

## **GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**

**FRIDAY, 14th AUGUST, 2009**

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

- Members present: Councillor Hendron (Chairman); and  
Councillors Kyle, McCarthy and McCausland.
- External Members: Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;  
Mr. P. Bunting, Irish Congress of Trades Unions;  
Ms. A. Chada, Minority Ethnic Groups;  
Mr. R. Galway, Confederation of British Industry;  
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast Trades Council;  
Mrs. M. Marken, Catholic Church;  
Dr. D. Morrow, Community Relations Council;  
Rev. J. Rea, Methodist Church;  
Mr. L. Reynolds, Voluntary/Community Sector;  
Mr. P. Scott, Catholic Church;  
Mr. M. Wardlow, Voluntary/Community Sector;  
Ms. E. Wilkinson, Department for Social Development.
- Also attended: Ms. E. Dargan, Consortium of Community Relations  
Council and Border Action.
- In attendance: Ms. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;  
Ms. L. Dennis, Peace III Project Officer;  
Mr. D. McGann, Peace III Project Officer;  
Mr. D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer; and  
Mr. J. Heaney, Committee Administrator.

(Councillor McCausland, Deputy Chairman, in the Chair.)

#### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors C. Maskey and Stoker and from Rev. L. Carroll, Ms. M. McKenna and Ms. M. de Silva.

#### **Election of Chairman**

The Partnership agreed that Councillor Hendron be elected Chairman of the Good Relations Partnership.

Councillor Hendron thanked the Members for her election.

(Councillor Hendron in the Chair.)

**Good Relations Current Financial Position**

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that, at its meeting on 5th September, 2008, it had noted a detailed report on the financial position of the Good Relations Unit, which had pointed out that the annual amounts allocated by the Office of the First and the Deputy First Minister had risen steadily over recent years. In March, 2008 correspondence had been received from the Community Relations Unit indicating that there would be potentially significant increases in funding for Councils' good relations programmes, since the year 2008/2009 was viewed as a transitional year leading to significant funding increases in the following two years.

Accordingly, the Good Relations Unit's bid for funding within the current year had been submitted based on the assumption that it was a transitional year, with significant additional support expected in future years. However, despite the assurances that had been received of a significant funding increase, the Council had now received correspondence from the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister indicating that the Council award had been limited to a 5% overall increase in its funding. The decision had been based on several factors, including the economic climate and, in particular, the decision of the Community Relations Unit to retain monies centrally in order for Ministers to support rapid responses/hotspot areas and signature projects throughout the year.

The Good Relations Manager stated that this was extremely disappointing, since it was a clear departure from the previous approach which had indicated greater resources would be made available for local delivery of good relations activity. She pointed out that one effect of the level of increase in funding would mean that the total amounts available under the Good Relations Grant Aid Fund during the current financial year would increase by approximately £17,500 to £367,500. To date, in excess of 70% of the funds available had been allocated and the Partnership had had to agree that the fund be suspended during the summer months. She pointed out that this had left approximately £100,000 for allocation during the remainder of the current financial year.

The Good Relations Manager expressed concerns at the Community Relations Unit's decision regarding the need to retain monies centrally. She stated that, whilst acknowledging that the Unit was the core funder and had a right to reserve funding centrally for emergency action, she expressed the view that the Good Relations Partnership had an interest in ensuring local democratic involvement and accountability and that the proposed activities to be funded were in line with and complementary to other local projects and initiatives, as was the case with all Peace III activities.

She suggested that it would be appropriate to request an assurance from the Community Relations Unit that any such decisions regarding additional ad hoc funding for Belfast and/or direct intervention activities in the City were taken only after full consultation with and full agreement of the Partnership. She suggested also that it would be appropriate to seek assurances that normal protocols and good practice relating to expenditure and public money were applied to the allocation of this central reserve and that the equality implications of this change in policy had been considered fully.

Several Members expressed concern at the percentage increase in funding which had been provided and the decision to retain money centrally. In addition, the Members suggested that the Minister be requested to clarify what had been defined as hotspot areas and signature projects.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the information which had been provided in regard to the Unit's financial position and agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Minister:

- (i) expressing the Partnership's disappointment at the level of funding which had been provided and at the unwelcome departure from normal policy;
- (ii) to seek clarification on what the Department defined as hotspots and signature projects;
- (iii) requesting that there should be local consultation and involvement in any future intervention by the Community Relations Unit within Belfast; and
- (iv) to seek assurances that normal protocols and good practice relating to the expenditure of public money and equality considerations would be applied to the allocation of the central reserve.

