

## **GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**

**FRIDAY, 16th JANUARY, 2009**

### **MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**

- Members present: Councillor McCausland (Deputy Chairman)  
(in the Chair); and  
Councillors C. Maskey and Stoker.
- External Members: Mr. P. Scott, Catholic Church;  
Rev. S. Watson, CALEB;  
Mr. R. Galway, Bombardier Aerospace/CBI;  
Mr. P. Bunting, Irish Congress of Trade Unions;  
Ms. S. Bhat, Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum;  
Ms. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;  
Ms. A. Chada, Minority Ethnic Groups;  
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast Trades Council;  
Mrs. M. Marken, Catholic Church;  
Miss L. Coates, Belfast City Centre Management;  
Ms. M. De Silva, Voluntary/Community Sector;  
Mr. L. Reynolds, Voluntary/Community Sector; and  
Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;
- Also attended: Ms. E. Dargan, Consortium of Community Relations  
Council and Border Action.
- In attendance: Ms. M. T. McGivern, Director of Development;  
Ms. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;  
Mr. I. May, Peace III Programme Manager; and  
Mr. J. Heaney, Committee Administrator.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Long, McCarthy and Kyle, together with Miss H. Smith and Miss E. Wilkinson.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 5th December were taken as read and signed as correct.

Arising from discussion on the minutes, the Good Relations Manager reported that since the last meeting another area within the south of the City had been identified as having the potential to meet the criteria and therefore would be included for economic appraisal in the Peace III Arterial Routes Programme.

**Partnership Agreement**

The Partnership was reminded that under the terms and conditions of the Letter of Offer to the Council from the Special European Union Projects Body (SEUPB) a formal Partnership Agreement was required to be submitted for approval. The Peace III Programme Manager advised the Partnership that no drawdown or claims processing would be possible until a Partnership Agreement had been agreed and was in place.

The Peace III Programme Manager advised the Partnership that a draft agreement had been provided by SEUPB. However, following a review by the Council's Legal Services Department it had been deemed inappropriate since the draft agreement had been designed primarily for a Local Authority cluster area. Accordingly, he submitted for the Partnership's consideration a revised draft agreement, which had been drawn-up in consultation with the Director of Legal Services, a copy of which is set out hereunder:

**“PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT  
For the IMPLEMENTATION of the BELFAST CITY COUNCIL PEACE  
& RECONCILIATION PLAN (PEACE PLAN)**

**Within the framework of the Cross-Border Territorial Co-operation Programme for Northern Ireland, the Border Counties of Ireland and Western Scotland 2007-2013, hereafter referred to the PEACE III Programme.**

**Between the following partners:**

**LEAD PARTNER**

**1. Belfast City Council**

**Represented by Councillors:**

**Naomi Long MLA (Chairman)  
John Kyle  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Pat McCarthy  
Conor Maskey  
Bob Stoker**

**PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS (as at December 2008)**

- 2. NI Housing Executive  
Represented by: Jennifer Hawthorne**
- 3. Department for Social Development/  
Belfast Regeneration Office  
Represented by: Elaine Wilkinson**
- 4. Irish Congress of Trade Unions  
Represented by: Peter Bunting**

5. **Belfast Trades Council**  
Represented by: Paddy Mackel
6. **Confederation of British Industry**  
Represented by: Rory Galway
7. **Belfast City Centre Management**  
Represented by: Leanne Coates
8. **Catholic Church**  
Represented by: Michelle Marken  
Patrick Scott
9. **Protestant Churches**  
Represented by: Helen Smith  
Samuel Watson
10. **Minority Faith Groups**  
Represented by: Sharada Bhat
11. **Voluntary and Community Sector**  
Represented by: Sean Brennan  
May de Silva  
Lee Reynolds  
Michael Wardlow
12. **Minority Ethnic Sector**  
Represented by: Angila Chada

*Please note that the use of the term 'Partnership' does not signify, and is not intended to establish, that a legal partnership between the parties exists.*

#### **Article 1: Subject of the Partnership Agreement**

The subject of this partnership agreement is the Belfast Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan funded by the European Regional Development Fund under Priority 1.1 of the Peace III Programme for Northern Ireland Building Positive relations at the local level.

#### **Article 2: Duration of the Partnership Agreement**

This partnership agreement covers the period August 2008 to December 2010.

