

SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

Monday 6th November, 2023

MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

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

External Members: Mr. T. Burns, Faith Sector;
Mr. J. Donnelly, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Ms. J. Irwin, Community Relations Council;
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast and District Trades Union;
Ms. T. Mimna, Good Relations, TEO;
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority;
Ms. A. Roberts, Community and Voluntary Sector; and
Mr. G. Walker, North Belfast Community Representative.

In attendance: Ms. D. McKinney, PEACE Programme Manager;
Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor Smyth and Ms. B. Arthurs, Ms. C. McMenamin, Wasif Naeem and Ms. A.M. White.

Minutes

In considering the minutes of the meeting of 9th October, which had been ratified at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee held on 20th October, Mr. J. Donnelly advised that his attendance had not been recorded. He also clarified that under the heading 'Belfast Stories Presentation' he had stated that a mapping exercise of major tourism investment across the city should be undertaken and asked that this be reflected in the November minutes.

The minutes of the meeting of 9th October 2023 were taken as read and agreed as correct, subject to the foregoing variation.

Declarations of Interest

Ms. T. Mimna declared an interest in agenda item 4 'Peace Plus Belfast City Council Local Action Plan' as TEO was the accountable department for PEACE Plus Investment Area 1.1 and at this stage in the proceedings she left the meeting.

Schedule of Meetings 2024

The Partnership approved the following schedule of meetings for 2024 and agreed that all meetings would commence at 1.30 p.m.:

- Monday, 8th January
- Monday, 5th February
- Monday, 11th March
- Monday, 8th April
- Monday, 13th May
- Monday, 10th June
- Monday, 5th August
- Monday, 9th September
- Monday, 7th October
- Monday, 11th November
- Monday, 2nd December.

SCP Membership Update (Verbal)

The Good Relations Manager commenced by welcoming Mr. Tim Burns to his first meeting of the Partnership, representing the Faith Sector. He also welcomed Ms. Tracey Mimna from TEO who was standing in for Ms. Anne Tohill whilst she was on a period of extended leave.

The Partnership was advised that there remained two vacant positions on the Partnership from the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce. He stated that, should these posts not be filled by December, he would submit a report to the January 2024 meeting of the Partnership with a contingency plan seeking to fill the vacant positions from other areas of the local business sector.

The Members were reminded that Mr. Aengus Hannaway had recently retired from the NIHE. The Housing Executive was still to appoint a new representative and the officer advised that he was hopeful that he would have details of the new nominee for the December meeting of the Partnership.

The Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the update provided.

Good Relations Scope of Work

The Good Relations Manager provided the Members of the Partnership with a comprehensive update on the range of projects that the Good Relations Unit was currently engaged in and the role of the Good Relations Officers.

The Members were advised that, since 2003, the Council had delivered an annual Good Relations Action Plan of programmes and projects, both internally within the Council and externally within the community. The Executive Office supported the Council's Action Plans under the T:BUC programme called the District Council's Good

Relations Programme (DGGRP). In addition to the delivery of the DCGRP, the Good Relations Unit also supported the Council in carrying out its functions under Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act; namely that all public bodies in carrying out their functions are “*required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group*”.

He reported that, in previous years, the Good Relations Action Plan had been approximately £1M, whilst this year it had been reduced to approximately £0.6M. The Members were reminded that the role of the Good Relations Unit was much more than the delivery of the annual Action Plan, with officers involved in a range of activity.

He detailed that the current financial climate was challenging, however, the volume of Good Relations work remained unchanged. The officers felt that it would be a useful exercise to inform Members of the breadth and scope of the work of the Unit and that of officers, in order to demonstrate the wider role and ensure that the Members of the Partnership were kept apprised of the work of Good Relations and how it supported the work of the Shared City Partnership.

He advised that the Good Relations Unit in Belfast City Council not only provided the District Council’s Good Relations Action Plan but also Advice, Support, and Advocacy in a number of ways, as follows:

Internal support to Council Units

He explained that, internally, the role was to provide advice and guidance to those seeking it to ensure that Good Relations was at the heart of all work. This was critical as one of the underpinning themes within the Belfast Agenda stating, “*BCC will work with the Shared City Partnership to deliver an integrated plan to improve good relations, develop a sustainable, transferable and scalable approach to management and promotion of shared spaces, while creating leadership and networking opportunities*”.

The officer detailed that the Good Relations Unit was supporting the following internal activities:

- the provision of Good Relations Awareness Training material, along with Human Resources, to all staff, including refresher training every 3 years;
- advice and guidance with the implementation of key Corporate Initiatives such as the new Dual Language Street Sign policy, expert advice to the recent One Young World Conference content group, Belfast Stories, Youth Advisory Group and regular advice to projects within Physical Programmes, Facilities or activities within Parks and Open Spaces;
- the main Council point of contact for staff who were seeking to engage with migrant and minority ethnic groups and advising senior management on policy and action planning in these areas;

- provision of advice and guidance for colleagues dealing with Good Relations challenges, such as flags, emblems, memorials and other cultural issues;
- support for the Lord Mayor's Unit in engagement with groups from a variety of community backgrounds, meeting with groups, drafting briefings, speeches and follow up on any actions from such engagements;
- provision of advice and guidance for Peace III, Peace IV and PeacePlus, including the drafting of projects for inclusion in these various Council plans; and
- working with senior management on a meaningful 'mainstreaming' of Good Relations.

External Support to Community and Statutory Organisations in Belfast City

The Good Relations Manager advised that externally the Unit had a significant footprint within the city, through years of building relationships with key stakeholders and representing the Council at a range of forums. The Unit also supported a range of groups, universities and those seeking to explore the Council's role in Good Relations and Peacebuilding.

