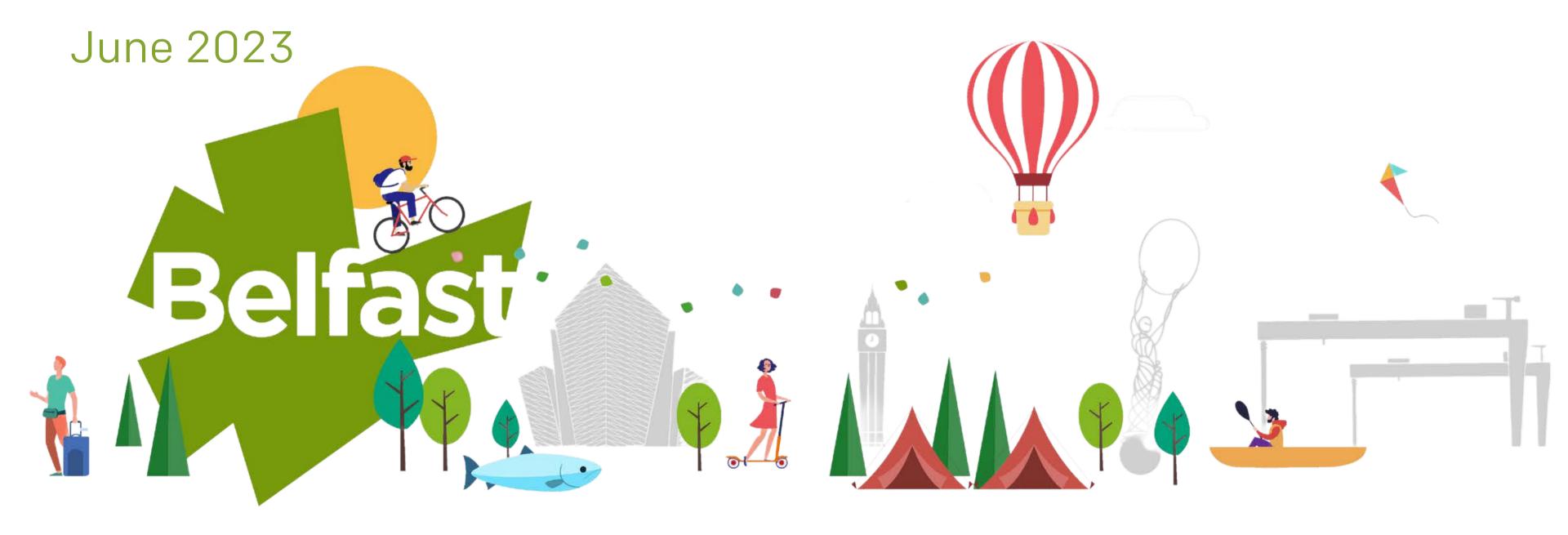
Sustainability Action Plan

Performance and Impact report 2022-2023





Introduction

Visit Belfast's business plan 'Rebuilding City Tourism 2021-24' set out an ambitious new direction of travel for our marketing and destination management, placing sustainability and community at the very heart of Belfast's tourism recovery.

To support delivery of this strategy, we launched Visit Belfast's sustainability policy in 2021 setting out our 10 commitments to guide our sustainability journey. Aligned to 8 of the 17 UN SDG's; these commitments focus on the positive role that we can play as the city's destination marketing and management organisation to drive inclusive and sustainable growth.

The collaborative efforts led by Visit Belfast, Belfast City Council and our industry partners to accelerate sustainability performance have transformed Belfast's position from a laggard to leader in just two years.

This 2023 impact report charts our tremendous progress during the 22-23 financial year and sets out our priorities for the 23-24 period.



Jery bern

Gerry Lennon
Chief Executive
Visit Belfast



22-23 Highlights

Visit Belfast and Belfast City Council joined the Global Destinations Sustainability Index in 2020 as one of the Belfast resilience strategy's 30 transformational programmes. With a ranking of 47th / 48th globally and an overall score of 41%, there was significant work to be done.

Today Belfast is ranked 8th / 73 destinations globally with overall score of 84% in the Global Destinations Sustainability Index (GDS 2022). It is the only destination on the island of Ireland and one of two cities in the UK to make the Top 10 position.