**Article 3: Role of the Lead Partner**

- 3.1** Belfast City Council (the Lead Partner) will retain legal responsibility for the management of the Peace III funds allocated, including financial monitoring and audit requirements; the Council will also be responsible for any officers who may be employed under this Programme. The Lead Partner shall fulfill all obligations arising from the Letter of Offer and the approved application. In particular the Lead Partner shall fulfill the following obligations.
- 3.2** The Lead Partner is responsible for the overall co-ordination, management and implementation of the project, including delivery of those specific actions identified in the Peace Plan. The Lead Partner shall be the beneficiary of the ERDF grant and shall manage the funds in accordance with the details of this Partnership Agreement. The Lead Partner assumes sole responsibility for the entire project vis-à-vis the Managing Authority.
- 3.3** The Lead Partner shall appoint a Project Manager who has operational responsibility for the implementation of the overall project;
- 3.4** The Lead Partner will ensure timely commencement of the project and implementation of the entire project within the time schedule in compliance with all obligations to the Managing Authority. The Lead Partner shall notify the Managing Authority of any factors that may adversely affect implementation of the project activities and/or financial plan;
- 3.5** Reception of payments from the Managing Authority and the management of the EU funds, in particular their timely onward transfer to those organisations commissioned to deliver elements of the Peace Plan; review of the appropriate spending of the EU funds by those organisations; and consolidation of the project-related individual accounting records of those organisations and preparation of all required documents and records for the final audit (with assistance of those organisations );
- 3.6** Preparation of a work plan setting out the tasks to be undertaken as part of the project and the role of those organisations in their implementation, and a project budget

- 3.7 Preparation and submission of periodic progress reports, interim reports, final reports, follow-up budget documentation, financial declarations, requests for payment, financial reports and application for budget or contract clause alterations;
- 3.8 Any other tasks agreed with those organisations commissioned to deliver elements of the Peace Plan

#### **Article 4: Role of the Partnership**

The Partnership shall have responsibility for endorsing the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan, for the overall management of Belfast City Council's element of the Peace III Programme, for establishing the criteria to be used in determining applications for funding and for approving funding applications.

#### **Article 5: Roles of Partnership Members**

- 5.1 All Partnership members will participate equally in its operation and will be expected to contribute positively towards the aims of the Peace III Programme.
- 5.2 The members of the Partnership will receive full training in their new roles, responsibilities, relationships, conflicts of interest and standards of behaviour.
- 5.3 All members of the Partnership will act as representatives for the various sectors from which they have been nominated or selected and will be expected to report regularly to their constituents, to ensure good ongoing feedback, consultation, and accountability.

#### **Article 6: Organisational Structure of the Partnership**

The Partnership is established as a Working Group of the Council's Strategic Policy & Resources Committee. As such, all recommendations of the Partnership will be subject to the agreement of that Committee and to ratification by the full Council.

- 6.1 **Quorum**  
The quorum for a meeting of the Partnership shall be 6, including at least 2 elected Members of the Council.
- 6.2 **Chairman**  
The Chairman of the Partnership shall be appointed from amongst the elected Members of the Council. If the Chairman is present he/she must take the Chair. In the absence of the Chairman, an elected Member of the Council shall be appointed to take the Chair for the duration of the meeting or until such time as the Chairman arrives.

**6.3 Meetings**

The Partnership shall meet monthly, with the exception of July when no meeting shall be held. The Partnership shall establish the date and time of its meetings. Council staff will provide secretarial, administrative and other support services.

**Article 7: General Rules for the Regulation of Business by the Partnership**

**7.1** In any instance of dispute as to the rules governing the order and conduct of business at a Partnership meeting, the Standing Orders of Belfast City Council shall be used as the appropriate reference document.

**7.2 Voting**

The Partnership shall strive to agree all matters before it by reaching a consensus. In the absence of such consensus, any question shall be decided by a majority of the Members present and voting by show of hands. The Chairman may vote and shall, in addition, have a casting vote in the case of equality of votes.

**Article 8: Belfast Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan**

The plan is included as an annexe to this agreement.

**Article 9: Cooperation with third parties**

**9.1** In case of cooperation with third parties, including subcontractors, delegation of part of the activities or of outsourcing, all organisations commissioned to deliver elements of the Peace Plan shall remain solely responsible to the Lead Partner concerning compliance with its obligations as set out in this Partnership Agreement including its annexes and through the latter to SEUPB implementing the Programme.

**9.2** The Lead Partner shall be informed by the organisations commissioned to deliver elements of the Peace Plan about the subject and party of any contract concluded with a third party.

**9.3** No organisation commissioned to deliver elements of the Peace Plan shall have the right to transfer its rights and obligations under this Partnership Agreement without the prior consent of the Lead Partner and the responsible programme implementing bodies.

- 9.4 Cooperation with third parties including subcontractors shall be undertaken in accordance with the procedures set out in EU public procurement directives.

