"I would like to thank all of the members of the West Belfast Partnership for their dedication and vision.

Guím gach rath oraibh go léir don todhcháin sin; todhcháin ina mbeidh bhur n-ídeálachas, bhur misneach agus bhur bhfuinneamh ar fáil chun sochaí a bhaint amach a dhéanfaidh fónamh dá saoránaih go léir.

I wish you all every success for that future; one where your idealism, your courage and your energy can offer so much to achieving a society that cherishes all its citizens.

President Michael D Higgins
Releasing the potential of west Belfast

I am delighted to present West Belfast Partnership Board’s Annual Report 2014, a year in which we have put our shoulder to the wheel to make west Belfast a better place in which to live, work, invest and visit. Throughout the year the Partnership continued to work within its key development themes of social, community, economic and physical renewal in the west of the city, promoting and developing effective and innovative programmes in the fields of education, economic development, health and the environment.

The positive outcomes for local people – especially children and young – are clearly evident. Local results in GCSE Mathematics have risen – in no small measure due to the Easter Schools and additional tuition supports we have put in place. We have worked with local residents to transform derelict alleyways into vibrant pleasant spaces. We opened up the first Social Enterprise Pop-Up Shop in the heart of the Falls Road offering renowned Irish Artist Rita Duffy and Conway Mill artists an opportunity to sell their wares. We also celebrated the 15th Anniversary of the Aisling Bursaries by reaching our target of half a million pounds.

In October, we accepted the kind invitation of President Michal D Higgins to visit him at Áras an Uachtaráin. The Aisling Bursary donors – local businesses, individuals, families and community organisations – heard President Higgins speak of how highly he valued their generosity in donating to the bursaries. During a wonderful visit, he also encouraged Bursary recipients to study hard to build for their futures.

I also offer my congratulations to fellow Board members and staff of the West Belfast Partnership for securing Investors in People accreditation and also achieving an additional IIP Health and Wellbeing award.

I would like to extend my thanks to my fellow board members and the Partnership working groups whose commitment and expertise has continued to guide the work of the Partnership. A massive thank you must also go to the WBPB team - led by Chief Executive, Geraldine McAteer - for their continual dedication and professionalism. My final thanks must go to our funders for their on-going support, in particular to BRO, without whom we would simply be unable to deliver positive change in west Belfast.

I am privileged to be associated with the work of the Partnership in all its challenges and successes, and I commend this Annual Report as an accurate account of the essential work carried out by the West Belfast Partnership Board during 2014.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Gerry McConville
Chairperson
WBPB staff team outside our offices. Pictured: Micheal Donnelly, Marie McIlwee, Niall McCloskey, Steffy Valley, Darragh McAdam, Dermot Glackin, Janice McHenry, Louise Brennan and Caroline Nolan.

“Quite simply, we would accomplish little without the leadership of our Chairperson Gerry McConville and the professionalism of our small but highly dedicated staff team and Board members. I wholeheartedly acknowledge the commitment made by them over the past year.”

Geraldine McAteer
In the past year we have developed and delivered exceptional programmes across the fields of education, the environment, economic development, employment and health. Working in partnership with a wonderful range of local people, business leaders, elected representatives, community organisations, statutory and public agencies we have delivered programmes and projects - and helped shape policies - which have resulted in positive change in our community.

Recession continues to bite in west Belfast. Job losses, lower incomes, rising prices and lack of job opportunities for young people are all continuing to have an impact on local people, posing a strain on individuals, families and communities. It was therefore with great regret and disappointment that Integrated Services for Children and Young People ended in March 2014, despite our best efforts to continue the programme and secure the funds to do so. Whilst these important services were later reprieved, it is nonetheless extremely worrying that we cannot sustain services to the most needy families in our society during this recession.

On a brighter note, this year we have secured the go ahead from OFMDFM to create 200 jobs in west Belfast and Shankill social Investment Zone. Watch this space!

