

## **GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**

**FRIDAY, 16th October, 2009**

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

- Members present: Councillor Hendron (Chairman); and  
Councillors Kyle, McCarthy, McCausland,  
C. Maskey and Stoker.
- External Members: Ms. S. Bhat, Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum;  
Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;  
Ms. A. Chada, Minority Ethnic Groups;  
Ms. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;  
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast Trades Council;  
Ms. 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;  
Ms. M. de Silva, Voluntary/Community Sector; and  
Mr. M. Wardlow, Voluntary/Community Sector.
- Also attended: Ms. E. Dargan, Consortium of Community Relations  
Council and Border Action.
- In attendance: Ms. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;  
Mr. I. May, Peace III Programme Manager;  
Ms. C. Wilson, Senior Good Relations Officer;  
Mr. D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer; and  
Mr. J. Heaney, Committee Administrator.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Mr. R. Galway, Ms. A. McKenna and Ms. E. Wilkinson.

#### **Minutes**

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

#### **Peace III Implementation Update**

The Peace III Programme Manager provided the Partnership with an update on the progress which had been achieved to date in regard to the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Plan in respect of the undernoted items:

<b>Shared City Space</b>	
<b>1. Safe Accessible City Centre</b>	<b>Delay to Hate Crime Training</b>
<b>2. Shared Routes Programme</b>	<b>Economic Appraisal approved in principle by DFP economist on 28 July. Further details required by OFMDFM Economist September. Business Case Approved 06 Oct 09</b>
<b>1.4 Community Cohesion</b>	<b>Presentation to GRP</b>
<b>5. Growing Together</b>	<b>Possible name change to Project. October 21 seminar on community gardens.</b>
<b>Transforming Contested Space</b>	
<b>2. Interface Networks</b>	<b>As per attached report</b>
<b>3. Engagement Capacity Building</b>	<b>As per attached report</b>
<b>5. Youth Intervention Programme</b>	<b>As per attached report. Ongoing Consultation with Community Safety; Community Services and BELB re complementary work.</b>
<b>Shared Cultural Space</b>	
<b>1. City of Festivals</b>	<b>Approach to implementation being worked up with Culture &amp; Arts Unit. Report to GRP in November 09.</b>
<b>2. Belfast Inter-Faith Work</b>	<b>Revised implementation approach in consultation with Consortium and inter-faith forum.</b>
<b>4. Creative Legacies Programme</b>	<b>As per attached report</b>
<b>Shared Organisational Space</b>	
<b>3. Learning &amp; Dissemination Programme</b>	<b>Communications Action Plan to be reviewed. Report on Review Session November GRP meeting.</b>

<b>Shared City Space (continued)</b>	
<b>Small Grants Programme</b>	<b>Ongoing site visits prior to issue of Letter of Offer. Debrief Sessions on 05/06 October 2009 for unsuccessful applicants under Call 2. Some projects starting late. Ongoing monitoring of all projects.</b>
<b>Programme Issues</b>	<b>Spend target for Belfast Plan to 30 Sept 09 not met. 50% included on claims database. Technical difficulties with claims database.</b>
	<b>Request to SEUPB re re-allocation of resources within themes following review.</b>
	<b>22/10/09 'Across the border and back' Conference Tara Centre, Omagh from 11am to 4pm.</b>

He advised the Membership that, subsequent to the agenda having been circulated, written confirmation had been received from SEUPB authorising the Council to proceed with the Shared Routes Programme. The Partnership was advised also that the eligible project expenditure under the four themes of the Peace Plan had been included within the approved allocation of £6.3 million and that 100% of the approved expenditure could be reclaimed from the Special European Union Programmes Body.

Several Members enquired if the targets which had been set would be met and, if not, would this result in any loss of funding. In response, the Programme Manager reported that every effort would be made to ensure that the targets would be met and he indicated that it was his understanding that there would be no loss of funding in the event of the target dates not being achieved.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided and noted also that further reports would be submitted on progress and that a report would be provided in regard to the review session which had been held in September.

**Northern Ireland Housing Executive's  
Shared Neighbourhood Programme**

Ms. J. Hawthorne, Partnership Member and Head of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Cohesion Community Unit, provided the Partnership with an update on the work of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Shared Neighbourhood Programme, a project which was designed to deliver community cohesion at local level and delivered in partnership with the City Council.

She pointed out that the overarching theme of the programme was to advance the aims of Peace III through peace and reconciliation by building positive relationships at local level and creating a secure shared City space. She stated that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Shared Neighbourhood Programme engaged currently with three areas in the City, which are currently mixed in terms of their religious/political make up of the communities, in order to protect their character and to secure their shared status. In addition, the project sought to develop at least two local area networks within the City where people would choose to live with others, regardless of their religion or race, and in a neighbourhood which was safe and welcoming to all and threatening to no-one. The projects sought to sustain meaningful dialogue and communication between the communities and sought also to support the local area networks by environmentally re-imagining each area through active community participation and in delivering programmes targeted specifically at young people which would promote social inclusion at a grass roots level.

Ms. Hawthorne stated that the goals of the project were to assist community involvement in environmental projects, to implement and sustain inter and intra community dialogue, to consult with communities in order to assist them replace threatening images and murals, to engage at interfaces, to focus on cross-community work, in particular with the young people of the area, and to actively encourage grass root engagement, community development and capacity building. She pointed out that the project sought to act as a catalyst for members of both communities to engage with each other in a safe and meaningful way and to complement the work of other Statutory Agencies and Partnership Bodies.