**Article 10: Project Budget & Eligible Expenditure**

The Lead Partner is responsible for preparing a project budget setting out an estimate of eligible expenditure and funding arising from implementation of the Belfast Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan

**Article 11: Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting**

- 11.1 The Lead Partner has overall responsibility for monitoring the actions undertaken by the organisations commissioned to deliver elements of the Peace Plan on an ongoing basis.
- 11.2 The Lead Partner is responsible for submitting interim reports to the JTS throughout the lifetime of the project and by the official end date of the project in order for final payment to be received. These reports should provide details of the activities undertaken as part of the project, the progress/outcomes achieved against targets, expenditure incurred, an explanation for any variances against the work plan's targets for physical outputs and budget, and proposed corrective actions, and any other information deemed relevant.

**Article 12: Communications, Publicity & Dissemination of outcomes**

Partners shall play an active role in any actions organized to disseminate the results of the project in line with the agreed publicity and communications strategy (attached as annexe to this agreement.)

**Article 13: Confidentiality**

Although the nature of the implementation of the Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan is public, it has been agreed that part of the information exchanged in the context of its implementation between the Good Relations Partnership itself or with the JTS or Programme Steering Committee, can be confidential. Only documents and other elements explicitly provided with the statement 'confidential' shall be regarded as such."

After discussion, the Partnership formally adopted the Partnership Agreement.

### Peace III Small Grants

The Committee considered the undernoted report in relation to the provision of a Small Grants element of the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Plan:

#### “Relevant Background Information

The Belfast Peace & Reconciliation Plan has provision for a small grants element under each of its four main themes. The Good Relations Partnership approved the opening of the call for Small Grants under the four themes of the Plan at its meeting of 10th October.

The call for small grants applications opened on 14th November and closed at noon on 5th January 2009. 62 applications were received by the deadline and all applications received have been acknowledged in writing.

#### Assessment Process

The Assessment Process was developed in line with guidance from the SEUPB and consists of the following steps

- Receipt of signed and completed application form by the deadline. Late applications not accepted
- An Eligibility Check whereby each application must meet the following criteria
  - The project proposal must clearly address one of the priorities outlined within the Operational Programme;
  - The project activity must be within the eligible area;
  - All sections in the application form must be completed accurately and in full;
  - Applications must be submitted on time (in the case of a published closing date);
  - If the project involves partners, the willingness for project partners to engage in the partnership must be fully demonstrated in the application; and
  - The project must be in accordance with the governing EU Regulations (in particular, rules on the eligibility of expenditure of Structural Funds support in relation to public procurement, state aid, environmental assessment and equal opportunities).



- Assessing officers then score each application against Programme, priority and thematic criteria and cross cutting themes of the programme in line with the project selection criteria issued by the SEUPB, weighted as follows.
  1. Programme criteria- 30% weighting
  2. Priority & Theme criteria- 30% weighting
  3. Efficiency and Effectiveness and the cross cutting themes of equality, sustainable development; impact on poverty and partnership - 40% weighting

An application must score a minimum of 65% under Programme and Priority Criteria and efficiency and effectiveness objectives as well as under the cross cutting themes before it can be considered for funding under the Peace Programme.

Applications were scored against the selection criteria using the following banding method: Not evident/ less evident/ evident/ very evident/ highly evident. The scoring matrix is attached as an appendix to this report.

All assessments were subject to a panelling process which involved a minimum of three Assessing Officers. The assessment scores and rationale have been recorded and will be available to applicants along with a debriefing session where requested. The SEUPB has established a review procedure for the entire programme. Details of this procedure will be communicated to applicants.

#### Key Issues

37 projects scored above the threshold and can be considered for funding under the Peace Plan subject to further checks in line with technical guidance issued under the Programme. These checks would cover the following issues:

- financial management capacity including partnership arrangements where relevant;
- adherence to EC and domestic legislation on equality of opportunity and protection of the environment;
- ability to maintain computerised data recording and monitoring system; and

- administration systems in place for maintenance of a complete audit trail.

The total value of these applications is £872,363.

21 applications scored below the threshold.

2 applications were rejected because they were incomplete.

2 organisations made multiple applications. At its meeting of 10th October the Partnership set a limit of one application per group/organisation, in view of the likely demand, to ensure the broadest possible take-up, unless in exceptional circumstances. These applications have not been assessed at this stage.

Applications are listed as an appendix to this report along with overall percentage score and a brief description of the project.

#### **Resource Implications**

The indicative resource allocation for small grants under the Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan is £850,000. At its meeting on 10th October 2008, the Good Relations Partnership agreed that the sum of £500,000 be made available at this stage. In view of the obvious funding difficulties within the voluntary/community sector in Belfast it is recommended that all 37 projects listed below, which scored over the threshold, proceed to the next stage.