Key achievements include:

- 81% of Belfast Hotel bedrooms now hold a sustainability certification up significantly from 25% prior year. This has been a remarkable
 achievement driven by the Green Tourism programme led by Visit
 Belfast and Belfast City Council with support and commitment from the
 hotel sector across the city.
- Supplier performance was 73% in 2022 with a significant increase from 41% prior year. (GDS Index)
- Destination management scores increased to 93% in 2022 from 75% (GDS Index)
- Development of Visit Belfast's award-winning social impact initiative 'Changing the Menu. For Good' to help tackle food poverty in Belfast through business events.
- 700 volunteer hours delivered up from 250 (21-22)
- £22,115 funds raised up from £2,200 (21-22) and £12k ahead of target for the year
- £110m in economic impact generated (+14% ahead of target) and £26m ahead of 21-22.

3rd 81% 8th Global Best Belfast Sustainable Innovation Performing Hotel rooms Destination in Award DMMO Sustainably the world Winner Globally Certified GDS Index 2022 **GDS Inex 2022** GDS Awards 2022 £22,115 Changing £110m 700 funds raised the Menu. Volunteer Economic For Good **Impact** 14,614 meals Hours Launched provided 93% DMO 73% Supplier Best Equality, Cruise Score Diversity & Sustainability Belfast (+18% YoY) Inclusion Score Sustainability Event (+32% YoY) Plan ICC-VB-Eventful GDS index 2022 **ABPCO 2022** GDS Index 2022



Our Commitments

Our 10 policy commitments are aligned to 8 of the UN SDGs and guide our sustainability plans across four areas:

- Our Organisation
- Our Industry
- Our Visitors and Clients
- Our City

















Our Organisation

- Reduce the environmental impact of our business and look for better, greener and more sustainable ways of working
- 2. Build sustainability capacity within Visit Belfast and empower our employees
- Support and improve employee health and wellbeing
- 4. Procure goods and services more sustainably
- 5. Maximise the social and economic impacts of Visit Belfast's activities to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth

Our Industry

6. Champion sustainability within our industry – encouraging collaboration, catalysing innovation and improvement

Our Visitors & Clients

7. Promote sustainable choices and experiences and positively influence the actions of visitors

8. Work with our clients (event organisers, tour operators and cruise lines) to make sustainable business easy



























Our City













9. Generate and manage year-round visitors to Belfast in a way which is sensitive to the environment and communities

10. Promote Belfast as an accessible, inclusive and sustainable destination for all



Our Organisation

Reduce the environmental impact of our business and look for better, greener and more sustainable ways of working.

Procure goods and services more sustainably.

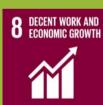












Our actions

- Baselined our 22-23 energy consumption and associated carbon footprint - 63.95 tonnes C02e
- Baselined our annual staff travel and associated carbon footprint - 43.36 tonnes Co2e (22-23)
- Digitised our Cruise Belfast 'What's On' Guide
- Launched a sustainable T-Shirt range in our Visit Belfast Welcome Centre
- Increased the number of locally sourced retail lines
- Our procurement policy has been updated to include sustainability and it is now a key consideration in all relevant procurement decisions
- Crucially, we have created a culture of sustainability across our organisation where it underpins how we do things.

In 2022 Visit Belfast was the 3rd highest performing DMMO in the Global Destination Sustainability index, the world's leading sustainability performance improvement and benchmarking programme for destinations.





93%

Our Organisation

Build sustainability capacity within Visit Belfast. Support and Improve employee wellbeing