It is difficult in a short introduction to capture all the detail of our work in the past year, so I invite you to visit our website www.westbelfast-partnership.com, where you will meet our Board members, staff and committees, read about our work and view the many short films we have developed which will hopefully give you an insight into our achievements and partnership working.

Quite simply, we would accomplish little without the leadership of our Chairperson Gerry McConville and the professionalism of our small but highly dedicated staff team and Board members. I wholeheartedly acknowledge the commitment made by them over the past year.

All of this work would be impossible without the support of our funders and donors who continue to invest in making west Belfast a better place, in particular Belfast Regeneration Office who provide core funding to the West Belfast Partnership Board.

West Belfast has always faced major economic, social, physical and cultural challenges. We are confident this Annual Report 2014 reflects the efforts we have made in tackling those challenges and we look forward to continuing and expanding our efforts next year.

Geraldine McAteer
Chief Executive
Mission Statement

“Involve people who live and work in West Belfast in generating social, economic, physical and cultural development and to ensure West Belfast makes a full contribution to and benefits equitably from, developments in the city as a whole.”

The West Belfast Partnership Board is a broad-based social partnership with community, statutory, political and business members who dedicated to the regeneration of west Belfast.

West Belfast Partnership Board’s vision is of a vibrant, confident, welcoming and prosperous community at ease with itself and its neighbours that has the resources, infrastructure, environment and services to grow the economy, enhance the cultural life and well-being, education, safety and security of its citizens and be a top class destination for visitors and investment.

The strategic priorities for West Belfast Partnership flow from our vision and mission and are defined around the key development themes of social, community, economic and physical renewal.

West Belfast Partnership Board 2013-2014 accounts are available upon request from Marie McIlwee, Finance Officer. E-mail: marie@wbpb.org
West Belfast Partnership Board is governed by its Board which is comprised of eight Belfast City Councillors; eight representatives from the community and voluntary sector (including five Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships); four business representatives and observer members from statutory and public bodies.

The Board has collective responsibility for the overall governance and strategic direction of WBPB, developing the vision, mission and values and the organisation’s strategic objectives.

2014 Board Members

Gerry McConville, Falls Community Council (Chairperson)
Renee Crawford, Lenadoon Neighbourhood Partnership (Secretary)
Claire Ferris, Work West (Treasurer)
Danny Power, Greater Falls Neighbourhood Partnership
Annie Armstrong, Colin Neighbourhood Partnership
Tish Holland, Upper Andersonstown Neighbourhood Partnership
Jim Donnelly, Upper Springfield Neighbourhood Partnership
Michael Culbert, Coiste na n-larchimi
Susan McCrory, Falls Women’s Centre
Alec McRitchie, Bombardier Aerospace
Seamus O’Prey, ORTUS
Sean Mitchell, Mitchell Kane Associates
Tom Armstrong, Christian Brothers School
Paul Maskey MP, Sinn Fein
Councillor Caoimhin MacGiolla Mhin, Sinn Fein
Councillor Jim McVeigh, Sinn Fein
Councillor Matt Garrett, Sinn Fein
Councillor Steven Corr, Sinn Fein
Councillor Tim Attwood, SDLP
Geoff Beattie, Belfast Regeneration Office
Arlene Kee, South Belfast Education and Library Board
Gerry McGuinness, Belfast Education and Library Board
Seoirse Caldwell, Belfast City Council
Tish Hegarty, Department Employment and Learning
Education at the Heart of Regeneration

Education is a top priority area for The West Belfast Partnership Board. The Education Committee is chaired by Terry Murphy of CCMS and is staffed by Angela Mervyn and Louise Brennan. The Partnership would like to thank all education committee members for their hard work, time and collaborative effort to improve the life chances of children, young people, and their families.

Raising educational attainment levels
WBPB is managing two new education initiatives in west Belfast, namely the West Belfast Community Project and the Community Education Initiative Programme – which together comprise the West Belfast Education Initiative, delivered through the medium of Irish and English. Both are funded by the Department of Education until March 2015, and became operational in January 2014.