**We are seeking an advance payment from SEUPB to facilitate delivery of these projects.”**

The Partnership affirmed its decision of 10th October, 2008, when it had agreed that a sum of £500,000 (out of a total of £850,000 for the first two years of the Peace III Programme) be made available and that a competitive process be undertaken with the highest scoring applications receiving funding. At that time, the Partnership had agreed also that the decision would be reviewed after six months, in order to ensure that the delivery of the Small Grants element was manageable within the Peace III resources and provided value-for-money within the overall Peace Plan.

Several Members stated that it was important to adhere to that decision of October, 2008 since there was an expectation among certain community groups that a second tranche of funding would be made available later in the year.

The Peace III Manager confirmed that all applicants would be offered the opportunity for a full debriefing session, on request. This would allow organisations which had not achieved the required score to submit a fresh application at the later date.

After discussion, the Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that £500,000 be made available for distribution among those groups which had achieved the 65% threshold, subject to further checks, funding to be awarded to those groups in rank order of scoring to the limit of £500,000 and that a second call for funding under the Small Grants Scheme be made in late spring of 2009.

The Partnership agreed also that those groups which had achieved the 65% threshold on the scoring matrix proceed to the second stage of the process, namely an on-site visit and assurance checks. The Partnership agreed further that staff from the Peace III team would work in conjunction with the Order Action/Community Relations Council Consortium in order to ensure that the cross-border element of the Programme was achieved and that debriefing sessions would be undertaken with unsuccessful applicants to the Programme which would include signposting to other potential sources of funding and development assistance.

Whilst considering the geographic spread throughout the City of those groups which had achieved a score in excess of 65%, Members expressed the view that the Partnership should undertake outreach work and attempt to encourage applications for grant-aid from all areas of the City and, in particular, from those areas which had a low representation at present.

#### **Peace III Commissioning Process Update**

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 5th December, it had adopted a dual approach to the Procedure for Commissioning Projects. The Peace III Programme Manager advised the Members that, in line with that decision, expressions of interest were being sought and that a number of information sessions had been held during January at which in excess of 110 community and voluntary organisations had attended.

Noted.

#### **Proposal for Exhibition Space under the Shared Cultural Theme**

The Peace III Programme Manager reminded the Partnership that, contained within the Shared Cultural Space theme of the Peace Plan, there was a Council-led action to be undertaken which related to the provision of exhibition space. This had been designed to tie in with the re-opening of the Ulster Hall and the City Hall in 2009 at an indicative cost of £100,000. It was proposed that three entrance-free exhibitions would be commissioned and displayed. It was anticipated that the exhibitions would attract over 1,500 visitors by December, 2010 and that at least one of the exhibitions would seek to promote cross-border links. The Partnership was advised that there was a need to develop the content of the proposed exhibitions in order that they would be completed to coincide with the re-opening of the two buildings.

The Members were advised that discussions were on-going between representatives of the Council, the Belfast Education and Library Board, the Northern Ireland Libraries Authority and the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure to examine options for the redevelopment of the Belfast Central Library. The need to reinforce the Central Library as an area of shared space within the City formed part of the discussions and the opportunity had been identified to tie-in with the Peace III Programme. The Programmes Manager pointed out that, whilst the date for the completion of the Central Library was outside the scope of the current Peace III Programme, there was an opportunity for the existing archives and material held by the Central Library to form the basis of an exhibition at the Ulster Hall or the City Hall and that this might be developed into a touring element at a later date.

The work carried out under the Conflict Transformation Project, which had been funded under Peace II, would take the form of an exhibition under the theme of a shared cultural space and would include a display of arts-related material from community groups, community centres and schools throughout the City.

The Peace III Programme Manager suggested that, during the design stage of the proposed exhibition, it might be possible to create exhibitions which would be capable of being erected at a number of sites other than the City Hall or Ulster Hall. He pointed out also that a permanent plaque highlighting the support of the European Regional Development Fund would be required.

After discussion, the Partnership agreed:

- (i) to approve, in principle, the holding of an exhibition on local identity in order to promote reconciliation and build positive relations using the archives and material currently held by the Belfast Central Library and that consultation should continue with the Belfast Education and Library Board, the Northern Ireland Libraries Authority and the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure in relation to the developing of such an exhibition as part of the cultural aspect of the Peace III Plan;
- (ii) to approve, in principle, the holding of an exhibition which would focus on the display of arts-related material from community groups, community centres and schools throughout the City;
- (iii) to note that, where appropriate, the travelling element of the exhibition could be built into the specifications where appropriate in order to maximise audience reach and to promote the idea of a shared cultural space; and
- (iv) to note the need to highlight the support of the European Regional Development Fund in relation to the provision of expenditure.

The Partnership noted also that further proposals in relation to the possible exhibition themes under the Peace Plan would be submitted at future meetings.