She outlined the delivery approach to be undertaken which would involve the appointment of a dedicated officer and the establishment of a Steering Group to direct and govern the programme. Ms. Hawthorne emphasised the fact that the programme would work in partnership with Council staff and use the Council's infrastructure to maximise a co-ordinated and joined-up approach to programme delivery. In addition, the programme would seek to share information with the Council's Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme team in order to implement the delivery of services in an effective manner. Ms. Hawthorne stated that the project would aim to establish at least two further local area networks by March, 2010, in areas which were not currently shared but which could be developed into "sharing between neighbourhoods" models, the overall aim of which was to defuse tension at segregated locations and promote community cohesion at a local level.

Ms. Hawthorne answered several questions from the Members of the Partnership in relation to those organisations which could be involved or consulted and the type of work that might be undertaken in relation to the projects. She concluded by saying that the overall aim of the project could be described as creating "good neighbours".

The Chairman thanked Ms. Hawthorne for her presentation and the Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

### **Regeneration in Neighbourhoods located at the Interface**

The Good Relations Manager advised the Partnership that the Council, at its meeting on 3rd March, 2008, had considered a Notice of Motion regarding the reduction and ultimate removal of interface barriers in the City. The matter had been referred to the former Good Relations Panel which, at its meeting on October, 2008, had agreed that a mapping exercise of all the groups and organisations working at interface areas be commissioned in order to explore a model which would enhance the links between mainstream regeneration work and good relations initiatives. Accordingly, Deloitte MCS Limited had been appointed to carry out the work, the objectives of which were to:

- (i) undertake a “snapshot” exercise on funded activities located in neighbourhoods at the interface, based on funders’ list;
- (ii) undertake Stakeholder consultation designed to discuss measuring the impact and/or the effectiveness of good relations activities at the interface; and
- (iii) develop a set of outcomes for good relations and regeneration work based on stakeholder consultation.

The Good Relations Manager pointed out that, to date, the consultants had completed the snapshot of the funding activities located near or at interfaces. This had indicated that the majority of initiatives were short-term interventions and often without core staff costs. In terms of the volume of grant-aid awards, the Council’s Good Relations Fund was the most common source of funding whilst the International Fund for Ireland and the Atlantic Philanthropies were the most substantial and long-term funders.

It was clear that the Good Relations initiatives supported by the various funders did not exist in a vacuum but were part of a wider picture of voluntary, community and statutory sector efforts designed to address the legacy of segregation throughout the City. Statutory organisations had invested significant amounts of capital funding, together with the provision of staff resources, for such neighbourhoods. However, the exercise had indicated that it was difficult to quantify the voluntary efforts of individuals and groups across the City. The consultants had suggested that, given the prevalence of interfaces in the City and the complexity of the challenges they presented to those persons living in their vicinity, it could be argued that the initiatives and the total investment was relatively small.

The Good Relations Manager indicated that the first stage of the commission had highlighted the need for the various funders to co-ordinate their efforts and objectives and, indeed, map the funding activities against their broader corporate priorities, such as health improvement and economic development. This had been based on the core assumption of the “Towards Sustainable Security” report completed by the Community Relations Council which stated that interface barriers would become obsolete in regenerated neighbourhoods which were vibrant, open, welcoming and safe.

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The Good Relations Manager outlined the work that the consultants would be carrying out in future, including exploring whether the potential existed to enhance connections made between neighbourhood renewal, physical regeneration, investment and conflict management/transformation activity. Such a framework would map a genuine pathway from short-term funded conflict management initiatives through to sustainable regeneration programmes which would transform and re-build relationships at the interface.

She pointed out that the consultants were considering also the research which had been undertaken by the Council's SNAP initiative which had mapped social assets and how it added to the understanding of the current context of interface areas and what methods or implications could be considered for future intervention. She pointed out that the next stage of the stakeholder consultation would seek to obtain the views of the Elected Representatives and a final report would be prepared for the Partnership in 2010.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the consultants be invited to make a presentation at a future meeting.

**Peace III Creative Legacies Programme**

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th May, it had considered, under the Shared Cultural Spaces theme, the Creative Legacies Programme. The aim of the programme was to identify appropriate arts organisations and to devise an enhanced programme of development outreach support for the good relations aspect of the work of those organisations which would seek to build shared cultural spaces within the City. The project had been managed by staff from within the Council's Culture and Arts Unit and, following a competitive exercise, the ten lead organisations listed had been identified to implement the programme:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Programme/Project</u>
Beyond Skin	Belfast East
Greater Shankill Partnership	Hewitt in the Frame
Lower North Belfast Community Council	Learning to Share

New Lodge Arts	Grow How
Northern Visions	In Our Time: Creating arts within reach
Open Arts	Out of the Shadows

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Programme/Project</u>
Upper Andersonstown Community Forum	All for Arts
Upper Springfield Development Company	Oidreacht na gCnoc – Heritage of the Hills
Workers' Educational Association	Murals on Museums Activity
Youth Action Northern Ireland	The Rainbow Community Links Arts Outreach

After discussion, the Partnership noted the progress which had been achieved in the implementation of the Creative Legacies Programme and approved the progress of the programme to the delivery stage with the ten organisations which had been identified.

### **City Festival**

(Ms. D. Robb, Arts Development Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Partnership agreed to defer consideration of the matter in order that further information could be provided in relation to the membership of the Festivals Forum and to enable additional information to be provided as to alternative means of delivering the objectives of the programme. In addition, the Members requested clarification as to how separation of the City of Festivals Programme from the Council's existing Festivals Fund might be achieved.

### **Procurement**

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 17th April, it had approved the invitation of tenders relating to key actions within the Peace and Reconciliation Plan, including tenders relating to Action 2.3 An Intercommunity Forum, 2.4 Engagement Capacity Building and 2.7 a Youth Intervention Programme.



