

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

FRIDAY, 13th AUGUST, 2010

MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

- Members present: Councillor Hendron (Chairman); and
Councillors Kyle, C. Maskey and McCarthy.
- External Members: Ms. S. Bhat, Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum;
Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Archdeacon B. Dodds, Church of Ireland;
Ms. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast and District Trades Council;
Ms. M. Marken, Catholic Church; and
Ms. M. deSilva, Voluntary/Community Sector.
- Also attended: Ms. M. Perry, Community Relations Council/Pobal
- In attendance: Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;
Mr. I. May, Peace III Programme Manager
Mr. D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillor Stoker and from Ms. A. Chada, Mr. R. Galway, Mr. P. Scott and Ms. E. Wilkinson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 11th and 25th June were taken as read and signed as correct.

Archdeacon Barry Dodds

The Chairman, on behalf of the Partnership, welcomed Archdeacon Dodds to his first meeting.

Islamic Cultural Centre

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 16th April, it had received from representatives of WDR & RT Taggart, Architects and Engineers, a presentation in relation to the potential location in the City of a cultural centre for Muslims living in Northern Ireland. The Partnership had agreed that a letter be forwarded on behalf of the Lord Mayor and the Council supporting, in principle, the development of such a facility and had agreed also to receive at a future meeting an update on the project. Accordingly, Mr. A. Saadi and Mr. J. Smylie, representing the aforementioned company, were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Mr. Smylie reminded the Partnership that the project was being sponsored by a named benefactor from Saudi Arabia and, on his behalf, thanked the Council for the letter of support which it had provided. He reported that a site which was situated between the Boucher and the Lisburn Roads had been identified as being suitable and that negotiations to purchase the land had commenced which, if successful, would lead to a planning application being submitted to the Planning Service.

With the assistance of visual aids, Mr. Saadi provided a detailed overview of the scheme. He explained that the site would be accessed primarily from the Boucher Road and that it would include a community hall, a crèche, a fitness suite, a mosque, educational facilities, student accommodation and business/shop units. These would be constructed around a large open space which, like all of the facilities, would be available for use by all communities. He pointed out that a sculptural tower, to be located within the area of open space, would form the main feature of the Centre and stressed that adequate car parking provision would be provided for those using the facility.

In response to a question from a Member, Mr. Smylie pointed out that a public consultation exercise, together with exhibitions, outlining the nature of the development would be undertaken in advance of the project.

After discussion, during which the Partnership expressed its ongoing support for the Cultural Centre, the Chairman thanked Mr. Saadi and Mr. Smylie for their presentation and they retired from the meeting.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

Growing a Shared City Project

(Ms. L. Dennis, Growing a Shared City Project Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Partnership was advised that the Growing a Shared City project was a learning and development programme which sought to explore the policy and capacity required in the Council, together with its partner agencies, in order to effect changes in Belfast's divided society. The Growing a Shared City Project Officer explained that the project, which would run until June, 2012, had been developed in order to meet the following three requirements:

- (i) increased collaboration between agencies on the development of a shared and open City;
- (ii) more effective engagement by public institutions with the diversity of people living in the City, in a way in which contributes to the sharing of space and resources rather than reinforcing existing divisions; and
- (iii) the need for public institutions to build their capacity in order to deal effectively with good relations and community cohesion issues through a broader regeneration process.

She outlined a number of actions which would be undertaken within the project, including the establishment and supporting of networks of inter-agency staff and the commissioning of an audit to examine the internal policies and processes within the Council in terms of how they related to diversity. A series of seminars and conferences, based around the theme of "Growing a Shared City", would be organised and a training programme would be established to support Elected Members, Council officers and partner agencies.

However, she pointed out that a number of key risks had been identified which could impact upon the success of the project, such as the likelihood of suspicion and opposition to the idea of shared services and increased diversity at a local level, the ever-changing political environment and uncertainty over the impact of the Review of Public Administration. She pointed out that funding of £300,000 had been allocated under Priority 2.2 of the Peace III Programme relating to the development of Key Institutional Capacities for a Shared Society and stressed that the project presented an opportunity for ongoing robust engagement between public agencies, including the Council, and diverse civil society interests to build a more shared, inclusive Belfast.

