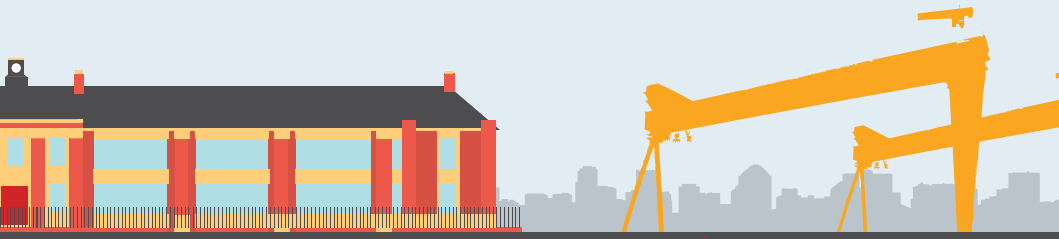


**East Belfast  
Community  
Development  
Agency**

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**People Build Communities**  
Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020

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## Foreword

**East Belfast Community Development Agency (EBCDA)** is the “umbrella organisation” supporting community development in East Belfast. Our membership is made up of community groups drawn from an area that contains almost 94,000 people. It is representative of a broad range of interests and needs within communities and encompasses a variety of groups, including local residents’ associations, faith based organisations, sports clubs, older people’s projects and women’s groups.

**Our Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020 is an important document as it provides the foundation for the work we will undertake within the next five years.** In developing the Strategic Plan, we have taken account of the changing environment we will have to operate within through the 2015 – 2020 period. With our Mission, theory of change, strategic themes and our Values and Principles, we are confident that we can steer a clear path through to 2020.

Our newly developed Intervention Record, through our exploration of Inspiring impact and Outcomes Based Accountability will allow for a more comprehensive reporting mechanism on a year to year basis.

**The title of our Strategic Plan “People Build Communities” is based on a number of conversations we had through the planning process. The key points from these conversations were:**

- Bricks and mortar (buildings) are important to invest in, as they allow for delivery processes to be more comprehensive, but without people buildings will remain empty.
- The sector needs to collaborate more in all that it does, recognising our strengths, our weaknesses and the opportunities.
- We all have a lot to offer East Belfast but we need to share and connect more.



## Context

In late 2014 EBCDA engaged Blueprint Consultancy to undertake a review and consultation process to assist in developing a new strategic plan for the 2015 – 2020 period. The process took place over a 6-month period and involved a series of meetings with the staff team, Board of Directors, statutory partners and EBCDA key funders. In addition EBCDA conducted a series of face-to-face members meetings, visiting member groups at their centre, offices and in some cases their own homes. This provided an opportunity for us to discuss the work they were doing, how they interacted with EBCDA and how we could continue to support them in the future.

The focus of the review and consultation process was to critically appraise EBCDA’s role, priorities, achievements and effectiveness as a basis for shaping the outline and approach for the new strategic plan.

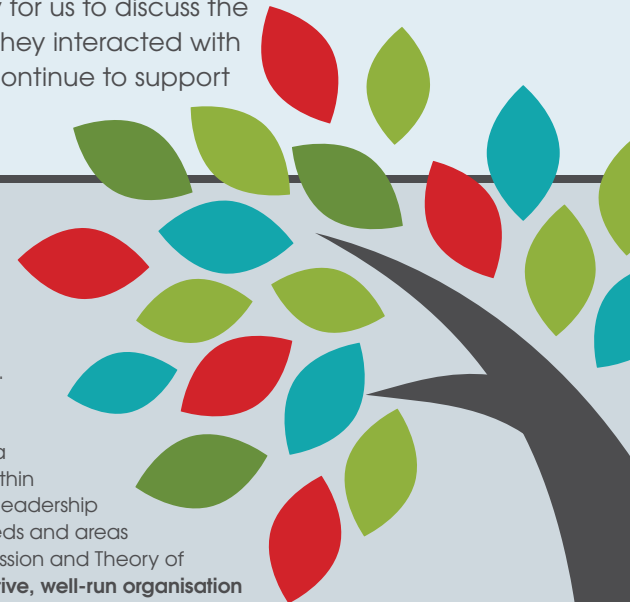
The process provided a clear and consistent picture of EBCDA having a clear role, of delivering effectively within the right thematic areas, of being a leadership organisation responding to local needs and areas of concern, all within the EBCDA’s Mission and Theory of Change. **EBCDA is seen as an effective, well-run organisation with a skilled team, providing leadership, acting as a catalyst, supporting collaboration and advocacy.**

**EBCDA’s is operating in an environment characterised by change, and uncertainty. While such change brings concerns and anxiety, over the past number of years this change and uncertainty has not been unusual within the sector. Though there are a number of things which are different, these are;**

- The financial context.
- The pressure to deliver with less.
- The challenge of being a delivery agent on behalf of statutory departments, while remaining independent.
- The need to ensure that the contribution being made can be measured and communicated.

Equally the changing and challenging environment will offer opportunities for EBCDA to work in partnership with Belfast City Council and other statutory partners, to deliver on behalf of the community sector within East Belfast.

