in succession without reasons been given for their absence, membership will be reviewed and may be revoked.

6. Governance

6.1. Belfast Climate Commission is an independent advisory body, chaired currently by Queen's University Belfast and Belfast City Council. It is intended that administrative support will be provided jointly.

6.2. In order to ensure accountability and scrutiny of the work of the Commission and an opportunity to report the progress that is being made by all sectors and partners towards the city's carbon reduction target, Belfast Climate Commission reports progress on an annual basis to Belfast City Council, Belfast Region City Deal councils, and other city wide fora as appropriate.

6.3. Belfast Climate Commission involves two main structures: -

Belfast Climate Commission:

Comprising a Chair (currently from Queen's University Belfast), Co-Chair (Belfast City Council) and representatives from key organisations or sectors, including at least one person from each Working Group. The Climate Commission group meets four times per year:

- To oversee the programme of deliverables;

- To take an overview of initiatives, projects and activities to ensure coordination, reduce duplication and foster synergy between projects;
- To act as a problem-solving forum;
- To agree, communicate and publish advice on meeting carbon reduction targets;
- To agree, communicate and publish advice on risk / opportunity assessment of climate change.

Working Groups:

Working Groups will include Belfast Climate Commissioners and Commission members (who join Working Groups) who are representative of a broader range of public, private and civil society organisations. Working Groups will concentrate on key areas of climate action; three Working Groups are under development:

- Business and Finance
- Community Climate Action
- Just Transition

Terms of Reference, key areas of action and frequency of meetings will be determined by each Working Group.

- 6.4. At each Climate Commission or Working Group meeting, one of the Co-chairs, or a nominee, shall preside. A Climate Commission meeting will be quorate if either Chair as well as seven members are present. A Working Group meeting will be quorate if either the Chair as well as two members are present.
- 6.5. Decisions within Belfast Climate Commission are made jointly with a preference for a consensus-based approach to decision-making. If a vote is taken, each member of Belfast Climate Commission is entitled to one vote, with a two-thirds majority being required.

7. Principles

- 7.1. The following principles are proposed within which Belfast Climate Commission is expected to operate: -
 - No party has a monopoly on best practice, initiative or solution;
 - All information is shared openly where possible;
 - Problems are solved jointly;
 - Innovative proposals are positively received and reviewed;
 - Working relationships are friendly;
 - Wherever possible risks are shared;
 - Work is delivered to the highest standards of quality and in a timely manner.
- 7.2. Working Group Participation Principles: -
 - Membership of the Commission and its Working Groups does imply a degree of shared ownership to help to ensure that priorities are delivered;
 - Membership of the Commission and its Working Groups is not remunerated, but is mutually beneficial to the work of the Commission members;

- Each priority for the Commission needs to be led by a member of the Commission or its Working Groups who will update progress regularly;
- A priority leader can draw on the resources and skills of other members of the Commission or its Working Groups in order to progress the priority;
- The Commission Secretariat is there to help facilitate the achievement of priorities through acting as a central resource for the administration, organisation and associated activities, but not leading priorities.

Belfast Climate Commission, December 2019