

SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

Monday 12th May, 2025

MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP HELD REMOTELY AND IN THE CONOR ROOM

Members present: Councillor J. Duffy (Chairperson) and
Councillors I. McLaughlin and Abernethy.

External Members: Ms. B. Arthurs, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Ms. L. Euler, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;
Fr. M. Magill, Faith Representative;
Ms. T. Mimna, The Executive Office;
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority;
Mr. G. Walker, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Ms. A. M. White, British Red Cross

In attendance: Mr. J. Girvan, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. D. McKinney, PEACE Programme Manager;
Mr. D. Robinson, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer;
MS. L. Dolan, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Mr. Naeem of the Interfaith Forum, together with Mr G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager.

A Member noted that the representatives of the PSNI had not attended meetings for several months. It was pointed out that the upcoming summer period was a time in Belfast when community relations could become strained and the Partnership agreed that its concerns in relation to the absence of the PSNI's representatives be conveyed onwards.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 8th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 18th April.

Declarations of Interest

In respect of the item 'PEACEPLUS - BCC Local Action Plan Update', declarations of interest were reported by Councillors Duffy and I. McLaughlin, as well as Independent Member Ms. B. Arthurs, in that they were associated with organisations which were in receipt of support under the terms of the plan. Mr. J. Girvan declared an interest also in the item in that he was related to a Member of the Council who was employed by an organisation in receipt of funding under the terms of the plan. They retired from the meeting whilst the matter was under discussion.

Good Relations Action Plan - Quarter 4 Update

The Partnership considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To update the Shared City Partnership on the delivery of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan during Quarter 4 which covers the period January – March 2025.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That Members recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report.

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the Council receives 75% of funding from The Executive Office (TEO) for the delivery of its annual Good Relations Action Plan.

The original total value of the Action Plan is £493,079.59. Within this the 75% contribution from TEO consists of £369,809.69 with the remaining 25%, or £123,269.90 being contributed by the Council. Of this overall total, £365,000 was allocated towards programmes.

- 3.2 In December, TEO offered the Council an additional resource of £38,170, at 100%. It was agreed that this be allocated towards programme activity. Therefore, the new Action Plan total for programme costs was £403,170.

- 3.3 Delivery of the Action Plan continued during quarter 4. In Q1, £181,714.48 was allocated. In Q2, a further £109,420 has been allocated. During Q3, £58,473 was allocated.

In Q4, £39,970 was allocated, giving a total allocation for programme during 2024/25 of £389,577.48. The small remaining amount of £13,592.52 will be reprofiled, along with any subsequent underspend as projects close, to offset the costs to the Council towards salaries and administration.

- 3.4 Members should also note that the Action Plan does not include the £128,700 allocated to the Council for work on refugee integration, or the Asylum Dispersal allocations totalling £406,228, all from TEO. These funds are in addition to the Action Plan as well as the delivery of actions within the Community Recovery Programme which is worth £600,000.

3.5 The following is a summary of update on activity and allocations within the Good Relations Action Plan during Q4:

| Code | Project Summary | Budget | Progress in Quarter 3 | Total allocated |
|-------------|---|---|--|---|
| BCC1 | Good Relations Small Grants Programme. | £155,000 | 43 projects awarded funding in Q1. Projects closing. | £0 |
| BCC2 | St Patrick's Day Civic Events programme | £20,000 | Programme completed | £0 |
| BCC3 | Positive Cultural Expression Programme | £20,000 (plus additional £13,170) | Beacon Demonstration event delivered in February. | £13,170 (from additional resource) |
| BCC4 | Civic Engagement and Learning Programme | £20,000 | Programme completed with small under-allocation. | |
| BCC5 | Minority Ethnic Equality and Inclusion Programme | £60,000 | March meeting of the Migrant Forum took place. Anti racism training Small under-allocation. | £300 £1,500 |
| BCC6 | Embedding Good Relations Programme | £0 | This programme didn't proceed as a result of budget shortfall | £0 |
| BCC7 | Interface Engagement & tackling sectarianism and racism | £60,000 | Programme completed | £0 |
| BCC8 | Shared Education Schools Programme | £20,000 | Programme completed | £0 |
| BCC 9 | Strategic Connections and Support Programme | £10,000 (Plus an additional £25,000) | East Meets West Community Centre Programme Good Relations Strategy, Audit and Action Plan | £5,000 £20,000 |
| | TOTAL | £403,170 | | £39,970 |

3.6 Financial and Resource Implications

All costs within the District Council's Good Relations Action Plan are covered within existing agreed budgets.

3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

All activity within the District Council's Good Relations Action Plan

The Partnership noted the information set out within the report and agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report also.