### **Inter-Community Forum**

The Peace III Programme Manager advised the Partnership that, in response to public advertisement, two tenders had been received and these had been evaluated against the agreed criteria. He reported that the Special European Programmes Body had requested that a minimum of 65% quality threshold be used during the tender assessment process. He pointed out that the price quoted by both tenderers had been in excess of the budget agreed by the Partnership in April, however, it was within the resource allocation for Action 2.3 established within the Plan. Accordingly, in line with the Council's revised Scheme of Delegation, this had been deemed exceptional circumstances requiring Council approval. Accordingly, he recommended that the tender submitted by the Falls Community Council, which had achieved a 71.5% quality threshold score, should be recommended for acceptance.

After discussion, the Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the tender received from the Falls Community Council in the sum of £285,150, be accepted under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive, subject to the form of contract being drawn up by the Director of Legal Services.

### **Engagement Capacity Building**

The Programme Manager reported that, in response to public advertisement, four tenders had been received in relation to Action 2.4, Engagement Capacity Building Programme, and had been evaluated against the pre-agreed criteria. He pointed out that the Special European Union Programmes Body had requested that a minimum of 65% quality threshold be used during the tender assessment process. Accordingly, he recommended that the tender submitted by Intercomm in the sum of £50,000, which had received the highest quality threshold score of 70%, be accepted under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive, subject to the form of contract being drawn up by the Director of Legal Services.

The Partnership adopted the recommendation.

### **Youth Intervention Programme**

The Partnership was advised that, in response to public advertisement, six tenders relating to Action 2.7: Youth Intervention Programme had been received and had been assessed against the agreed criteria. The Peace III Programme Manager informed the Members that a minimum score of 65% on the quality threshold had been used in accordance with the request from the Special European Union Programmes Body in the tender assessment process. Accordingly, he recommended that the tender received from Scoutlink Trust in the sum of £178,222.66, which had achieved the highest quality threshold score of 67%, be accepted under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive, subject to a form of contract being drawn up by the Director of Legal Services.

The Partnership adopted the recommendation.

### **Disability in Local Councils – Appointment of Champions**

The Partnership was advised that correspondence had been received from the Local Government Staff Commission advising of the launch on 8th September of its Disability in Local Councils Initiative. One of the key elements of the Initiative would be the appointment of a network of disability champions to actively promote the agenda of equality for people with disabilities both in employment and in access to services. The Initiative had been established as a partnership between a number of organisations, including the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Employers for

Disability in Northern Ireland, SOLACE, Disability Action and the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance, and a Steering Group had been set up. The Group had requested all Councils to commit to the Initiative and to appoint both an officer and an Elected Member to act as disability champions. The role of the Elected Member would include:

- championing disability across the Council;
- displaying real interest in developments;
- attending and speaking at key events;
- challenging senior staff and other Members to promote the Initiative;
- acting as a focus within the Council for engaging with staff, sharing best practice and driving positive actions;
- promoting the Disability Action Plan;
- attending appropriate events and meetings; and
- reporting back to help inform further developments.

The Good Relations Manager advised the Partnership that the Chief Officers Management Team had nominated the Director of Parks and Leisure Services to act as the Officer Disability Champion and she recommended that the Chairman of the Good Relations Partnership be nominated as the Elected Member Disability Champion.

After discussion, the Good Relations Partnership agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to nominate the Chairman of the Good Relations Partnership to act as the Council's Elected Member Disability Champion.

### **Gender Action Plan**

The Good Relations Manager advised the Partnership that, as part of the ongoing work on diversity within the Council's workforce, efforts had been targeted in particular at the promotion and development of women. In January, 2006, the Council had signed up to the Declaration of the Principles of Women in Local Councils Initiative. This had been led by the Local Council Staff Commission's Women's Steering Group, which was made up of senior Local Government Officers and wider Public Sector staff as well as elected and trades union representatives. As part of its commitment to the Initiative, the Council had developed a Gender Action Plan and had established a joint Member/Officer Women's Steering Group in order to help advance the Initiative and develop a gender action for the Council.

She pointed out that the first Gender Action Plan had led to various successful gender-based projects, including the Women Leaders Programme, a joint Member/officer leadership development programme which had been recognised by the Improvement and Development Agency as an example of best practice. She stated that the Council had recently shared its experience of best practice in the promotion of gender equality in local government with Lyon Council, France during a two-day study visit by staff from Lyon Council.

The Good Relations Manager pointed out that, in order to build on previous success and agree priorities for a new work plan, the Women's Steering Group, in consultation with the People Panel, had revised the Gender Action Plan. The aims of the three-year Plan were to:

- (i) ensure that the Council's policies and practice met legal requirements;
- (ii) develop a culture in which women felt able to participate fully in order to utilise their skills, knowledge and expertise; and
- (iii) develop and implement strategies to identify and remove barriers to address gender under-representation and job segregation.

She pointed out that the main priorities of the Plan were to concentrate on matters such as equal pay, work-life balance/health and well-being, gender stereotyping, women and leadership, violence against women, and communications. The Partnership was advised that the first priority would be the development and implementation of a communications plan for the Gender Action Plan and the subsequent delivery of activities would be prioritised and timetabled within the Plan.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the information which had been provided and congratulated the Council on the production of an excellent Gender Action Plan, which could be regarded as a model of good practice.

### **European Coalition of Cities Against Racism**

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

#### **"Relevant Background Information**

##### **Notice of Motion**

**Elected Members will recall that at the monthly meeting of Council on 1 September, the following Notice of Motion was proposed:**

**'That this Council unreservedly condemns the recent racially motivated attacks in the city of Belfast and agrees to join the European Coalition against Racism to help publicly endorse the Council's opposition to all forms of racism'.**

**In accordance with standard Council procedure, this matter was referred to the relevant Committee, the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, which has in turn referred it to the Good Relations Partnership for action, since it falls within our remit.**

### Racism in Belfast

The Good Relations Partnership will be aware that unfortunately over the past few months there have been a number of attacks on members of minority ethnic communities in Belfast. The Council is committed to tackling racism and sectarianism through its Good Relations Plan and the Lord Mayor and other Councillors were notable in demonstrating strong civic leadership in roundly condemning such attacks and issuing appropriate media releases.