The core aim of the work is to raise attainment levels across the education spectrum for children and young people experiencing disadvantage and exclusion through poverty, and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The innovation of the WBPB Education Initiative lies in the wraparound support approach that is inclusive of parents and families, building on the existing work in the local area. The Education Initiative will facilitate the creation of a seamless education pathway for children and young people.

Breaking the cycle of disadvantage
The services are designed to help break the cycle of disadvantage by delivering targeted interventions at a number of key levels of educational attainment. This will involve supporting children, young people and families at key transition points from Early Years through to Post-Primary School. Opportunities are also being developed and delivered to parents; including programmes and support to raise the value of education and encourage the development of home/school routines.

Key identified Education priorities include
- Structural development to influence educational change including formation of a new Strategic Steering Group, Practitioners’ Forum, Nursery Area Learning Network Community and Primary ALNC.
- Development of a West Belfast wide Strategic Education Plan, linking to DE priorities and those of the local Education community
- Communications
The Community Education Initiative Programme is funded by the Department of Education. West Belfast Partnership has used the funding to allocate to community education programmes in west Belfast aimed at raising the numeracy and literacy levels of children and their parents. The two year project seeks to create firm links between community, schools and family and offer support at all stages of a child’s educational development. The aim is to provide seamless transition at times of substantial change in a child’s life.

“The work carried out by West Belfast Partnership Board has the potential to make a real difference to the educational outcomes of our children and young people.”

Education Minister John O’Dowd

1 West Belfast Community Project

- Early Years / pre-school support
- Nursery – Primary
- Primary Support
- Post Primary Support
- Saturday School
- Summer Transition School
- Easter School

2 Community Education Initiative Programme

- Community Based Afterschool Provision
- Family Learning

The core focus of this new programme is to strengthen the involvement of parents, carers and the family unit in the education of children and young people by working in partnership with families, schools and the local community. The programme involves the various sectors and initiatives in West Belfast and builds on and adds value to that work.
Celebrating the 15th Anniversary

In September 2014 West Belfast Partnership Board celebrated the 15th Annual Aisling Bursaries. This year 36 students from west Belfast were awarded a bursary from the total of £27,500 donated by sponsors. Since 2000 over £510,000 has been donated in total, with almost 600 students receiving bursaries.

Each organisation or individual who sponsors a bursary contributes £1,000 for a full-time bursary or £500 for a part-time bursary. This provides local students with a welcome financial boost to help them with their further education and training costs.

To mark the 15th anniversary of the Aisling Bursaries, President Michael D. Higgins invited WBPB to bring a group made up of Aisling Bursary sponsors and recipients to meet with him at Áras an Uachtaráin. The President wished to congratulate them and hear more about their experience of the bursaries and was keen to praise the achievements of local students, and commend local businesses and individuals for their sponsorship and support.
of the Aisling Bursaries

“The value of the Aisling bursaries lies beyond their significance in financial terms: in acknowledging talent and effort, in supporting young people’s will to pursue higher education, the bursaries give both encouragement and a sense of self-worth to those who receive them. Indeed all of us are best able to reach our potential when we are given heartfelt and sustained encouragement.”

President Michael D Higgins

The West Belfast Partnership Board would like to sincerely thank the local businesses and families who sponsored this year’s Aisling Bursaries:

- Ace Taxis
- Andor Technology
- Belfast Educational Services
- Belfast Media Group
- Belfast Taxis
- Bombardier
- Delta Print
- Eoin McKeran Aisling Bursary
- Feile
- I-Teach
- Kennedy Centre
- Kevin Winters Solicitors
- Liam Higgins Memorial Aisling Bursary sponsored by the Roddy McCorley Society
- MacGioll Bursary sponsored by Ciaran Mackel
- Madden & Finucane Solicitors
- Maguire Pharmacy
- Michael Ferguson Aisling Bursary sponsored by the Fergus family
- Michael Flanagan Solicitors
- ORTUS
- People 1st
- Springvale Learning
- Top of the Rock
- United Irish Appeal
- Upper Springfield Development Trust
- Whitemountain
- WorkWest
Environment: Regenerating the West

The Housing, Environment and Planning Committee aims to enable west Belfast to become an increasingly sustainable community, in which the quality of the natural and built environment is enjoyed by all. The Committee is chaired by Mrs Renee Crawford and is staffed by Darragh McAdam, with a great contribution from Declan Hassan who has moved on to Belfast City Council. The Committee focuses on a number of priority areas including housing, environment, planning, transport, gateway projects and public art. We aim to deliver a collective voice for west Belfast on issues related to physical development and regeneration and we advocate and lobby to influence how policy is developed and implemented.