After discussion, during which the Partnership suggested that issues such as bonfires, flags, memorials, media involvement and peace walls should be considered in more detailed discussions as part of the project, the Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

Peace III – Implementation Update

The Peace III Programme Manager submitted a report which provided an update in respect of the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan. The report provided an overview of the various programmes and projects, together with a summary of expenditure, under each of the four themes of the Plan and included a number of recent press articles relating to funded projects. He drew the Partnership's attention to a Project Progress Report, a copy of which had been circulated, which was submitted to the Special European Union Programme's Body on a quarterly basis and pointed out that it examined progress against outputs, results and impacts, letter of offer conditions and expenditure to date.

He reminded the Partnership that review sessions had, in September, 2009 and February, 2010, been held to provide an update in respect of the implementation of the Peace Plan. He stated that it was proposed that a further session be held on 2nd September and pointed out that it would review the progress which had been made under Phase I of the Plan and look ahead to the implementation of Phase II.

The Peace III Programme Manager reminded the Partnership that the Council had been invited to submit, before 17th September, to the Special European Union Programmes Body a proposal for Phase II of the Local Action Plan. He explained that a consultation document had been formulated and that it had been circulated widely for comment, with responses being sought either by email or through the response form provided on the Council's website. He pointed out that a number of public meetings and focus groups had been arranged and that consultative sessions were also

being arranged with the Youth Forum, Women's Sector, the Section 75 Consultative Forum, community arts practitioners and with the inter-agency group which had been set up under the Growing a Shared City Project. He advised that, to enable consultation responses to be considered by the Partnership prior to their submission to the Special European Union Programmes Body by the required deadline, it was considered necessary for a special meeting of the Partnership to be held.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the progress which had been made to date in relation to the implementation of Phase I of the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan and approved the holding of a review session on 2nd September. In addition, the Partnership noted the consultation process which was underway in relation to Phase II of the Plan and agreed that a special meeting be held on 3rd September to consider the responses.

Peace III – Shared Cultural Space Funding

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 14th May, it had approved the undertaking of an open call for applications under the theme of Shared Cultural Space. The Peace III Programme Manager reported that the call for applications had closed on 7th July and that twenty-three applications had been received. He provided a brief overview of each application and advised the Partnership that they had been subjected to a rigorous assessment process which had been developed in line with guidance laid down by the Special European Union Programmes Body. Each application had been evaluated against pre-determined criteria and a total score of 65% was required before funding could be considered under the Peace Programme. He pointed out that initial assessments had been subjected to a moderation process involving senior Council staff and that scores and rationale would be made available to all applicants, together with a debriefing session, where requested. The Special European Union Programmes Body had established a review procedure for the entire programme, details of which would be communicated to all applicants.

The Peace III Programme Manager explained that seven applications had achieved scores above the required threshold of 65% and, therefore, would be eligible for funding under the Peace III Programme. He stated that the approved budget in relation to this latest call for applications had been £245,000 and that the total amount requested by those applicants had been £239,478.83.

After discussion, during which it was agreed that there was a need to raise awareness amongst Muslim groups of the availability of Shared Cultural Space Funding, the Partnership agreed that letters of offer be issued to the following organisations, subject to site visits and further checks being undertaken by Peace III Programme Officers:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Amount Requested</u>
Northern Ireland Children's Enterprise	Journeys Through Faith and Culture	£26,402.00
Youth Initiative	The BEST Project (Belfast Exploring Spirituality Together)	£38,560.00
Headliners (UK)	Sharing Time and Space	£20,178.00
Small Steps Education Group	Walk of Faith	£39,972.72
Ballynafeigh Community Development Association	Ballynafeigh Interfaith Learning Project	£39,936.11
Belfast Jewish Community	Jews Schmooze - Sounds Familiar	£40,000.00
Habitat for Humanity	HopeBuilders	£34,430.00

Peace III – Regeneration and Good Relations at the Interface/Roll-out of Inter-Community Networks in South Belfast

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of Report

To update the Partnership on research conducted by Deloitte on regeneration and good relations at the interface and to seek

approval to roll out the intercommunity network model in south Belfast.

Key Issues

The Partnership will recall that, at its meeting on 11th June, it considered a presentation from Deloitte MCS on research into good relations activities in neighbourhoods located near/at interface barriers in the City. Following their presentation, further information and revisions to the report were requested from Deloitte. These revisions have now been made and the final report has been circulated to the Partnership.