The Council is already engaged in a number of projects that support our work in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling racism and discrimination – e.g. support for a range of local voluntary and community projects that tackle racism, including the South Belfast Roundtable; our Migrants' Forum, the INTI and DIVE Eurocities projects, equality and diversity training for staff, the OPEN Cities project etc.

The Partnership will therefore be interested to learn of the work of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism, an initiative which complements our current work.

### The European Coalition of Cities against Racism

The European Coalition of Cities against Racism was established in Nuremberg in December 2004 as an UNESCO initiative. The aim was to establish a network of cities interested in sharing experiences in order to improve their policies to fight racism, discrimination and xenophobia.

The purpose was to ensure that conventions, recommendations and declarations made at international and national level were ratified and implemented at local level and able to respond to actual problems.

UNESCO chose cities as the key delivery mechanism. In times of growing globalisation and urbanisation, city authorities, as policy makers at the local level, were considered fundamental in ensuring that all their citizens, regardless of their nationality, ethnic, cultural, religious or social origin could live a life with dignity, security and justice.

The European Coalition of Cities against Racism is the first regional step towards an International Coalition.

### Ten-Point-Plan of Action

The Coalition's Ten Point Action Plan provides the basis for its activities. It is intended to support the member cities in their struggle against racism and discrimination, help them to set priorities, optimise their strategies and intensify their co-operation. The signatory cities undertake to integrate the Action Plan within their policies and strategies and to involve the various stakeholders within civil society in its implementation.

The Action Plan defines 10 commitments, supplemented by practical policy examples for measures and activities in various areas such as employment, housing, education and cultural activities:

1. greater vigilance against racism
2. assessing racism and discrimination and monitoring municipal policies
3. better support for the victims of racism, discrimination
4. more participation and better informed city dwellers
5. the city as an active supporter of equal opportunity practices
6. the city as an equal opportunities employer and service provider
7. fair access to housing
8. challenging racism and discrimination through education
9. promoting cultural diversity
10. hate crimes and conflict management.

Signatories commit themselves to using their powers to counteract racism and discrimination through the implementation of the 10 commitments. It is up to individual member cities to decide which fields need action in their own city. Signatory cities send a report on their implementation of the Action Plan to UNESCO and the Secretariat every two years.

Currently 92 municipalities from 20 European countries have joined the network and adopted the Action Plan; these include London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle and Dublin. More information is available from the website: <http://www.citiesagainstracism.org>

To request membership, cities apply in a letter signed by the Mayor, to the Steering Committee of the ECCAR, based in Nuremberg.

The procedure is in two stages in order to take into account the requirements of the decision-making processes of the various municipalities:

- 1) Signature of a Declaration of Intent conveying the strong interest of the city in membership of the Coalition;
- 2) Signature of an Act of Accession and Commitment by which the city fully adheres to the Coalition and its Ten-Point Plan of Action; the city thus agrees to implement this Action Plan by incorporating it into its policies and strategies.

### Key Issues

Although the functions of the Council do not include areas of work such as education, housing or employment, all public bodies in Belfast are obliged to promote equality of opportunity and good relations under their Section 75 obligations of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Council is already participating in a number of initiatives relating to anti-racist work with key partners in the city – e.g. the Housing Executive’s Shared Neighbourhoods Programme, a Hate Crime project with the Community Safety Partnership and the Police Service etc. Membership of this Coalition would complement this approach.

The accompanying Ten Point Action Plan and subsequent evaluation reports will monitor the continuing work of Belfast agencies in this field.

Membership of this Coalition will send out a clear signal locally and internationally that racism will not be tolerated and that the Council is committed to demonstrating leadership in this area.

### 3rd General Conference of the European Coalition against Racism

The Lord Mayor has been invited to attend the 3rd General Conference of the European Coalition against Racism to be held in Toulouse on 19-20 November. The Lord Mayor is unable to attend but has forwarded it to the Good Relations Unit, indicating that the Chairman of the Good Relations Partnership might attend on behalf of the Council.

The Conference is entitled ‘Mix Cities’ and aims at identifying the best strategies for cities to combat racism and discrimination of the basis of their 10-point plan. The conference will examine, inter alia, the impact of the current economic crisis on the rise of right-wing extremism.

Participation in the Conference would be useful in making contact with other cities experiencing racial attacks, identifying practical actions that others are taking, and sharing good practice in general.

#### **Resource Implications**

Membership of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism is free.

Participation in the Conference would be around £200 per person for flights and £200 for hotel accommodation.

Future action may require resourcing but it is likely that this would be minimal and part of the Council's normal ongoing expenditure.

#### **Recommendations**

That the Good Relations Partnership recommends to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee:

that the Council apply for membership to the European Coalition of Cities against Racism, to supplement and enhance its current work and demonstrate its continuing commitment to tackling racism and discrimination in all its forms.

That the Chairman of the Good Relations Partnership and the Good Relations Manager, or their nominees, attend the 3rd General Conference of the Coalition, to be held in Toulouse as set out above.

#### **Decision Tracking**

Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, Ext 6020

#### **Key to Abbreviations**

**ECCAR = European Coalition of Cities against Racism"**

The Good Relations Manager stated that, although membership of the Coalition was free, there was an annual membership fee of €1000 for the Coalition's Association, which provided administrative support, the cost of which could be met from within existing budgets. After discussion, during which the Good Relations Manager undertook to clarify the legal and insurance position with regard to external members attending conferences, the Partnership adopted the recommendations contained within the foregoing report.