### **Peace III Implementation Update**

The Partnership considered a report submitted by the Good Relations Manager detailing the progress which had been achieved to date in respect of the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan. The report had highlighted the work which had been carried out under the different Peace Plan themes and actions which included Shared City Space, Transforming Contested Spaces, Shared Cultural Space and Shared Organisational Space.

The Good Relations Manager highlighted, in particular, the item under Shared Cultural Space entitled Inter-Faith Work. She stated that, since only two responses had been received to the request for expressions of interest, consultation in regard to the theme had taken place with the Council's Faith Forum. Accordingly, it had been proposed to halt the procurement exercise relating to this action and that the Partnership should consider instead the development of a specific Inter-Faith Small Grants Programme relating to inter-church or inter-faith work, with a maximum of grant of £25,000 being made available.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the information which had been provided, agreed to halt the current procurement exercise regarding inter-faith work, approved the development of a tailored small grants programme limited to inter-faith work and noted also that a further report, in relation to the development of a small grants scheme for inter-faith work and providing details of the level of grant and the criteria to be used in relation to this small grants programme would be submitted for its consideration at a future meeting.

**Peace III Review and Planning Session**

The Members of the Partnership were advised that a Review and Planning Session would be held to assess the progress which had been achieved in relation to the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan in order to identify any issues arising and to plan for the forthcoming year.

The Good Relations Manager highlighted the main issues for review which would include the progress relating to expenditure targets and a review of individual themes and actions, stakeholder relationships, monitoring and evaluation framework, communications, strategic fit and complementary initiatives. She indicated that the expected outcomes of the review would be the production of a Year 1 progress report, a revised action plan, revised communication plan, a revised monitoring and evaluation framework and the identification of key themes for consultation in the remaining years of the plan. The Members were advised that the Review and Planning Session would be held in the Holiday Inn, Ormeau Avenue, on 10th and 11th September and that Mr. R. O’Rawe of Stellar Leadership had been appointed to facilitate the session.

After discussion, the Members noted the information provided and noted also the request for each of the Partnership Members to complete a confidential online survey prior to the event and to attend the session.

**Peace III Small Grants 2nd Call**

The Partnership considered the undernoted report which provided an update on the applications which had been received under the 2nd call for Peace III small grants:

**“Purpose of paper**

**To update the Partnership on applications received under the second call for small grants.**

**Key Issues**

**Partnership will recall that they approved a second call for applications under the small grants fund provided for as part of the Belfast Peace Plan. The call opened on 7th June and closed on 10th July. An information session for applicants was held in Grosvenor Hall, Glengall Street on 12th June 2009.**

**Applications received**

**There were 59 applications received under this call. A list of all applications received is attached as an appendix to this report. A map detailing the geographic spread of applications received is also attached.**

### **Assessment**

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 initial 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; and
  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.

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

All documentation relating to the process including original applications forms and supporting documents along with assessment notes are available for inspection at the Good Relations Unit, Adelaide Exchange..

#### Recommended Scores

Summary reports on each project are attached as an appendix to this report. A total of 22 applications have recommended scores above the quality threshold of 65% and would be eligible for funding under the Peace III Programme. A summary of recommended scores for all projects received is attached as an appendix to this report.

#### Budget

The approved allocation for the second call is £350,000. The total amount requested by those applications scoring above the minimum quality threshold is £528,053.52. The fund is therefore oversubscribed by £178,053. The current allocation, as it stands would enable the highest scoring 15 projects to be funded, allowing for an initial overcommitment of 5%. Projects would be subject to further checks including clarification of budget lines prior to issue of any letter of offer.

#### Issues for consideration

The Partnership is asked to consider the following issues in relation to the Peace III small grants fund.

The identification of delivery partners for a number of key actions under the plan under the procurement process has taken longer than anticipated while the end date for activity under the programme remains 31 December 2010 and there is an expenditure target for 2009 as outlined in the letter of Offer from SEUPB. For the same period the funding for mainstream Good Relations grants has not been increased as anticipated.