“The area has been transformed into a nice area to sit out and enjoy, with bird boxes, hanging baskets and allotments, giving residents the opportunity to grow veg.”
Eamonn McGonigle, La Salle Gardens Resident

“Engaging with government departments, local politicians, public and private sector organisations and the wider community, we promote collaboration, co-operation and cohesion in West Belfast, across the city and further afield to share information and practice. Membership of the group is drawn from West Belfast’s Neighbourhood Partnerships along with representatives from other agencies who have an interest in the physical regeneration of the west of the city.”

Renee Crawford, Chair of the West Belfast Partnership Housing, Planning and Environment Sub Group
Glen 10
WBPB are part of the Glen Road Framework Delivery Team established by the Department for Social Development. Regular meetings are held and the spine road continues to be taken up through this process.

Belfast Rapid Transit
WBPB have undertaken a range of community and stakeholder consultations exercise in anticipation of the Belfast Rapid Transit scheme.

Former Andersonstown Barracks Site
A refreshed community consultation exercise was carried out, the conclusions of which were presented to Department for Social Development and made available on the WBPB website. The refreshed consultation resulted in the community confirming support for a degree of development on the site but with provision for green/open space. In terms of uses a majority desire was expressed for community/festival use with perhaps some link to family history / genealogy, and a green user friendly open space with public art for the local community to take advantage of and appreciate. WBPB continue to liaise with DSD regarding the future of the site.

The Alleyways Project
The WBPB teamed up with Springvale Learning to transform the alleyway behind La Salle Gardens off the Falls Road in March from a ‘dead space’ into a residential friendly, green area. WBPB was allocated funding from Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) through the NGO Challenge Fund from the Carrier Bag levy, to undertake this alleyway regeneration project.

Environment Awards
The 2014 awards were held on the 21st October, where 13 high-quality entrants were presented with certificates and plaques by Minister for Environment Mark H. Durkan. The event also served as an environment awareness/education event as several environment organisations had information stands on the day.

Funding Projects:
• Challenge Fund: A successful alleyway greening project was carried out at La Salle Gardens with funding from the Challenge Fund.
• Grow Wild: A community garden is nearing completion at the bottom of St. James Road with funding from Grow Wild.
• Live Here Love Here: Funding has recently been secured for two projects: a) to develop a Community Garden at Falls Women’s Centre, and b) to assist Green Teens group in further development of planting areas at Half Moon Lake.
• Rethink Waste Fund: An application is being submitted under this funding programme to resource the west Belfast Men’s Shed group and two charity organisations in recycling timber into quality usable furniture.

“West Belfast Partnership deserves great praise for its work with local communities and schools in transforming their environments. There is so much potential to promote prosperity, jobs and economic growth in west Belfast using the historic cultural and natural environment and I would encourage local communities to continue to engage in this work.”
Minister for the Environment, Mark H. Durkan
Tackling Health Inequalities - promoting Health and Well-being

The Health and Well-being Committee of the West Belfast Partnership Board tackle health inequalities and work to ensure that health issues remain high on the community, voluntary, statutory and political agenda. The health development staff is Dermot Glackin, Lorraine Morrissey-McCann and Joanne Wright. This year our esteemed colleagues Rowan Davison and Denise Baker left the Partnership, having completed their work. We wish them well for the future. West Belfast Partnership Board is extremely lucky to have a very active and committed committee and we would like to thank every member for their support, energy and commitment.