### **Diversity Awareness Programme for Council Employees**

The Good Relations Manager advised the Committee that the Good Relations Unit would be organising a Diversity Awareness Programme for Council employees. The purpose of this was to encourage an increased awareness of issues around diversity within the Council workforce and to provide employees with an opportunity to meet and engage with representatives from other minority ethnic or minority faith-based communities. She pointed out that a series of visits had been arranged in order to provide Council employees with enhanced understanding of the culture and traditions of other communities living in Belfast. She outlined the various visits or training sessions which could be undertaken by staff in the coming months, including visits to An Munia Tober, the Traveller Support Group, Migration Awareness Training, visits to the Belfast Islamic Centre and to the Jewish Synagogue and a workshop on Ending Hate Crime Training.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the initiatives which would be undertaken and that the costs of the project could be recouped at 100% from the Peace III Programme.

### **Business in the Community – Anti-Racism Workplace Event Week**

The Partnership was advised that the Good Relations Unit, in partnership with Business in the Community, as part of the Anti-Racist Workplace Week would be holding an event showcasing some of the best practice initiatives used by local employers to support migrant workers and to develop a more culturally diverse workforce. The event, which would be held on 21st October and hosted by the Chinese Welfare Association, would be introduced by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Long) and would provide information to employers about the needs of migrant workers and would highlight practical examples of the work being done by many organisations in the public and private sectors.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

### **Holocaust Memorial Day 2010**

The Partnership was reminded that Holocaust Memorial Day was an International Day of Remembrance for Victims of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides. It had been held annually on 27th January as that date marked the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. The purpose of the day was to permit reflection on what had happened when racism, prejudice and exclusionary behaviour had been left unchecked. The theme of the 2010 Memorial Day would be "The Legacy of Hope" and the Council had been invited by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to be part of the events to mark the day.

The Good Relations Manager advised the Partnership that the Office of the First and the Deputy First Minister had since contacted the Council requesting that Belfast host the Northern Ireland regional event to mark Holocaust Day and stating that their Office would provide the funding for this regional event.

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It was proposed that the Good Relations Unit would engage with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to mark such an important date and facilitate the following:

- the Council Holocaust Memorial Exhibition be erected within the City Hall for the period of one week leading up to the Holocaust Memorial Day;
- work with the Trust in order to provide free resources to the public and visiting groups to the City Hall; and
- advertise the presence of the exhibition through the external and internal websites.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the Council mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2010 as recommended by the Good Relations Manager. The Partnership also noted that the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister would be making a separate application to the Council for the use of the Great Hall on 27th January, 2010.

**Emerging Priorities for the next Good Relations Plan**

The Committee considered the undernoted report in relation to the development of the next Good Relations Plan for the City:

**“Purpose of paper**

**To outline a series of priorities aligned to the Council’s current corporate plan, for the next Good Relations Plan in Belfast.**

**Relevant Background Information**

**In May 2008, the Good Relations Unit of Belfast City Council organised a study visit for a group of Councillors to Chicago, Illinois representing all its political parties. The purpose of the visit was to explore the shape of a collaborative, good relations agenda for the city and to capture some of the core lessons from other cities about tackling division and violence to achieve community cohesion and successful economic development.**

**Following this, there has been a series of discussions with elected representatives and with the Partnership to identify priorities for a collaborative good relations plan in Belfast. This would build on the first Belfast Good Relations Plan published in 2007 and endorsed by all the political parties and key agencies in the city.**

## Key Issues

### 1. Overview

Following the visits to Chicago and the ongoing implementation of the Peace III Programme, there is a renewed momentum to the broader agenda of good relations, particularly its core connection to other areas of mainstream delivery in the Council. This is reflected in the recent publication of the draft Corporate Plan 2008-2011 which highlighted 'good relations' as one of our core values.

The core assumption behind the plan is that good relations and community cohesion remain vital ingredients for the city's future development. Developing a good relations agenda means not only resolving the problems of the past but also dealing with new sets of issues thrown up by a volatile, rapidly changing world.

In the context of the Corporate Plan and its commitment to thematic approaches, it is proposed that there are multiple possibilities which exist in city management to deliver good relations and community cohesion outcomes. However, the capability to deliver actions lies with other Committees within Council, and with partner agencies. It is now essential the following proposed priorities for good relations work should be situated within the appropriate service delivery streams within Council, and ultimately, with its partner organisations.

### 2. Draft Action Plan

Over September and October, a draft plan has been discussed with elected representatives who suggested a number of amendments; these have been integrated into the action plan.

The key areas of action are:

- a. Good Relations Leadership Programme – advocating for and supporting strong political and agency leadership in delivering a shared and better future for all in Belfast, including an ongoing private discussion forum to explore issues related to city transformation, managing diversity and other related issues;
- b. Shared by Design - a framework of principles and criteria on 'shared by design' is developed by the Council for integration into relevant internal and external strategies supporting the physical development of an open, welcoming and shared city;

- c. Connectivity and mobility for meeting - the design of a safe, shared path network across city and between shared space destinations, including engagement with Department of Regional Development and Translink to improve connectivity in the city;
- d. New city, new spaces – developing a civic pride and a modern brand as ‘B open, B modern, B shared’ and a series of innovative shared space events in the city centre, e.g. lighting displays and no-traffic day;
- e. City of neighbourhoods - the development of an inclusive charter of principles, used to support the delivery of a series of linked cultural projects on culture and identity across several neighbourhoods which are unique, welcoming and open to all;
- f. The shared city’s natural resources – a series of linked events using the natural resources of the city promoting access to the city's natural shared spaces;
- g. Interfaces regeneration strategy - supporting improved co-ordination in the regeneration of those neighbourhoods located at the interface; and
- h. Linked City – a series of actions related to improving health and well-being in relation to tackling health inequalities and building trust.