**The most noticeable outcome in the review and consultation process is the development of an impact framework, linking the strategic plan with delivery. This will provide greater integration between the outcomes and delivery, streamline the collection of evidence and support the presentation of concise reports, which will illustrate what is being delivered, and the added value that EBCDA brings to the area.**



## Mission

EBCDA exists to provide resources, support and capacity building programmes for community groups that are based upon partnerships, equal opportunities and sustainable outcomes.

## Values and Principles

### Participation

We will work proactively to ensure that people have the opportunity to fully contribute to, and share in, decision-making processes in relation to policies and programmes that will affect them.

### Inclusion

We will support and promote work which builds communities that include groups and people that have been most marginalised.

### Fairness

We oppose harassment, victimisation and prejudice of any kind. We are committed to ensuring that we do not discriminate against anyone within, or in contact with, the organisation on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, and responsibility for dependents, sexuality, age, economic status, religious or political belief or marital status. This includes all the groups highlighted in Equality Legislation as outlined in Section 75 of the (1998) Northern Ireland Act.

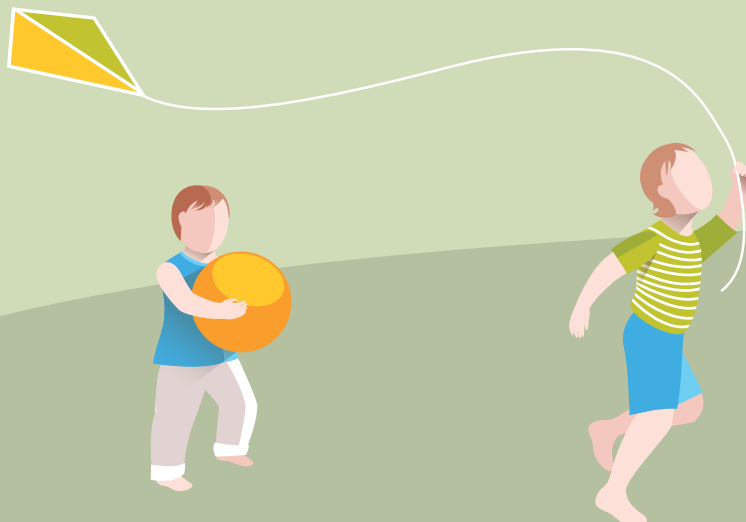
## Theory Of Change

EBCDA's job is to add value to the activity undertaken by groups in local areas. We work with other key organisations to ensure the continued development of a community sector in East Belfast that is recognised, valued and effective. We seek to support successful community development, encourage reflective practice and promote cooperation and locally based solutions.

### Good Practice

We value learning from other places and will promote identified good practice amongst our members and other stakeholders. The application of these values and principles to our work will contribute to:

- A greater awareness that the principles of community development are fundamental to successful regeneration in East Belfast.
- Equal access to a wide range of development opportunities for people living in areas of recognised disadvantage.
- All relevant agencies and organisations being involved in promoting community participation and consultation in developing policy and practice.



## Strategic Themes

### THEME 1

**Community Support & Capacity Building:** To assess the needs of the community sector and work with other key organisations to draw up programmes, projects, plans and strategies that build capacity.

### THEME 2

**Community Resource & Finance Services:** To promote good financial management practice in the community sector by offering financial management advice, training services and a community accountancy service.

### THEME 3

**Community Development Training, Education and Advocacy:** To encourage, support and facilitate the provision of quality training and education opportunities. To seek to influence the policies of community, voluntary, government and public agencies so that they recognise the value of adopting a community development approach and that the community sector in East Belfast might benefit from this.



## Monitoring Framework

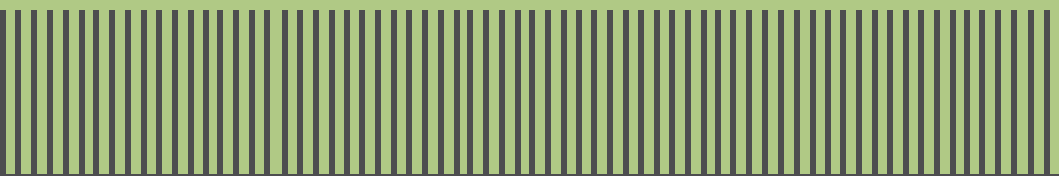
Not everything that can be measured matters, and not everything that matters is measured

*(Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland – Carnegie UK Trust 2014)*

We want to know we are making a difference with the impact of our work. Recording the number of people who attended an event or who completed a training session is only a very small part of the impact.

What happened after this and what difference the event or training made to the individual or group is what has the longer-term impact on communities. We want to capture this and use it for continuous improvement in implementing our strategic plan.

Through our participation in a series of events around Inspiring Impact NI and Outcomes Based Accountability, we have developed a recording process that allows us to capture the key information, from the interventions we have, with the many and varied groups in the community sector throughout East Belfast. We will communicate the key findings from this process to the Board of Directors every 6 months and to our members through our annual AGM, under our 3 strategic themes, throughout the life of this Strategic Plan.



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East Belfast Community Development Agency



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