Award Winning Health Initiatives - Healthy Hearts in the West: A Chronic Disease Prevention Hub

The award winning Healthy Hearts in the West initiative has continued to help people to effectively access and use heart-health services. Since it commenced, Healthy Hearts and its partners organisations, have involved over 10,000 adults and children in sports and fun events, health screening and advice, schools-based 'Fit Kids' Programme, numerous community health days, weekly park runs and workplace events.

In April 2015 the initiative changed its name to ‘Healthy Hearts’: A Chronic Disease Prevention Hub. Initially Healthy Hearts solely focussed on Cardio Vascular Disease but over the last year the initiative has the remit of focussing on Stroke as well as a range of other chronic conditions. Now the initiative is currently rolling elements of the programme out into east Belfast with partners in that part of the city. The Fit Kids physical and nutrition program is also being delivered to 200 primary school children in inner east Belfast.

Healthy Hearts Awards and Recognitions

The Healthy Hearts in the West initiative was ‘highly recommended’ in the national NICE Shared Learning Awards at this year’s NICE conference in Birmingham on 13th and 14th May 2014. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Shared Learning Awards recognise and celebrate services that have put NICE guidance or quality standards into practice in innovative and effective ways.
Funding Challenges
Like many other valuable services, Healthy Hearts is in a vulnerable funding situation. Challenges over the coming months will focus on working negotiating the necessary resources to maintain the fantastic work the programme has successfully piloted.

PARIS – Prevention and Reablement Integrated Service
The Health and Social Care Board commissioned WBPB to conduct a scoping study for north and west Belfast to look into services and resources for older people. For many of those in later years contact with local community groups is a vital life line helping them remain independent. Where there is capacity the WBPB have been working with Health Trust and local seniors groups to look at how we can support an individual get back up on their feet after contact with the health trust reablement teams. A working group of those who provide services to or speak on behalf of the senior community has been established to progress this work.

Belfast Positive Ageing Festival
The WBPB played its part in supporting this year’s Belfast Positive Ageing Festival, which ran from the 13th to the 17th October 2014. Working along with Springfield Charitable Association and the South Belfast Partnership Board, WBPB arranged a gala concert at Belfast City Hall, with high tea and a dance to the music of the 18 piece “Balmoral Big Band.” The event was a huge success aimed at promoting the health and well-being of our older citizens through positive and active ageing.

“I was thrilled to walk through the front doors of the City Hall. I had never been there before and it was a wonderful day out and a real treat”.

Member of Glen Community Centre Tuesday Club

“The Healthy Hearts initiative has more than proved itself, evident in its achievements and robust evaluations. The current environment has created a lot of nervousness about where best to place funding because of the cuts in budget. I would urge those decision makers to continue to invest in early intervention and prevention services, such as Healthy Hearts, which have a well proven track record and which, no doubt, will ultimately result in budget savings in the long-term”.

Kevin Bailey, Chairperson of the Healthy Hearts Steering Group
We are focusing on three key areas:

1. **200 jobs for unemployed people**
   For many years the WBPB has argued that unemployed people need real jobs and not just training. It has taken a long time but OFMDFM, through the Social Investment Fund (SIF), has agreed to give £3.2m to the Belfast West Zone to set up an Integrated Employment Programme, which will:
   - Provide 200 unemployed people with a job, either full-time or part-time in either the community, public or private sector. The job will be for 12 months, and the wages will be at least the minimum wage (but can be topped up by employer). It is hoped that people can start work almost immediately, with day releases for training, and they will have a mentor to help advise on job opportunities, and offer continued support while in the job.
   - Create a flexible training fund to help people who need training that is related to getting work.
   - Create a scheme which is based on the idea that one person in a job would get training and move up the ladder in work, creating an opening for someone to take up that person’s old job.

   Up to 900 people should benefit from this programme. After months of planning the tender should be before Christmas and hopefully start in March/April 2015. This project offers a great opportunity to help people who are out of work get jobs and training that meet their needs. But there is a need for this project to do more than that; it needs to change the way services are provided in the local area so that there is a legacy to this project, long after the money has dried up.