### 3. Next steps

In its Peace III Programme Peace & Reconciliation Plan, the Council has stressed the importance of strategic, commissioned work which will have a significant legacy in terms of cohesion, open, shared spaces and securing Belfast as an attractive, competitive and safe city. A number of the areas of action proposed above sit under the objectives of the Partnership’s Peace Plan and potentially could attract a financial contribution from the Peace III funding programme.

The learning and actions outlined above, if implemented, have the potential to significantly enhance the sophistication and mainstream nature of the Council’s good relations agenda and accelerate the achievement of its good relations objectives.

It is important that those Committees, who have the authority to deliver some of the work outlined above, are given the opportunity to define their contribution and discuss the most efficient method to achieve the anticipated outcomes. Further work on the detail of the individual actions will be developed over the coming months in conjunction with the relevant Committees and Departments of the Council.

The role of the Good Relations Partnership would be to provide advice and guidance to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and through it, seek to 'quality assure' the good relations outcomes during implementation.

The Good Relations Partnership, through the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee granted authority previously for the Chief Executive to engage partner agencies on the proposed actions. It is now recommended that these meetings are initiated.

It is proposed that the Plan is agreed and ready for publication in early 2010.

#### Resource Implications

##### Financial

None at present. Each action would in due course produce business plans and detailed resource requirements.

#### Decision Tracking

Timeframe: Action will be completed by 26 March 2010.  
Officer responsible: Hazel Francey, Ext. 6020

#### Decisions required

- The Partnership recommends the broad principles of action included above, in line with the Council's Corporate Plan, to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee;
- The Chief Executive briefs a group of relevant partner agencies in the city on the emerging action plan, to seek their broad agreement and to delegate authority to senior operational officers within their organisation to contribute to its implementation.

#### Officers to contact for further information:

Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, Ext. 6020  
Caroline Wilson, Senior Good Relations Officer, Ext 6037"

After discussion, during which several Members indicated that the ideal of creating a common good should be at the heart of any future plan, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Belfast City Council Bonfire Management**

The Committee considered the undernoted report in respect of the Council's Bonfire Management Plan:

#### **"Relevant Background Information**

The Partnership will be aware of the Council led Bonfire Management Programme which has been delivered for the past number of years. The Council initiated work in this area in response to a number of public concerns:

- earlier collection times for bonfire material
- significant paramilitary displays in some areas
- greater awareness about environmental issues such as the burning of tyres
- considerable media coverage around issues such as dumping and fly-tipping

There was also an emerging willingness within a number of communities to move forward and address many of the negative elements about bonfires. In January 2007, following some pilot work, the Council approved a 3-year programme for a Council-led initiative to work with communities in a more sustained way on promoting better bonfire management. This programme has now come to an end.

An independent evaluation of the 2007 – 2009 programme has been completed by the Institute for Conflict Research (ICR) and is attached as an appendix. Some general findings of this report are worth noting:

- The bonfire management programme has been an innovative and challenging development in relation to addressing a sensitive, political, and divisive subject area. Belfast City Council and Groundwork NI must be commended for tackling bonfires when other statutory organisations and government departments had historically side stepped the issue. (p.21)
- There has been significant transformation away from the paramilitary, alcohol fuelled events to more family friendly, festival occasions. Concerns remain around the burning of nationalist and republican symbols on

bonfires. Discussions have begun and the bonfire programme provides the most appropriate mechanism to facilitate and encourage such community dialogue (p.21)

- The development and successful implementation of beacons has proved to be a significant outcome. They have benefited those communities who have concerns around the location of their bonfire in relation to interfaces (Tigers Bay and Roden Street) and areas where redevelopment has resulted in a reduction in available sites (Woodvale). (p.21)
- A key outcome has been the development of relationships between the emergency services, the bonfire committees, the wider communities and statutory groups affiliated to the programme. The topic of bonfires has been the catalyst for engagement that has created a mechanism for other community issues to be discussed and addressed. (p.25-26)
- Bonfire committees have acknowledged the community benefits from the transformation of their bonfires, with more emphasis on the cultural significance of the occasion, along with a renewed interest in historical events. (p.27)
- An interesting dynamic was the increased participation of women both operationally and strategically, within the bonfire committees. This facilitated the transformation with an increased emphasis on activities for children and the older generations. (p.27-8)
- The management programme provided an avenue for opposing communities to raise issues around bonfires and the potential for communal violence and disorder. Loyalists and Republicans met, examined the impact of the bonfire and developed plans around addressing anti-social behaviour and reducing sectarian tensions. (p.33)

The programme has largely addressed the environmental issues and there has been a significant move to more family friendly occasions. Social and economic networks have emerged from this engagement, which have assisted communities to examine environmental and regeneration issues within their neighbourhoods. The level of dialogue and engagement that has been generated between communities and service providers, as a direct consequence of the programme, was not envisaged at the onset of the programme in 2007. Although this is difficult to measure, it is an indirect, yet highly significant outcome.

**Key Issues****Review of the 2009 programme**

At the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership in October 2008, it was agreed that year 3 of the 3-year programme would develop the Bonfire Management Programme intervention as follows:

- (a) That the Bonfire Management Programme begins a proactive process of engagement with areas identified within the PSNI report as being 'problematic'; namely East Belfast and Donegall Road, with the aim of reducing the number of overall reported incidents*

A number of meetings were held with those responsible for the bonfires in Templemore Avenue, King George V playing fields and the City Hospital. We were successful in bringing the site at Templemore Avenue onto the programme, but unable to persuade the other two sites to do likewise. However, channels of engagement were created with those two sites and they may participate in the cultural networks programme in the future.