A related piece of work is the development of intercommunity approaches to the reduction or removal of interfaces across Belfast. This work is currently being delivered by a consortium led by Falls Community Council. The Partnership will recall that, at its meeting on 12th March, it had considered a presentation from Falls Community Council relating to the development of locally agreed action plans around interface areas in Belfast. Thirteen organisations are participating in the project using a grassroots approach which involved local communities around interface areas.

Technical assistance was being provided through Community Places and the Participation and Practice of Rights Project to assist in the development of the model framework and training materials. The Project is currently operating in the mid-Shankill and Clonard areas of West Belfast, the Short Strand and Lower Newtownards, Lower Castlereagh, Lower Woodstock and Lower Ravenhill areas of East Belfast and in North Belfast. The current planned outputs for the project are:

- (i) three defined and resourced pieces of work areas on the interfaces which would serve as a models of good practice;
- (ii) the creation of a legacy which would focus on the removal of, and reduction in, physical barriers in the areas;
- (iii) local action plans for each area; and
- (iv) the publication of a model framework.

Draft materials developed through these networks and have been circulated to the Partnership for reference.

At the meeting in March, the Partnership was concerned that there was no activity taking place in the South of the City. Members requested that this gap be addressed with the funding allocation available within the Transforming Contested Space theme of the Plan.

Following consultation it is now proposed that a plan be developed to apply this model in the South of the City, with implementation before the end of June 2011. Further details on progress will be brought to a future meeting of the Good Relations Partnership.

Resource Implications

Financial Implications

None.

HR Implications

None.

Recommendations

The Partnership is requested to:

Note the revised report on Regeneration and Good Relations at the Interface and;

Approve the development of a plan to implement the model in south Belfast.”

After discussion, during which a number of areas within the South of the City were suggested for the implementation of the Inter-Community Network, the Partnership adopted the recommendations.

Migrant and Minority Ethnic Project

The Good Relations Manager informed the Partnership that, under objective 3.5 – Shared Cultural Space of the Peace Plan, the Council was seeking to lead a project in association with a range of agencies to establish a City-wide forum and support network for migrant workers in Belfast and to support advice groups to ensure that adequate information and advice on a range of issues was available for migrant workers. She explained that, under the Peace III Programme, the Good Relations Unit had established a Migrant and Minority Ethnic Support Project. As part of that project, the Unit wished to commission a suitable organisation to develop and deliver a capacity building training programme to provide advice workers with the specialist knowledge required to advise migrants on related issues. That requirement had been identified during consultation sessions with migrant workers, at which they had raised concerns that some advice outlets and information providers were not equipped to provide migrants with advice on certain issues. That, in turn, meant that they were often not given accurate advice or had been turned away. She reported that a specification had now been developed and provided a breakdown of the criteria which would be used in the assessment of applicants. The successful applicant would be required to develop and deliver training programmes aimed at advice workers and to provide them with a specialist knowledge required to advise people who had migrated to Belfast.

The Good Relations Manager reported further that, as part of the same project, the Good Relations Unit wished also to print and distribute a directory documenting the services which were available in Belfast to migrant workers. That need had arisen during discussions with both migrant workers and with members of the Council's Migrant Forum, who were of the view that practitioners, community organisations and migrant workers would benefit from a guide which documented all of the services and projects available to migrants in Belfast. The Good Relations Unit had compiled a list of services and now wished to produce the results in an accessible guide. Accordingly, she sought approval to commission a suitable organisation to develop and deliver training programmes aimed at advice workers and to invite quotations for the design and printing of a directory of services for migrant workers. She pointed out that the costs of each would be £29,500 and £2,500 respectively.

The Partnership granted the approval sought.

Annual Report on Progress 2008/2009

(Ms. M. Hand, Equality Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Equality Officer reported that the Council's Equality Scheme and Good Relations Strategy had stated that regular reports on progress were to be submitted to the Good Relations Partnership and to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. She reminded the Partnership that the Council was required to submit to the Equality Commission an annual report on the progress which had been achieved in respect of the implementation of equality and good relations duties imposed under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Accordingly, she submitted for the Partnership's consideration a copy of the annual progress report.

After discussion, during which it was suggested that increased reference be made within the annual report of the success of the various older people's initiatives which had been undertaken throughout the year and of major events such as International Women's Day which had been hosted by the Lord Mayor, the Partnership noted the contents of the annual report, which would be presented for consideration to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and to the Equality Commission. The Partnership noted also that the Council had submitted its Annual Monitoring Return as at 1st January, 2010 to the Equality Commission, a copy of which was available from the Council's Human Resources Section.