Through identification of common themes and approaches among the smaller projects along with a continued emphasis on monitoring, evaluation and shared learning, the small grants programme will help achieve some of the desired strategic outcomes.

The Partnership is therefore requested to consider whether it wishes to approve reallocation of funding into the small grants fund from other actions. This would enable funding for those projects which have scored above the quality threshold, subject to satisfactory completion of pre contractual checks and site visit and agreement of budget with Peace III Programme staff. This would mean an additional 7 projects could be considered for funding.

This approach has been discussed with staff of SEUPB who have confirmed that this is an acceptable course of action should the Partnership consider it appropriate.

This would bring the total small grants fund under the current period of the plan, to December 2010, to just over £1million or approximately 20% of the overall allocation under the Letter of Offer. The Small Grants fund was originally 15% of the overall allocation.

### Resource Implications

#### Financial Implications

Eligible project expenditure under the four themes of the Peace Plan was included within the approved allocation of £6.3m and may be reclaimed at 100% from the SEUPB. SEUPB have agreed in principle the re-allocation of funding into the small grants fund.

#### HR Implications

None

### Recommendations

**The Good Relations Partnership is requested:**

- **To note the assessment process.**
- **To consider the detail provided on applications received and the recommended scores as moderated.**
- **To approve the recommended scores.**

**The Partnership is further requested :**

- **to approve reallocation of funding into the small grants fund as outlined above.**
- **to approve the issue of Letters of Offer up to a maximum value of £25,000 subject to satisfactory completion of pre contractual checks and site visit and agreement of budget with Peace III Programme staff.”**

After discussion, the Partnership noted the assessment process, considered the detail provided on the applications received and the recommended scores as moderated and approved the recommended scores. The Good Relations Partnership agreed to adopt the recommendations contained within the report and agreed that all 22 of the undernoted groups which had received a quality score in excess of the 65% threshold should proceed to the next stage. The Partnership also approved the reallocation of funding into the small grants fund as outlined above and approved the issue of Letters of Offer up to a maximum value of £25,000, subject to satisfactory completion of pre-contractual checks and site visit and agreement of budget with Peace III Programme staff.

<u>Organisation Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>
East Belfast Mission	Reality, Perception & Myth: Interface Dialogue during times of change
Creative Writers Network	Her Story – Women’s Writing Project
St Matthews Primary School	St Matthews and Avoniel Parent Support Programme
Arts for All	CIRCA – Cross Interface Relations through Community Arts
PeacePlayers International	Rising Stars – Bridging Divides, Developing Leaders and Changing Perceptions
Manor Street/Cliftonville Community Centre	Actions Speak Louder than Words
Early Years – the Organisation for Children	Media Initiative for Children respecting differences
Greater Village Regeneration Trust	Leadership in a Changing Community



<u>Organisation Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>
Falls Community Council	Sharing Contentious History
Stadium Projects	Higher Force Challenge Programmes
Lower North Belfast Community Council	Impact
Women's Resource & Development	Good Relations – Politics and Progress
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Diversiory Youth Officer
GROW Community Gardens (GROW)	Grow North
Intercomm	They Served With Us – Remembering Commonwealth Military Veterans
Belfast Interface Project	Supporting Sharing Project
Northern Ireland Children's Enterprise	Citizenship in a Divided Society
Small Steps Adult Education Group	Reaching Out
Common Purpose	Young Leaders Pathway Programme
WOMEN'S TEC	Bits and Pieces Project – BAP
Workers' Educational Association	Getting to YES
Corpus Christi Youth Centre	The 'Lily and the Poppy'

**Peace III Procurement Mediation  
Capacity Building Programme**

The Partnership considered a report which provided an update to the Partnership on the procurement of a mediation capacity building programme under the theme of Transforming Contested Spaces in the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Plan:

**“Purpose of paper**

To update the Partnership on the procurement of a mediation capacity building programme under the theme of Transforming Contested Space in the Belfast Peace Plan.

**Key Issues**

Partnership will recall that they approved the invitation of tenders relating to several key actions within the Peace Plan at its meeting in April. Tenders relating to Action 2.2 Mediation Capacity Building Programme in the Peace Plan were received by the deadline on 23rd June 2009. The Partnership is requested to note that SEUPB has requested a minimum 65% quality threshold be used in tender assessment. Tenders were assessed against the following criteria:

- Methodology
- Calibre & Competencies of Project Team
- Value for Money
- Ability to Work in Partnership
- Ability to Meet Timescales
- Complementarity

Submissions were received from Mediation NI (£199,263) and Intercomm (£50,000). Mediation NI scored 75% overall and Intercomm scored 43% overall.