- (b) That introductory work with the additional 14 sites from 2008 continues in 2009.*

This work continued and this work will feed into the cultural networks process for the future

- (c) To continue to seek additional funding for year 3 from the partner agencies.*

Additional funding was received from the PSNI and OFM/DFM. Other traditional funders, the NIO and Belfast Community Safety Partnership were unable to contribute to the funding for 2009, although the NIHE funded a beacon for Whitecity. This will create difficulties regarding future funding.

- (d) To begin drawing up proposals for the post 2009 programme in partnership with other stakeholders*

These proposals were developed and agreed by the Good Relations Partnership in April 2009.

- (e) That an invitation be extended to representatives of a number of the communities on the programme to deliver a presentation to the partnership, at a future meeting, on some work that they have been involved with on developing and progressing issues related to bonfires for the future*



Completed in November 2008 and deemed to have been a useful exercise by all those involved.

*(f) To agree that the revised aims and grant-aid framework, set out in the Appendix to this report, are included in the guidelines for participating groups in the 2009 programme.*

This was done.

#### Future issues

Bonfire Committees within the programme point to the rules that they adhere to and indicate that the wider community often complain to them about diluting their cultural celebrations in conforming to these conditions. Bonfires outside the programme are built in a range of sizes, display sectarian and paramilitary symbols and flout all types of environmental laws, yet are never punished. Statutory organisations have largely ignored the legal issues around the construction of bonfires. However, in any future management programme, organisations such as the PSNI, NIEA, DRD will need to be more proactive in addressing bonfires that do not wish to engage in the programme or address issues around health and safety.

#### Reduction in anti-social behaviour and incidents recorded by the PSNI

There has been a continuing improvement in behaviour round bonfires, as shown in the following summary of the 2009 police statistics:

- PSNI recorded approximately 727 incidents related to bonfires throughout NI between 1 April and 31 August 2009 – an increase of 120 on 2008.
- Around 47% of all recorded incidents in NI occurred in Belfast, compared with 52% in 2008.
- 17 bonfire sites signed up to the bonfire management programme this year out of the 84 known bonfire sites in the Belfast Area. This equates to 20% of known bonfires having signed up to the Bonfire Management Programme.
- The majority (31%) of recorded incidents in Belfast were in the East. However this is a significant decrease on 2008 when 54% of all incidents were reported in East Belfast.

- There was an overall reduction in the number of incidents reported to PSNI by around a third in East Belfast in 2009 compared to 2008. In East Belfast it was noted last year that there were 17 complaints related to Templemore Avenue. In 2009 there were no complaints from this street; they signed up to the scheme in 2009. The number of incidents reported in East Belfast decreased by more than 10% each month except May.
- 2 of the 20 worst affected sites participated in the Bonfire Management Programme.
- 65 incidents can be linked to Bonfire Management Programme sites – 19% of incidents. This has increased by 40 incidents compared to last year. However, it must be noted that there were an additional 4 groups that participated overall, and one particularly problematic site accounted for 22 incidents alone.

#### Funding

The issue of financing bonfire management programmes has proved complex. The fact that BCC committed £50,000 for three years to the programme was a significant benefit and emphasised their commitment to both the communities and the programme. A number of external organisations also contributed funding, including OFM/DFM, PSNI, NIHE, the NIO Community Safety Unit and Community Relations Council. However, accessing further funding upon completion of the three-year programme is proving difficult in the current economic climate.

#### Engaging new partners

The three year bonfire management programme successfully addressed the majority of aims and objectives overseen by the Interagency Working Group. There is now an opportunity for BCC to develop partnerships with new organisations around the premise of addressing cultural and good relations issues that surround bonfires. Unionist and Loyalist communities very rarely make distinctions between bonfire events on 11th and those of 12th July and combine these as a general celebration. There is the potential to develop positive partnerships that involve the Orange Order around the themes of history, culture, tradition and identity.

#### Shared city

Any programme relating to bonfires is set within the context of Council's vision of a shared city.

The reality is that bonfires are a celebration of a historical event that is exclusively focused on the Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist community. Although they have been transformed in recent years to an event that encourages participation from across the community, with events concentrating on the cultural and historical aspects, they do not generally appeal to members of the Catholic/Nationalist/Republican community who largely view them with suspicion and as sectarian; the prospect for marketing bonfires as a cross community, all-inclusive event is limited.

In this context, there is recognition that there are two major communities with very different cultures and traditions. If their celebrations are not offensive, with consideration given to the views and opinions of the 'other side,' then there is a place for the bonfire tradition within the vision of a shared city.

#### Reduced availability of sites

Sites for bonfires are decreasing as a result of development and a growing awareness around the environmental damage.

#### Beacons

One of the biggest achievements of the programme was the fact that several bonfire committees adopted beacons as an alternative to large-scale bonfires, following the success of the Woodvale beacon in 2008. Here the beacon is seen as only one element within a broader and more inclusive cultural and festival programme. This however, requires a greater commitment and capacity from local volunteers. In addition, as all local communities are different, transferring examples of good practice between communities may prove difficult.

#### Burning of Nationalist/Republican symbols

The burning on bonfires of nationalist and republican symbols, in particular the Irish national flag, has been raised as an issue of concern. It has been stated that this is offensive and insulting to around half the population of the city and that a specific reference to this should be included within the general terms and conditions for a publicly funded programme in future; i.e. an element of funding to be withheld until after the event, to ensure compliance.

The programme has begun the process of addressing this subject through discussion sessions between the bonfire committees and Nationalist/Republican representatives in the 2009 programme. Cultural workshops have included conversations about the burning of flags within a wider framework of bonfire practices.

Within the context of the programme, it is worth noting that the committees that used a beacon (6 in 2009, 20% of the total) chose not to burn anything perceived as sectarian on their bonfire, without any incentive or threat of sanction.