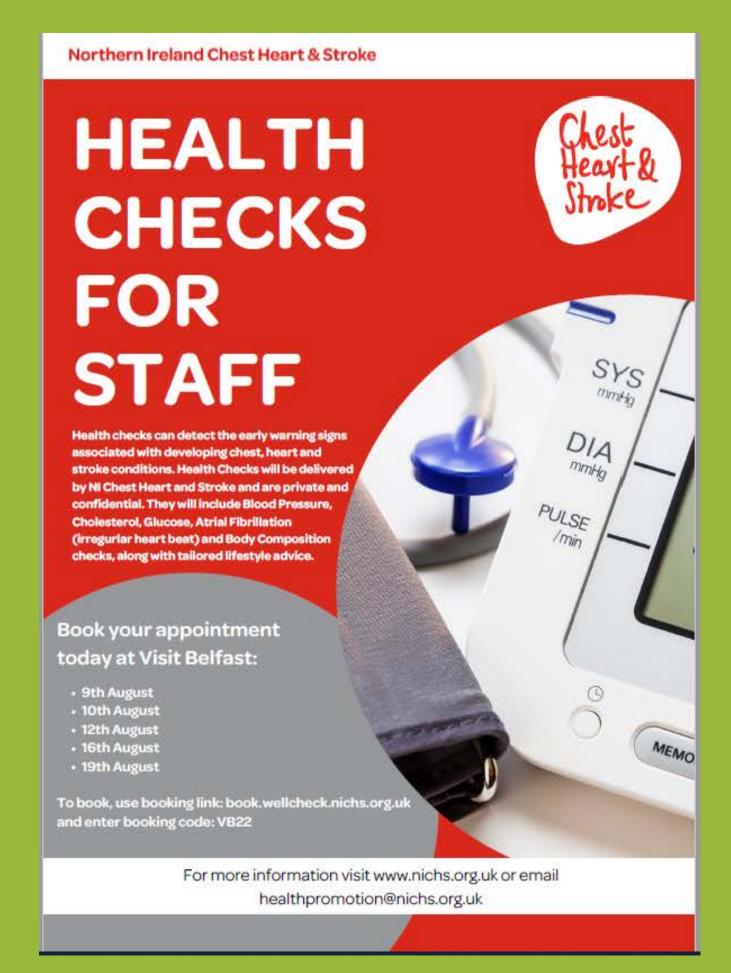
Our actions

- Developed our three-year people strategy with wellbeing as one of the five priority areas
- Established an employee committee to help shape volunteering, wellbeing, social and engagement activities at Visit Belfast
- Launched our core company values
- Ensured that 100% of Visit Belfast employees are sustainability and inclusion trained including all new joiners.
- Supported employees to develop specialist skills in DEI, accessibility and inclusion, wellbeing, legacy/impact and carbon
- Funded free health checks for all employees
- Came 2nd in our category for the Active Travel challenge





In our first ever 'active travel challenge' with Sustrans, we came 2nd in our category with 69% employee participation, 393kg CO2 saved and 57,579 calories burned!



Our Organisation

Maximise the social and economic impact of Visit Belfast Activities













£110m

Economic Impact

+£26m YoY

+14% ahead of target

700

Volunteer Hours +450 hours YoY

£22,115

Funds raised for charity +£20,000 YoY 200% of target

14,612

Meals provided Changing the Menu. For Good

453

Visit Belfast partners supported +9% YoY 42 not-for-profit/charity partners

CSR & Impact Initiatives



Our Industry

Champion sustainability within our industry - encouraging collaboration, catalyzing innovation and improvement.















Our Actions

- Secured a Global innovation Award for our pioneering social impact project - 'Changing the Menu. For Good' to help tackle food poverty in Belfast through business events.
- Galvanised industry support and action on food waste and food poverty
- Led delivery of the Green Tourism certification programme in partnership with BCC and Industry which has accelerated sustainability performance across the sector.
- 81% of Belfast Hotel bedrooms are now sustainably certified.
- Developed the first Cruise Belfast sustainability plan with Belfast Harbour
- Collaborated with Visit Britain, Global Destination
 Sustainability movement, Green Tourism, All Ireland
 Sustainability Summit, University of Surrey, ABPCO,
 ICCA, WRAP, City DNA and Guardians of Grub to share
 ideas and learn from best practice.

Our Industry

Champion sustainability within our industry - encouraging collaboration, catalyzing innovation and improvement.













81%

Hotel bedrooms sustainably certified +56% YoY 73%
Supplier Score +32% YoY

GDS Index 2022

98

Businesses committed to Green Tourism +15 YoY 41

Green Tourism certified partners +29 YoY 10

Venues Green Tourism certified



Our Visitors & Clients

Promote sustainable choices and experiences and positively influence the actions of visitors and clients (event organisers, cruise lines and tour operators).

Work with our clients to make sustainable business easy in Belfast.















