

SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

Monday 9th October, 2023

MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Duffy (Chairperson);
Councillors Lyons, McLaughlin and Smyth.

External Members: Ms. O. Barron, Belfast Trust;
Ms. J. Irwin, Community Relations Council;
Ms. A. Roberts, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority;
Ms. A. M. White, British Red Cross; and
Mr. G. Walker, North Belfast Community Representative.

In attendance: Ms. D. McKinney, PEACE Programme Manager;
Mr. J. Girvan, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager;
Mr. S. Lavery, Good Relations Programme Manager;
Ms. L. Dolan, Good Relations Officer;
Mr. D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer;
Ms. E. Henry, Strategic Lead, Belfast Destination Hub; and
Ms. V. Smyth, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor McMullan, Ms. B. Arthurs and Mr. P Anderson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11th September 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

Belfast Stories Presentation

The Members welcomed Ms. E. Henry, Strategic Lead from the Belfast Stories team, who had been invited to present an update on this new experience in the city centre which would share the stories of the people and the place (past, present and future), told through exhibitions, screen and social spaces.

The Strategic Lead advised that since the last Belfast Stories presentation in September 2022 to the Shared City Partnership, the consultation report had now been

completed and was presented to City Growth and Regeneration Committee in June 2023.

The Strategic Lead outlined the strategic context of the Belfast Stories project and informed the Partnership that its involvement would be needed in bringing actions forward. She provided details of specific findings of the public consultation exercise and the key milestones throughout 2023/24.

The Strategic Lead outlined the consultation findings, engagement, and stories audit and actions as detailed in the presentation. She took the Members through the 3 stages of Inclusive Growth (Pre construction, Construction and Operational) and the Governance structure, and advised that she would be working with Democratic Services over the coming months to establish a Members Working Group.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Lead for her presentation and opened up the floor to questions.

A Member asked if there had been Irish language community engagement. The Strategic Lead advised that an Irish language expert would be brought onboard to ensure the community would be engaged and there would now be a standing item on the Irish Language Forum.

A Member asked where the gaps were in the city. The Strategic Lead agreed to share this information which would be available in an end of project stage report.

Mr. M. McBride asked about plans to share information with young people. The Strategic Lead advised that there were plans to undertake a formal schools' project and intergenerational stories programme over the next 12 months.

There was discussion around the spend of tourism in the east and west areas of the city. A Member asked for it to be noted that West Belfast should receive the same resources as other areas in city to promote tourism. A Member asked for the tourism investment information to be shared to understand where the funds are being spent.

Noted.

SCP Membership (Verbal Update)

The Good Relations Manager welcomed Mr. G. Walker to the Partnership as the community representative for North Belfast. He advised that the Church of Ireland had not responded in terms of nominating a faith representative. He had scheduled a meeting with Bishop McClay and he would raise this matter.

A representative from the Chamber of Commerce had also not been nominated. The Good Relations Manager advised that he would bring this to the attention of the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce.

He advised the Members that Mrs. A. Tohill, TEO, was currently off on extended leave. In this case, the Executive Office would like to nominate a representative to attend the Shared City Partnership in her absence. The Partnership agreed with this approach.

Good Relations Programme Update

The Senior Good Relations Officer updated the Shared City Partnership on the delivery of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan during Quarter 2 (Q2) which covered the period July – September 2023.

The Members were reminded, as reported at its August meeting, the total Good Relations budget for programme, staffing and administration for 2023/24 was £714,857.38. This figure comprised £413,320.10 from the Council and £301,537.28 from The Executive Office. The Executive Office contribution was cut by 47% compared with the allocation awarded for 2022/23. Of this total, £294,644 had been allocated towards programme costs and the remainder allocated towards salaries and administration costs.

The Members recalled that during Q1 a total of £184,644 was allocated to projects across the City.

Work continued on the delivery of the Action Plan during Q2.

While no financial allocations had been made in Q2, officers had been mobilising projects for delivery in Q3. This process was only possible following the final confirmation of budgets in August. The Senior Good Relations Officer referred to the summary in the report which provided a status update on the individual projects.

The Members noted the contents of the report and recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report.

Peace IV Update

The Peace IV Programme Manager provided the Shared City Partnership with a progress update in respect of the Shared Space and Services (SSS) activity and Secretariat associated with the implementation of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

- **SSS Update - Programme Implementation**

Both programming and capital works for the SSS theme had now been completed.

- **PEACE IV Network Scheme – Capital Works**

All snagging and health and safety checks had been completed in early September 2023, and Section 2 opened to the public on Wednesday 13th September 2023.

The Programme Manager advised that, to mark the completion of all works, the Forth Meadow Community Greenway had opened to the public on 16th September 2023. People could now travel uninterrupted along the full 12km route. The opening of the Greenway was co-designed with the local community through the Advisory

Group, with fun days in Glencairn Park and Springfield Dam, bird ringing at Bog Meadows, tree planting at Springvale and volunteer led walks and cycles between the 2 sites along the greenway. The community celebration was well attended and encouraged people to move along the route.

- **Shared History, Heritage and Identity Content / Narratives for Shared Space**

The compendium of narratives, Proud of Our Past, Confident for the Future had been received from the Delivery Partner and distributed during the Community Open Day as referenced above.

- **SSS Financial and Resource Implications**

The final claim and report for Period 36 (Aug-Sep 23), valued at £1.088m, had been submitted to SEUPB. That brought the total value of claims submitted under the SSS theme to £6,012,710, against a revised Letter of Offer award of £6,432,705. The underspend within the theme was approximately £467k, which was attributable to the signage / language decision. To date, claims valued at £2.273m had been reimbursed and outstanding claims were now £3.691m.

