



## Lord Mayor Helps Children 'Plan a City' at Ulster Museum



Belfast Lord Mayor Cllr Nichola Mallon helps young participants plan their at the Ulster Museum

As part of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) centenary celebrations, children in Belfast are being encouraged to think about the environment around them and how it has been shaped. The week-long event in the Ulster Museum is being staged in partnership with World Health Organization (WHO) project Belfast Healthy Cities, and the planning schools at Queens University and Ulster University, with sponsorship from the Department of the Environment, Belfast City Council and Eplani.

The event entitled 'Planning My City' provides an opportunity for young minds to demonstrate what they believe is required to produce a healthy and enjoyable city and how the different elements are brought together. Children are able to create a miniature city, based on Belfast which has been created by Ulster University architecture students and encouraged to think about what the uses of buildings could be, where they should be located and how they would contribute to their own 'dream city'.

Facilitated workshops help participants explore how a city is designed and how they can create their own ideal city. The programme also includes arts and crafts, paper-bag houses, a photo wall, computer modelling/interactive areas, Lego ® workshops and free play suitable for all ages.

Belfast Lord Mayor, Cllr Nichola Mallon said: “This is a great initiative! Here’s hoping it will get our young people thinking about what makes a vibrant and healthy city that is an enjoyable place to live and visit. It is encouraging to see so many children participating in this free, innovative event and I would encourage teachers and parents to come and get involved. What better way to foster a better environment and stronger economy than to educate our children, through play, about their built environment from primary school age”.

RTPI NI Policy Officer Claire Williamson indicated ‘RTPI NI is excited to have had the opportunity to develop this project, the enthusiasm from the partners and sponsors is clear; it really has captured our imaginations. We are enjoying being part of what the children produce and learning from them in addition to portraying a positive message about the role of planning in the creation of the built environment’.

Joan Devlin, Chief Executive, Belfast Healthy Cities stated ‘This is an exciting opportunity for children who live in Belfast to imagine the city as they would like it to be, in a way that is fun while also encouraging them to learn about the role of planners.

‘Belfast Healthy Cities is particularly pleased to be involved, in partnership with RTPI, Queen’s University and Ulster University, as evidence shows that the quality of the built environment has a significant influence on the health and wellbeing of children. We already work with children on a number of projects and we know they are interested in their environment and an event like this is a great way to get them to think about how places can be improved. Who knows, perhaps some of the children taking part this week will become the healthy planners of the future.’

Where: Ulster Museum, Stranmillis Road, Belfast

When: Tuesday 28 – Friday 31 October

Opening hours: 10 am – 4 pm each day

Cost: FREE

Workshops at 11 am, 12 noon, 1 pm and 2 pm.

Planning my City is for children of all ages and abilities and children must be accompanied by an adult.

For further information, please contact Laura McDonald, Belfast Healthy Cities on 028 9032 8811

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## Notes

Event partners are Royal Town Planning Institute (NI), Belfast Healthy Cities, Ulster University, and Queens University Belfast. The event sponsors and contributors are the Department of the Environment, Belfast City Council, Environmental and Planning Law Association of Northern Ireland (Eplani) and Bricks 4 Kidz.