A general discussion ensued in relation to the prevalence of sectarianism across the City and the methodology used in evaluating the effectiveness of programmes funded through the action plan. It was noted that more qualitative data should be included in any future quarterly updates on the Action Plan, rather than just a report that dealt with financial issues. It was agreed also that consideration be given as to how the Interfaces Programme, as contained in the revised Good Relations Action Plan, could be delivered more effectively in order to focus particularly on sectarianism and the issues facing residents. It was noted also that there remained an onus on the Council and its Members to show greater leadership at a civic level to address the persistence of sectarianism in Belfast and other associated problems, such as racism.

The Acting Senior Good Relations Officer also provided an update on this year's forthcoming Day of Reflection on 21st June, information in respect of which would be circulated to the Members.

Good Relations Action Plan - Funding Update

Mr. Robinson, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer, reminded the Partnership that, at its previous meeting, it had noted that The Executive Office had indicated informally that the level of funding to be provided to oversee activity in 2025/26 would be sufficient to support the agreed programmes. However, since the previous meeting, the Good Relations Unit had been informed that the level of funding would, in fact, be £41,999.99 less than the figure originally communicated. Accordingly, the Acting Senior Good Relations Officer outlined a number of options for consideration and pointed out that, in previous years, the Council had received an additional in-year allocation as a result of monitoring rounds, which could be earmarked and reallocated to support the delivery of the programme in full in 2025/26.

The Partnership noted the comments of the Acting Senior Good Relations Officer and agreed that the programme for 2025/26 proceed as anticipated. The amount allocated towards programmes would remain the same and the deduction of the £41,999.99 would be taken from the salaries and administration element of the Action Plan programme.

The Partnership agreed that any in-year financial reallocation received would be reallocated towards salaries and administration, thus enabling the programme element to proceed as planned. It was noted that a report in relation to any reallocation received would be submitted for consideration and that an invitation be extended to representatives from The Executive Office to present to the Partnership in respect of the programme.

The Partnership agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to note and endorse the course of action agreed by the Partnership.

PEACE IV Programme - Secretariat Update

Ms. McKinney reported that confirmation had been received from the Audit Authority that the Article 27 Audit of the Council's Programme had been completed successfully, which would enable SEUPB to progress final payments. In addition, the Partnership was informed that reimbursement of final claims for Children and Young People (that being £123.5K) and Building Positive Relations (that being £221K) that is, 'Claim 36', for the Shared Spaces and Services theme of £1.069 million had been received and reconciliation and reimbursement of funds was currently being progressed.

Noted.

Partnership Members' Update

The Partnership noted a number of verbal updates from various Members in relation to ongoing good relations issues across the Belfast.

PEACEPLUS Belfast City Council Local Action Plan – Update

(Councillors Duffy and I. McLaughlin, Mr. J. Girvan and Ms. Arthurs, who had all declared interests in the matter, left the meeting prior to consideration of the recommendations within the report.)

The Partnership considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Shared City Partnership members with an update on the mobilisation of PEACEPLUS 1.1. Co-designed Belfast Local Community Peace Action Plan (LCAP).

2.0 Recommendations

Members are requested to note the contents of the report and agree

- i. the revised CRT Animation Timeframe subject to SEUPB approval;**
- ii. the cross community breakdown for participants as outlined in Appendix II Option 2**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Letter of Offer (LoO) - Data Sharing Agreement

Correspondence has been issued to SEUPB's Director regarding finalising and agreeing the Data Sharing Agreement (DSA), which is becoming critical. SEUPB has advised they are seeking advice from Counsel and will advise Council in due course.

3.2 Contract Awards

Contract awards are continuing to progress, with further awards made to successful bidders as follows:

- TPC2 - Health & Wellbeing to Ashton with community partners
- CCD3 - LGBTQIA+ - Community Engagement Programme to The Rainbow Project

As previously reported, members should note that delivery partners have been requested to realign the implementation timeframes to condense delivery, where necessary, to ensure achievement of targets by December 2027.

3.3 Procurement

Final procurement checks are progressing for CCD2 Community Connections and CCD4 Community Empowerment Ex-Politically Motivated Prisoners, with formal contract awards imminent.

Clarifications for TPC3 Lot 4 Youth Empowerment are underway, and assessment of Lot 2 of CCD5 Multiculturalism to Interculturalism is progressing.

Members should note that feedback requests on the Lot 1 of CCD5 Multiculturalism to Interculturalism are ongoing, with a view to re-tendering the project by May 2025.

3.4 Mobilisation of Community Regeneration and Transformation

Procurements for the PQQ stage of the Integrated Consultancy Services (Design) for all capital projects were recently issued.

As reported in April 2025, alignment of the capital and animation timeframe is required to enable the achievement of targets. Given that construction works is expected to continue to May 2027, delivery of the animation activity, even with an extension, will be challenging.

The PEACEPLUS Programme Board, has considered delivery of animation activity across three phases of pre, during and post construction, as outlined in Appendix I CRT Animation Timeframe and recommend that the Shared City Partnership agree the revised timeframe, subject to agreement with SEUPB.