It is recommended that the tender of Mediation NI is accepted at £199,263. This exceeds the budget agreed by the Partnership in April but it is within the resource allocation for Action 2.2 established in the Plan. In line with the revised Scheme of Delegation this has been deemed an exceptional circumstance requiring Council approval.

Further details on the programme will be brought back to the Partnership following agreement of project initiation documents with the contractor.

#### Resource Implications

##### Financial Implications

Eligible project expenditure under the four themes of the Peace Plan was included within the approved allocation of £6.3m and may be reclaimed at 100% from the SEUPB.

##### HR Implications

None

#### Recommendations

**That it be recommended to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee to agree that the tender received from Mediation NI should be accepted by the Chief Executive, under delegated authority, subject to a form of contract drawn up by Legal Services.”**

Several Members sought clarification as to why Mediation Northern Ireland was being recommended, since the cost of such a programme was almost four times that of the other tenderer. The Peace III Project Officers pointed out that the submission received by Mediation Northern Ireland had received a score in excess of 75% and that the other tenderer had achieved a score of 43% which had excluded it from being awarded the contract.

After discussion, the Partnership adopted the recommendation contained within the report.

Arising from discussion in the aforementioned item, several Members suggested that it might be appropriate to compile a register of interest of each of the Members of the Partnership and to seek legal advice from the Director of Legal Services in regard to the declaration of interest at meetings of the Partnership.

The Partnership agreed to this course of action.

### **Unite Against Hate Convention**

The Partnership was advised that the Council's Good Relations and Community Safety Units had, in 2007, developed a partnership to commission research and identify good practice across five groupings which had been protected by hate crime legislation namely, faith, race, sectarianism, disability and sexual orientation. An external working group, comprising representatives from each of the five groupings and statutory partners, had been established to direct this work.

As a culmination of this part of the work, an inaugural convention had been held in Belfast Castle in 2008, to which community representatives from across the City had been invited to hear expert keynote speakers and participate in focused hate crime workshops where their views would inform the following year's work.

Due to the success of this convention, it had been agreed that it should become an annual event and it was reported that the 2009 convention would be held in the Waterfront Hall on Wednesday, 9th September.

The Convention would be opened by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Councillor Long, and guest speakers would include Dr. Morrow, Community Relations Council, Mr. Ted Cantle, Institute for Community Cohesion, and Mr. Steve Wessler, Centre for the Prevention of Hate Violence, who would give local, national and international perspectives on the subject. In addition, workshops would be held which would provide the participants with an opportunity to voice their views on the subjects.

The cost of the convention would be supported with funding from the Northern Ireland Office, Community Safety Unit, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Peace III Programme.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided and noted also that recent events in Belfast had reinforced the need for concerted action against hate crime. The Partnership noted further that the Unite Against Hate message would be promoted via the annual Mela event scheduled to be held on Sunday, 30th August which would be supported through the Peace III City of Festivals theme.

### **City Diplomacy: A Tool for Business Measures of Confidence Seminar**

The Good Relations Manager advised the Partnership that, in June 2008, Councillor C. Maskey and Mr. D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer, had attended a conference in The Hague, which had been organised under the theme of the role of local governments in conflict prevention, peace building and post conflict reconstruction. The representatives had made a presentation on the Council's role in delivering its Good Relations strategy as a tool in peace building and fostering local democracy.

Following on from that conference, an invitation had been received via the Good Relations Unit for a representative to address a seminar in Brussels on the afternoon of 6th October. The title of the seminar was "City Diplomacy: a Tool for Building Measures of Confidence" and it would include international speakers from Belfast, Cyprus and the Balkans who would make presentations and engage in discussion with other participants.

The Good Relations Manager suggested that the event would enable the City to share its good practice in promoting Good Relations and working towards a shared City. It would provide an opportunity to showcase the work being done by Belfast and the Good Relations Partnership in building cooperation in a City emerging from conflict. The event would focus on the implications for local authorities in servicing a divided City and working towards community cohesion.