He provided some examples of this work, as follows:

- managing external funding for initiatives such as the Home Office Dispersal Funding, Heritage Lottery funding for Centenaries projects in 2021, Stena Line funding for work in schools as well as the annual TEO Action Plan;
- providing support for local forums, advisory groups and advice projects at a neighbourhood level on a variety of Good Relations issues such as Interfaces, Minority Ethnic issues, shared housing schemes and cultural expression;
- providing support to communities at a neighbourhood level where there was localised Good Relations issues that required advice, support and intervention;
- providing support to local groups in seeking funding from other agencies;
- regular and ongoing relationship building with local groups and organisations seeking to build Good Relations at a local level;
- undertaking interviews with students studying peacebuilding and conflict resolution;

- providing talks and presentations to visiting international groups in partnership with universities and organisations such as Intercomm; and
- connecting local groups with other statutory, community and governmental bodies in order to maximise their projects and ideas.

Supporting Central Government

The Good Relations Manager detailed that the role of the Unit also involved a significant partnership with TEO, in the support of its wider T:BUC Headline Actions. This included a range of tasks such as:

- assessing grant applications for the Central Good Relations Fund and the Planned Intervention Programme;
- participation in regular ‘shared learning’ events with other practitioners within the Good Relations field on a regional basis;
- providing information to TEO for Assembly Questions or for queries from MLA’s;
- participating in the DoJ led Interfaces Working Group; and
- support for TEO staff delivering initiatives such as Urban Villages, Minority Ethnic Development Fund and Tackling Paramilitarism. This support included linking staff with local communities, facilitating engagement and signposting.

The Good Relations Manager advised that the aforementioned areas of work necessitated undergoing a significant degree of vouching, monitoring and evaluation, this was also undertaken within the Unit. He explained that this work was crucial, not only for the stewardship of external funding, but also to maintain the good reputation of the Council.

The Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the update provided and also that an updated Action Plan would be submitted to the December meeting of the Partnership which would aim to further build sustainable good relations within communities.

Peace Plus Belfast City Council Local Action Plan

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

The purpose of this report is to provide Shared City Partnership Members with an information update on the submission timetable for PEACE PLUS 1.1. Co-designed

Local Community Peace Action Plan for Belfast, and the scheduled Public Information Sessions.

2.0 Recommendations

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

3.0 Main report

SCP members are aware that the development of the £15.1 million Local PEACE Action Plan is being delivered in three stages:

Stage 1 Co-design needs & opportunities
Stage 2 Co-design long list of priority projects
Stage 3 Action Plan submission

The plan will be delivered under the following 3 Thematic Areas

1. Community Regeneration & Transformation (Capital Projects)
2. Thriving & Peaceful Communities
3. Building Respect for All Cultural Identities

3.2 Current Status – Stage 3 Submission

There are a number of moving parts which have been timetabled out for submission in November 2023.

- Executive Summary
- The proposed Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan
- Strategic and Policy Context
- The Co- Design Process
- Project Options Considered and Preferred Option
- Budget and Financial Projections
- Risk Analysis (Risks, Uncertainty and Constraints)
- Horizontal Themes - Sustainable Development and Equality
- Management Arrangements
- Communication & Marketing Plan
- Monitoring & Evaluation Plan
- Exit Strategy And VFM - Economy, effectiveness and efficiency
- Summary Action Plan
- JEMS Application Support

Further Detail of the above is detailed in Appendix 1.

3.3 Information Sessions

Two public information sessions will be held to report back on all initiatives included in the overall plan for submission to SEUPB, as a member of the Shared City Partnership Officers would welcome your attendance and support at one of these sessions.

- Tuesday 7th November 11.00 am – 12.30pm, Girdwood Community Hub, 10 Girdwood Avenue, BT14 6EG
- Monday 13th November 7.00 pm – 8.30 pm, Riddel Hall, 185 Stranmillis Road, BT9 5EE

To book a place, can you please email peacepluslap@belfastcity.gov.uk and confirm which session you will attend.

3.4 Further to this Belfast City Council hope to offer practical training with regards to preparing for the tendering opportunities that will be available as part of PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan.

3.5 Financial and Resource Implications

Within existing budget to be claimed retrospectively from SEUPB.

3.6 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

The Plan, once produced, will need to be screened for equality and good relations implications along with completion of a rural needs assessment.”

With the aid of PowerPoint, the Peace Programme Manager presented the Members with a detailed update on the submission timetable for PEACE PLUS 1.1. Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plan for Belfast, advising of the specific dates of competition for the various areas of the plan.

The Members noted the particularly tight deadlines and the Chairperson, on behalf of the Partnership, thanked the officers for their dedication and commitment at this time in ensuring that the deadlines were achieved.

The Good Relations Manager advised that the following Public Information Sessions were scheduled to be held to report back on all initiatives included in the overall plan for submission to the SEUPB:

- Tuesday, 7th November 11.00 am – 12.30 pm, Girdwood Community Hub, 10 Girdwood Avenue, BT14 6EG; and

- Monday, 13th November 7.00 pm – 8.30 pm, Riddel Hall, 185 Stranmillis Road, BT9 5EE

He advised that a place could be reserved by e-mailing peacepluslap@belfastcity.gov.uk and he encouraged the Members to attend one of the sessions to show their support.

Following a query from a Member regarding the current high levels of inflation, the Peace Programme Manager concurred with the difficulties of estimating for this and advised that, where possible, realistic contingency sums were being built into the proposals. She added that it might be possible for funds to be diverted should there be a shortfall in other areas.

The Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the update provided.

Chairperson