European Union Open Days 2010

The Partnership was advised that the European Commission, in partnership with the Committee of the Regions and cities across Europe, would, from 4th till 7th October, be holding in Brussels the European Union Open Days event. The Good Relations Manager reported that the event would be structured around one hundred seminars, each providing information on emerging European Union policies and funding opportunities. Many of the regional offices which were based in Brussels, including the Northern Ireland Executive Office, hosted thematic workshops in order to showcase their strengths. She pointed out that the most relevant European Union policy under development currently was the new cohesion policy, which would from 2014 onwards shape European Union structural funds. That policy was due to be presented and considered, together with future opportunities for Cities and regions, at the Open Days event.

She reported that, this year, the Special European Unions Programmes Body had been allocated within the Open Days programme on 6th October a workshop to examine cultural diversities in cities and how European funding had invested in that area. The Body had invited Councillor Hendron, as Chairman of the Good Relations Partnership, to outline how the Council had used Peace III funding in the delivery of good relations and in the celebration of cultural diversity. She pointed out that Councillor C. Maskey would, in his capacity as Chairman of the Development Committee, also be attending the Open Days and added that the event provided an excellent opportunity to showcase to a wide audience the Council's work in the development and delivery of the Peace III Programme.

After discussion, during which the Good Relations Manager confirmed that the cost of travel and accommodation for Councillor Hendron would be met fully by the Special European Union Programmes Body and the European Union Commission, the Partnership approved the Chairman's attendance at the aforementioned event.

**Proposed Development Event for
Good Relations Unit Staff**

The Partnership was advised that the work of the Good Relations Unit had, over the past two years, expanded significantly, including that in relation to the Peace III Programme. The Good Relations Manager explained that it was important that all staff within the Unit had sufficient time to be apprised of current developments in their area of work. To this end, it was proposed that an event be held over the next few weeks to enable officers to work on the Unit's business plan and to focus on issues such as information sharing, good practice, project development, improved communication and motivation.

The Good Relations Manager explained that it was proposed that the event be held in the Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, a venue which was internationally renowned as having a central focus on improving relations and on community relations work. She pointed out that nineteen officers from the Unit would be in attendance and that the cost, including accommodation and meals, would be in the region of £1,000. Provision for this amount had been made within the Unit's training budget. Accordingly, she recommended that the Partnership commend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that approval be granted for the organisation of a staff development event as outlined.

The Partnership adopted the recommendation.

Proposal to Host an Event for Funded Groups

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 17th April, 2009, it had awarded funding from the Good Relations Fund for a series of workshops with support groups for former prisoners and their families. The Good Relations Manager reported that the three groups involved, namely, An Eochair, Teach Na Fáilte and Prisoners in Partnership, had compiled two brief pamphlets dealing specifically with de-romanticising violence/conflict, whilst highlighting also the difficulties faced by prisoners' families. She stated that the aim of the project had been to highlight to young people involved in interface rioting the reality of prison life, the futility of conflict and the negative impact which prison had on an individual's life and their family. It had sought also to demonstrate to young people that involvement in violence and conflict had implications for their long-term future. She added that the participants in the project had been part of the 'From Prison to Peace Network' which had been funded by the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland under the Peace III Programme.

The Good Relations Manager reported that it was proposed that an event be held in the City Hall to mark the launch of the pamphlets. She advised that the cost of the event would not exceed £500 and that 75% of the cost could be reclaimed from the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister under the District Council's Good Relations Programme. Accordingly, she recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to approve the holding in the City Hall during the month of September of a small event to launch the aforementioned pamphlets.

The Partnership adopted the recommendation.

Belfast Community Sport Development Network Event

The Partnership noted that the Belfast Community Sports Development Network would on 20th August be holding at the Mary Peters' Track a sports day to mark the conclusion of a five-week diversionary summer sports programme which had taken place at various locations throughout the City. It was agreed that any member of the Partnership who so wished be authorised to attend the event.

Bits and Pieces Project

The Partnership authorised the attendance of any member at an event being held on 26th August by the Bits and Pieces Project.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

The Partnership noted that a consultation exercise in respect of the above-mentioned strategy was underway currently and that the Council's Response would in due course be submitted to the Good Relations Partnership for its approval.

Chairman