3.5 Programme Extension

A preliminary approach has been made to SEUPB to formally submit the extension request. SEUPB has advised that the extension request should be submitted via SEUPB's Modification Template once Council is formally contracted on JeMS.

Discussions with SEUPB on progressing formal contracting is progressing.

3.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

As referenced at 3.1 the Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) between Council and the SEUPB has not yet been agreed and signed. Proposed amendments from Council to the DSA are being considered by SEUPB's Counsel. These impacts finalising the Schedules of Processing (SOP's) between Council and Delivery Partners.

The Programme Board has considered the sharing of participant data and the risk to Council and Delivery Partners. It is recommended that as an interim measure, Delivery Partners submit participant databases, with personal data anonymised. Members are requested note this approach.

3.7 Cross Community Breakdown

Members are reminded that the cross-community breakdown of participants outlined in the PEACEPLUS Action Plan submission reflects the religious breakdown for Belfast based the 2021 Census data, which is Catholic 43%, Protestant 30%, Other Religions 3%, and No Religion 24%.

It was highlighted during the co-design and pre-market engagement phases, that the cross-community breakdown for projects reflective of participant age groups and area of delivery was critical. As such each project has individual cross community targets based on these factors, with the exception of TPC5 Employability (Language Up), which is based on those who do not have English as a first language.

- 3.8 As mobilisation of the Community Regeneration & Transformation (CRT) projects is progressing, consideration of the cross-community breakdown for projects based on the above factors (Option 1) has been compiled. However, a key aspect of the CRT projects is to attract people from other areas to the regenerated locations, and on this basis a further cross community breakdown of those within a 2-mile radius of the delivery area (Option 2), has been compiled. (Refer to Appendix II). As the LGBTQIA+ Hub is centrally located, the cross community split for Belfast has been applied.

Members should note that as each project assigned individual cross community targets, there are some rounding issues when figures from all projects are collated together, as outlined in the variances.

- 3.9 A Letter of Offer condition states that the 'community background of each cohort of participants should be confirmed and not vary from that set out in the application and detailed on JeMs.' As such applying a consistent rationale to achieve as close to the cross-community targets outlined in the Action Plan is required.

- 3.10 The Programme Board has considered the cross-community breakdown options and recommend that the Shared City Partnership

agree Option 2 as the preferred approach. It should also be noted that these are minimum cross community targets that delivery partners should be aiming to achieve and will not exclude anyone from participating in projects.

3.11 Governance

implementation of operation tier of the Governance structure is progressing, with meetings of the Thriving and Peaceful Communities (TPC) and Celebrating Cultures & Diversity (CCD) Thematic Steering Groups (TSG) scheduled for the 7 and 8 May 2025, respectively. Members are advised that the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the TGSs and streamlining of the Capital and Community Regeneration and Transformation TSG is being considered by the Programme Board. A further report on the proposed amends of the TSG will be presented to members at the next meeting.

3.12 Delivery Partner Support

Contract initiation meetings with appointed delivery partners are progressing. Further training workshops on the requirements for Data Sharing, Monitoring and Evaluation, Communications and Finance are scheduled for 14 May and 17 June 2025.

3.13 Financial Controller

An approach for management verification services for both the PEACEPLUS Action Plan and Reconnected Belfast projects, has been submitted to KPMG, as the first ranked contractor on SEUPB's Management Verification / Financial Controller Framework. KPMG has completed their initial checks and confirmed they have capacity to deliver services. A preliminary meeting to discuss the next steps has taken place. KPMG has advised they are to complete their onboarding process and agree a budget for the works with SEUPB.

3.14 Programme Risk Register

Members are reminded that quarterly risk updates will be reported, with delivery partner risks considered and escalated, as necessary. To date, 5 delivery partners have submitted Risk Registers that have been reviewed in line with the Programme Risk Register, and to date no additional risks have been identified.

Financial & Resource Implications

All expenditure associated with the PEACEPLUS Action Plan is eligible from 1 January 2024. Once SEUPB complete the formal contracting on JeMS, claims submission will progress. Claims expenditure from January 2024 to March 2025 is valued at £488,344 and relate solely to Salary and Office / Admin costs, preparation for the submission of claims on JeMS is progressing, although as referenced above xxx

claims submission will progress once the formal contracting on JeMS has been progressed.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan has been screened for equality, good relations and rural needs assessment, and has been screened out.

The Partnership was provided with an overview of the report.

(Councillor Abernethy in the Chair.)

Prior to considering the recommendations, the Acting Chairperson's attention was drawn to the fact that the meeting was inquorate in that only one Elected Member remained in attendance.

Accordingly, the meeting was declared to be at an end and it was noted that the above-mentioned report would be submitted to the meeting of the Strategic Policy Resources Committee on Friday 23rd May, with a request that it endorse the recommendations as set out.

Chairperson