The Partnership noted that SEUPB adherence to the timeframe for reimbursement had slipped, as such a formal request for an updated payment schedule would be progressed by officers.

- **PEACE IV Programme Closure**

A celebration event marking the closure of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan and International Day of Peace took place at the City Hall on Thursday 21st September 2023. The event outlined the achievements and impacts of the Programme. The funding body, SEUPB, and representatives from TEO, as the Accountable Department, had attended the event and acknowledged the contribution to peacebuilding. A representative from DCRD, the Irish Government Accountable Department, was included and the event had also showcased the Belfast Peace Journey video.

The Members noted that post project evaluations for the CYP and BPR theme, including the impact analysis, had been completed as outlined in Appendices I and II. Key highlights of impacts released showed that:

- 86% of participants within the Children and Young People theme believed that relations between Protestants and Catholics would be somewhat / much better in 5 years, a 13% increase from the start of the project.
- Within the Building Positive Relations theme, 79% of participants believed that relations between Protestants and Catholics would be somewhat / much better in 5 years, a 17% increase.
- Understanding of the culture of minority ethnic communities had increased from 24% of participants to 51.2% on completion of projects, within the Building Positive Relations Theme.

The post project evaluations for the SSS theme, including the impact analysis, was currently being compiled and would be presented to the Members in a future report.

The Peace IV Programme Manager reported that SEUPB had reimbursed £64.2k of claims during September 2023 in respect of NIHE CYP P32 (£16.7k) and BPR P33 (£47.5k) expenditure.

Following submission of the final SSS claim, the total value of claims awaiting SEUPB verification was now £4,899,442. The Peace IV Programme Manager advised that an updated payment schedule for claims and request for a timeframe for reimbursement would be requested from SEUPB.

All costs relating to PEACE IV were claimed for reimbursement from SEUPB. Following submission of the final claim, the total expenditure across the PEACE IV Programme was £12,972,748, against Letters of Offer valued at £14,574.876. The Programme Manager referred to the breakdown below.

Theme	Budget	Expenditure	Underspend
CYP	£ 2,965,421.49	£ 2,335,888.87	£ 634,362.25
BPR	£ 5,176,749.33	£ 4,624,148.86	£ 553,321.22
SSS	£ 6,432,705.31	£ 6,012,710.35	£ 467,937.75
TOTAL	£ 14,574,876.13	£ 12,972,748.08	£ 1,655,621.21

The Programme Manager advised that, as previously reported, all funding under the PEACE IV was fully committed. The underspends within CYP and BPR were a result of reduced staff costs and reflected the level of delivery by NIHE, and the signage / language decision for the SSS.

The Members noted that future reporting of the PEACE IV Programme would be as required and focused solely on final evaluations and the claims position.

Peace Plus Belfast City Council Local Action Plan
(Presentation with Recommendation)

The Good Relations Programme Manager delivered a presentation on the Local Action Plan with the purpose of:

- Providing a final updated overview of projects to be included in the PEACEPLUS 1.1 Local Community Action Plan.
- Requesting that the Shared City Partnership agree the PEACEPLUS Plan detailed in the presentation;

- Recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to agree the outlined PEACEPLUS Plan in the presentation and for this to be submitted through the application process to the Special EU Programmes Body; and
- Agree delegated authority to officers to make minor amendments to the Action Plan, where necessary to ensure compliance with the assessment and funding requirements.

The Good Relations Programme Manager provided a recap on the PEACEPLUS Action Plan which had a budget total of €17,437,277 / £15,162,85, and a target of 17,437 participants to be engaged. He outlined the peacebuilding elements of the plan and the current status as of October 2023 and the current budget position. He emphasised the significant amount of work that the project had involved.

Theme 1 Community Regeneration & Transformation

The Good Relations Programme Manager provided the Partnership with details of the capital proposals and projects across the city and the participant numbers.

- Approx £4.4m (minus fees) for 5 projects across the city
- Projects of a scale of approximately £500k-£600k
- Animation budget will accompany projects

There was discussion around minorities in the city and hate attacks. The Good Relations Programme Manager advised that there were plans to address such matters as part of the Local Area Plan. A Member advised that there were data sets available that could inform the plan. The Good Relations Programme Manager stated there might be a need to go into specific areas and he confirmed that that the Members' points would be taken on board.

The Good Relations Programme Manager provided a Member with clarity around the Annadale project in the context of the plan.

The Peace IV Programme Manager responded to Ms. A M White's comments around agility in respect of ethnic minorities and confirmed that an agile response would be taken to emerging issues.

Theme 2 Thriving & Peaceful Communities - Final Concepts

The Programme Manager outlined the key objectives across Capacity Building (Neighbourhood Empowerment Programme), Health and Wellbeing, Youth, Sport, Employability and the Arts.

Theme 3 Celebrating Culture & Diversity - Final Concepts

The Good Relations Programme Manager outlined the key objectives across Faith and Church/Religion and Belief, Ethnic Minority, LGBTQAI+, Ex Politically Motivated Prisoners Community and Culture & Heritage.

He provided details of potential future development and preliminary feedback received from SEUPB and the timeline of key milestones and next steps up to 7th – 13th November 2023.

On behalf of the Shared City Partnership, the Chairman acknowledged the level of work which had gone into the project.

- The Members of the Shared City Partnership agreed to the PEACEPLUS Plan detailed in the presentation; and
- Agreed to recommend to the Special Policy and Resources Committee to approve the outlined PEACEPLUS Plan in the presentation and for this to be submitted through the application process to the Special EU Programmes Body; and
- Agreed that authority be delegated to officers to make minor amendments to the Action Plan, where necessary, to ensure compliance with the assessment and funding requirements.

Chairperson