The organisers had pointed out that, due to budgetary concerns, it was possible to reimburse the costs of only one delegate. Accordingly, the Good Relations Manager recommended that one Good Relations Officer be authorised to attend the conference and to deliver the Council's presentation at the seminar.

The Partnership adopted the recommendation.

### **Re-Imaging Community Exhibition**

The Partnership was advised that, following a successful application by the Good Relations Unit to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Council had been awarded approximately £232,000 to carry out a city-wide Re-imaging Community Arts Programme.

The initial project identification activity, which had formed the basis of the approval, had been carried out by consultants appointed by the Good Relations Unit. The consultants had been tasked with identifying the potential for a range of projects and the artistic concept for a final form, together with budgetary costs.

Of the twelve projects, eleven were progressing towards final implementation by September, 2009. The project for the replacement of murals in the Inner East had been unable to proceed as it had not been able to secure local agreement for the re-imaging initiatives. The Good Relations Manager provided information in relation to the other eleven projects for which funding had been secured giving details of the work involved.

The Partnership was advised that all of the projects were due to be completed in September 2009 and it was suggested that, in order to celebrate the completion of this successful scheme, an exhibition, promoting the partnership work of the Council and showcasing the re-imaging work should be organised. The exhibition would bring together the communities involved in the project to share their experiences and celebrate the positive contribution which they had made in transforming their areas. Initially, the suggested venue for the exhibition would be the Meter House in the Gasworks, a neutral and central location. It was proposed that the exhibition would be launched in September to coincide with the European Heritage open days and would be displayed at a later date within the City Hall. The exhibition would be a mobile exhibition which would permit it to be available for community groups to exhibit at local venues.

The Members noted the information which had been provided, granted approval for the holding of the proposed exhibition and noted that the total cost, in the region of £2,000, would be funded under Peace III – 3.7 Exhibition Space Theme.

### **International Day of Peace – 21st September**

The Partnership was advised that the United Nations' International Day of Peace was celebrated each year on 21st September and was designed to encourage people to work towards peace. The United Nations resolution had declared that "the International Day of Peace shall henceforth be observed as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities for the duration of that Day". The Good Relations Manager reported that the Peace Day would provide an opportunity for individuals, communities and organisations to highlight efforts to end conflict and promote practical acts of peace. The Partnership was informed that within the City, the Peace Day campaign was being headed by the Springboard organisation and the local campaign in Northern Ireland would be aimed at increasing public and civic awareness and the observance of this international day of ceasefire and non-violence.

It was reported that in excess of 100 individuals, groups, politicians, community organisations, schools, churches and public sector organisations had joined Springboard's Peace Day Campaign, the aim of which was to create a talking point about the International Day of Peace and to contribute to reconciliation and maintain peace. The Partnership was advised that the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Councillor Long, would be attending the main Belfast Peace Day on 21st September and would lead the one minute silence at 12.00 noon. The Good Relations Manager reported that all Members of the Partnership had been invited to attend.

Other events being organised to mark the day of peace included a youth conference, a 'come try it sports day' for local primary schools and a concert in the Ulster Hall featuring Brian Kennedy.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the information provided and noted also the invitation to the Members to attend the Peace Day event on 21st September.

### **Jews Schmooze Events**

The Partnership was advised that the Belfast Jewish community would be hosting a series of events entitled 'Jews Schmooze' both at the synagogue and in the Spiegeltent, in partnership with the Ulster Bank Festival at Queen's during October and November. Included in the events would be a play commissioned by Kabosh entitled "This Is What We Sang", a concert by the group Los Desterrados, a comedy documentary and discussion with director and comedian David Schneider and an interactive four-room exhibition entitled "The Jewish Way of Life", which had been used extensively by educators in Great Britain and which the Belfast Education and Library Board were scheduling schools to attend throughout the month.

**Good Relations Partnership,  
Friday, 14th August, 2009**

It was reported that the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Councillor Long, would open the 'Jews Schmooze' initiative on the morning of the 13th October and she would be accompanied by a number of senior representatives from the Jewish Board of Deputies. As the Jewish community were appreciative of the Council's support and encouragement for their work, all Members of the Good Relations Partnership had been invited to attend the event.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the invitation to attend the Jews Schmooze event and noted the information which had been provided.

Chairman