2. **Capitalise – literally – on local assets. Local Supply Chain**
   We see the need to capitalise – literally- on the major capital investment that is planned for west Belfast. While Casement Park may spring to everyone’s mind, in fact there are several other capital build projects, such as an Innovation Centre on the old Mackie’s site, the refurbishment of St. Comhghall’s that are just about to start and other projects such as
Colin Village and Glen 10 are also coming down the line.

WBPB brought together a specific team to work at creating local supply chains; we want local contractors to be ready to pitch for work on all of these projects, and to ensure that local workers get work opportunities. We know that this will not happen overnight but the key step is being prepared; we are contacting local contractors and builders to find out what would really help them in gearing up for these opportunities.

We know that many new public contracts have social clauses, providing a commitment to opening opportunities for local people to get work. While welcoming these clauses, the feedback is that we must build close links with the contractors to make these job opportunities work; the Economic Development Unit is setting this as a priority for 2015.

3. Creative Industries (Right up our Street!)

In conjunction with Springvale Learning and the West Belfast Traders we supported the setting up of the first Coder Dojo Club in the west of the city, a Saturday session where kids learn (and show their parents!) how to code. What started with a pilot of 10-15 children earlier in the year has now expanded into a full programme with 100 children taking part every Saturday. Springvale Learning provides the tutors, venue and computer-savvy parents also lend a hand.

WBPB supported the purchase of Lego Mindstorms, robotic lego designed with specific lessons to help children learn the STEM subjects. This has led to primary schools being offered ‘taster sessions’ and interest from computer companies to sponsor introductory coding sessions in schools. The potential to expand this work is enormous. We just hope we can keep up!

Pop-Up Shop/Siopa Sealadach

WBPB launched the Pop – up Shop at 208 Falls Road in August to host local and emerging artists and support the development of creative industries and cultural businesses in west Belfast. Funded by the NI Executive, this Social Enterprise Hub was delivered by Ortus and is aimed at supporting new social enterprise creation in the west of the city. The Pop-up Shop provides an opportunity to market test innovative & creative products by local artists and craftspeople. Celebrated artist Rita Duffy launched her ‘Thaw’ project during Féile in August, for which she also developed special products with a west Belfast theme.

In November, a number of artists known as ‘Artists at the Mill’ opened a display of their work in the shop to raise their profile and showcase the great artistic work done locally and market test their products. Ortus have supported them with business classes open to everyone interested in expanding or starting a creative business.
The Integrated Services for Children and Young People programme is aimed at improving the life chances of children, young people and their families in West Belfast and Shankill. The programme has been headed up by Angela Mervyn. The ISCYP programme benefited from having a very active and committed committee and staff team. We would like to thank every member for their support, energy and commitment.

It was with great regret and disappointment that Integrated Services for Children and Young People ended in March 2014, despite best efforts to continue the programme and secure the funds to do so.

ISCYP had a number of aims, including to work together across community and statutory organisations to plan, design and deliver integrated services to improve the life chances of our children and young people.

Throughout 2013 - 2014 West Belfast Integrated Services for Children & Young People continued to work in partnership with local community groups, schools and statutory agencies to give the best possible services to local families most in need.

After closure on 31st March 2014, further funding was secured for the period August – December 2014 for a Transition Programme to work with a limited amount of families who were identified at closure as having no additional supports.

Despite the closure of ISCYP, the dedication and commitment of our excellent staff team has ensured that our services have had really positive impacts for families, children and young people within our community.

West Belfast Partnership Board would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff team, community partners, statutory partners and most of all our families for your continued support and to wish you well in the future.

Children, Young People & Families
“I can talk to my kids and can help them with their school work. I was embarrassed and couldn’t do that before. Integrated Services have helped me to be more confident and now I don’t worry about meeting with teachers and my family home is a happier place.”

“ISCYP has been a support for me & my family, they have helped me with behaviour of my youngest child and even my fifteen year old who doesn’t speak to anyone; he feels he can talk to them.”
For detailed information about our programmes, projects and partnerships, please contact us:

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