It is evident that bonfire committees require support to facilitate these discussions within the wider context of expressions of Loyalist identity, culture and good relations. The management programme has the experience and the structures in place to channel community based discussions on the practice of burning symbols and flags and challenge them to address this perceived negative behaviour.

### Summary

There is a lack of confidence within the Loyalist community as to the future commitment and agenda of statutory agencies around engaging with, and responding to, bonfire issues. There is an ongoing transformation within these communities as to the most appropriate method of celebrating their culture and identity. It is important to recognise the individuals leading these discussions and the balancing act they are trying to perform.

### Recommendations from the ICR report

This evaluation has highlighted the success of the programme and the benefits to statutory agencies and council departments. A preventative approach to bonfire management issues is financially more cost effective as opposed to a responsive approach.

Within the ICR evaluation, there are a number of recommendations. Full details of these can be found on Pages 4-7 of the report, but in summary:

- programme provides strong model for engagement with communities aiming to transform their Eleventh celebrations
- significant success achieved in addressing environmental aims
- engagement must continue and build on experience, sharing models of good practice
- focus shifting from bonfire to wider issues of culture, history, tradition and identity
- strategic aims of the programme need to be revisited
- possibility of developing a cultural forum on events, symbols and practices

- development and use of beacons needs support and resources
- external waste contractor costly; communities have to take responsibility for illegal dumping
- funding and sustainability of future programmes is an area of growing concern
- communities should investigate opportunities to encourage private sponsorship and social economy approach.

These recommendations sit very well within the programme of developing 6 cultural networks developed under item 2.5 of Peace III 'Dealing with physical manifestations' which was approved by the Good Relations Partnership in April 2009, in the region of £300,000, to run from May 2009 until December 2010.

The cultural networks programme will move the bonfire issue forward in a more comprehensive way with those groups that were part of the 3-year programme that has been just completed. It will have resources to fund community and cultural activity related to the bonfire period, to cover the cost of beacons and other activities and events throughout the year to further support cultural expression and heritage. This work will consolidate what has been happening in relation to bonfires with the participating groups over the last 3 years.

Following consultation with the Director of Parks & Leisure, it is proposed that the Council develops a parallel approach to the issue of bonfires, moving forward on the cultural networks as funded under Peace III, with a parallel and complementary programme to resource some elements that remain outside that programme but have been successful over the last 3 years. These are:

- a dedicated cleansing contractor to service the needs of participating sites
- ability to include additional sites with incentives to engage and participate
- ability to intervene pro-actively in areas that are isolated and separate from 'mainstream' bonfire areas.

For 2010, the Council would need to resource the following:

	Cost
A dedicated cleansing contractor	£25,000
Additional communities/sites. Grants, workshops and administration (GWNI)	£15,000
5 more Beacons (fabrication, installation, removal, technical assistance)	£55,000
Management costs (GWNI)	£5,000
Contingency budget	£10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£110,000</b>

The Council's current annual allocation is £50,000. The PSNI are likely to continue their current funding of £25,000 but former funders such as the NIHE and NIO Community Safety Unit have stated that they are no longer in a position to assist; this leaves a shortfall of £35,000 to ensure the continuation of the programme.

In view of the programme's success and the fact that it has been regarded as an example of good practice by the Community Relations Unit within the OFM/DFM, it is recommended that application be made to that agency for financial support. In the event of such support not being forthcoming, the programme will have to be reduced substantially.

### **Resource Implications**

#### **Financial**

An extension of the present level of funding of £50,000 from the Council, with match funding being requested from other agencies.

### **Recommendations**

- (a) to note the ICR evaluation report
- (b) to agree that the terms and conditions be revised so that an amount of funding relating to the burning of political symbols is reserved to encourage compliance
- (c) to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that it approves the proposal for the continuation of the current level of funding of £50,000
- (d) to agree to apply for additional funding to the Community Relations Unit
- (e) to continue to pursue other possible funding sources"

Several Members expressed their appreciation of the work of the Council officers and the groups which had participated in the Programme, especially in view of the major difficulties which they had faced.

However, a Member expressed concern at the continued burning of nationalist or republican symbols at some bonfire sites. The Good Relations Manager confirmed that funding had been withheld from some groups who had not met certain criteria in the past.

In response, the Good Relations Officer indicated that work was ongoing with the various groups to address this issue along with other problems. He pointed out that, although the organisations involved had made good progress, there was still much work to be undertaken and that the Council's Bonfire Management Programme was seeking to address a number of issues, including the early commencement dates for collection of bonfire materials, the reduction of paramilitary displays, the development of greater awareness of environmental issues, such as the burning of tyres, and the reduction in dumping and fly-tipping at bonfire sites.

After a lengthy discussion in the matter, the Partnership adopted the recommendations contained within the report and agreed that further update reports be submitted.

### **St. Patrick's Day 2010 Small Grants Scheme**

The Partnership was advised that applications had been invited from voluntary and community groups within the City in relation to the organisation of local events and activities associated with the celebration of St. Patrick's Day, with a grant up to the value of £1,000, being available for activities and events organised and held prior to 31st March, 2010. The Good Relations Manager stated that information and application criteria and forms was available on the Council's website and the closing date for applications was 12.00 noon on Friday, 30th October, 2009.

The Partnership noted the information provided.

### **Re-Imaging the Communities**

The Committee noted the contents of the final report in relation to the Re-Imaging Communities Initiative. The Partnership was reminded 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 undertake a City-wide re-imaging community art programme. A number of projects had been identified as suitable for inclusion within the Project, by either the installation of a piece of art work or the production of murals that would reflect the individual communities' history and would positively celebrate the culture of the local community.

Several Members expressed the view that the project had made a significant development in creating a non-threatening and more welcoming culture in several areas of the City.

The Partnership noted the contents of the report.

Chairman

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