Our Actions

- Provided a sustainability and impact support service to
 75 clients across business events, travel trade and cruise
- Developed the first Cruise Belfast Sustainability plan with Belfast Harbour
- Developed over 16 sustainability themed blogs to inspire visitors and delegates to make sustainable choices
- Developed 10 CSR/Volunteering initiatives for event organisers and tour operators to support their Belfast programme
- Developed sustainability itineraries, content, toolkits and templates for VB websites, ezines, digital channels and presentations
- Surveyed visitors across all VIC sites to track attitudes and positively influence action
- Highlighted sustainability credentials of venues and suppliers on Visit Belfast's business events site and in its conference and events guide.

Our Visitors & Clients















74%

visitors interested in sustainability -2% YoY

50%

visitors would like to take part in sustainable experiences +3% YoY

46%

visitors interested in how they can support local projects and communities +6% YoY 42%

visitors interested in how they can reduce the environmental impact of their visit +4% YoY 502km

completed through Visit Belfast conference delegate runs designed to promote wellbeing at events 75

Clients supported through sustainability and impact service



Our City

Generate and manage year-round visitors to Belfast in a way which is sensitive to the environment and communities

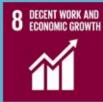














Our Actions

- Accelerated our transition from a DMO to a DMMO, increasing our destination management and stewardship role to ensure that tourism is a force for good across Belfast
- Managed capacity across the destination across inbound conferences, cruise calls and leisure visitors through our tourism barometer
- Prioritised neighbourhood tourism development, working with area partnership boards including Fáilte Feirste Thiar, EastSide Partnership and the businesses within these communities to increase and share tourism prosperity across Belfast
- Established neighbourhood tourism clusters
- Worked with cruise lines and the National Trust to support visitor management during the cruise season
- Focussed our marketing campaigns and sales activity to targets gaps in the city calendar and avoid peak capacity months
- Leveraged Belfast's gateway role to extend stay and spend through promoting regionality across business events, short breaks, cruise and tour segments

Our City

Generate and manage year-round visitors to Belfast in a way which is sensitive to the environment and communities

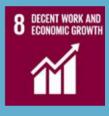














81%

Conferences are midweek -2% YoY

55%

Conferences take place in the shoulder season +7% YoY

48%

visitor enquiries handled by Visit Belfast are for regional destinations outside Belfast +6% YoY 32%

Visit Belfast partners are across Northern Ireland -1% YoY

78

Neighbourhood tourism businesses form part of Visit Belfast's partnership



Our City

Promote Belfast as an accessible, inclusive and sustainable destination for all









Our Actions

- Supported Belfast City Council's accessibility and inclusion programme to help build capacity within the sector and amongst our staff
- Incorporated inclusion training into Visit Belfast's induction programme and ensured that 100% of all employees are inclusion trained
- Supported employees to develop specialist knowledge around introducing DEI into business events
- Introduced 'ReachDeck' onto our business events
 website which is an all-in-one digital inclusion solution
 which helps to make our online content accessible and
 usable to everyone.
- Provided advice and support to visitors, event organisers and tour operators on <u>accessible venues</u>, <u>hotels and</u> <u>attractions across Belfast</u> through our work with AccessAble
- Focussed on celebrating the diversity of Belfast in our marketing, communications and visitor servicing activities



Measurement & Impact

Top 10

Sustainable Destinations Globally 90%

Bedrooms

certified

Hotel

85%

GDS Score

Top 5 DMO

Funds Raised

Increase

Reduce Carbon

Impact Impact

Increase

Legacy

Industry
Clients
Visitors
Community
Impact &
Measurement

Strategic Interventions 23-24 - Key Priorities

Carbon

- Visit Belfast CarbonMeasurement & Reduction Plan
- Baseline Belfast's carbon impact for tourism & events
- Launch carbon measurement & reduction tool for business events
- Introduce an online carbon reduction and sustainable choices tool on our business events website

Social Impact

- Review, expand, promote and scale our Changing the Menu for Good pilot programme
- Increase Fundraising
- Increase Volunteering
- Survey and monitoring of impacts clients, industry, VB, stakeholders & community
- Implement DEI plan

Legacy

- Launch Visit Belfast legacy and impact programme - 5 key themes
- Tier 1 Business events bespoke legacy plans to be developed
- Improve monitoring, reporting and storytelling



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