

**GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP****MONDAY, 7th NOVEMBER, 2011****MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**

- Members present: Councillor Hendron (Chairman); and  
Councillors Attwood and Reynolds.
- External Members: Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;  
Ms. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;  
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast and District Trades Council;  
Mr. P. Scott, Catholic Church; and  
Ms. M. de Silva, Voluntary/Community Sector.
- In attendance: Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;  
Mr. I. May, PEACE III Programme Manager;  
Mr. D. Robinson, Senior Good Relations Officer; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

**Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Rev. L. Carroll, Ms. A. Chada, Archdeacon B. Dodds, Mr. R. Galway, Ms. M. Marken, Mr. M. O'Donnell and from Ms. Joan Peden, who had recently been appointed as the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's representative on the Partnership.

**Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 10th October were taken as read and signed as correct.

**PEACE III – Implementation Update**

The Partnership considered a report which provided an update in respect of the implementation of Phase 1 of the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan. The PEACE III Programme Manager reported that the Special European Union Programmes Body was in the process of verifying £2.1 million of expenditure which had been claimed between April and July under Phase 1 of the Plan. He added that the Good Relations Unit was awaiting a draft report on the outcome of an audit of the Phase 1 Programme which had been undertaken by the Department of Finance and Personnel focusing upon expenditure incurred under the Migrant and Minority Project and policies and procedures. The Programmes Body would be conducting over a period of one week commencing on 14th November, a systems audit on the programme, which would include inspections of a number of sub-projects and of expenditure related to Phase 1 projects.

**Past/Forthcoming Events****Cross-Border Seminar**

A cross-border seminar, which had been attended by representatives of Peace II Clusters from the border region, had been held in the City Hall on 19th October. The seminar had included a presentation on cross-border activity undertaken under the Belfast Phase 1 Plan. Representatives from several Phase II projects had attended the event in order to identify potential partners with whom to develop cross-border working over the lifetime of the Phase II plan.

**Forthcoming Events**

The Partnership noted that the following events had been arranged:

- 9th November - Information session on the Strategic Grants Programme – Ulster Hall (10.00 a.m.)
- 23rd November – Forum for Chairpersons of PEACE III Partnerships and PEACE III managers, Dungannon (time and venue to be confirmed)
- 14th December – Formal launch of Phase II of the Belfast PEACE III Plan, City Hall (time to be confirmed).

The PEACE III manager informed the Partnership that a call for applications under the Strategic Grants Programme had opened on 21st October. He reported that an information session had been held in City Hall on 26th October which had provided a brief overview of the PEACE III Programme and the Belfast PEACE III Plan and that attendees had been provided with an opportunity to discuss their project idea with a member of the PEACE III team. Further events would take place on 9th and 18th November.

He reported further that the Special European Union Programmes Body had submitted comments on an economic appraisal which had been undertaken in respect of the Tension Monitoring programme and had requested that additional information be provided before final approval was granted. In addition, it was still considering the economic appraisal on Youth Engagement and further information could be required in support of the project. He informed the Members that, in addition to receiving monthly reports on the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Plan, it was proposed that the Partnership receive over the course of the next year presentations from each of the projects involved in Phase II of the PEACE III Plan.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

**Proposals for the Development of a Strategy and Action Plan  
Focused on Interface Areas**

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

**“Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 Members will be aware of the recent Notice of Motion brought to the September meeting of Council by Alderman Tom Ekin: ‘Removal of Peace Walls’, detailed as follows:

“This Council can demonstrate true civic leadership by agreeing to tackle one of the biggest problems which affects all of the citizens of the City, that is, the continued existence of the so called ‘Peace Walls’. These walls performed a necessary security purpose in the past in the several interface areas of the City but now serve to increase alienation and to inhibit regeneration and development of those very same areas and the time has now come to seek to move towards their removal.

The Council agrees to take the lead in devising a strategy which seeks to move towards the removal of a number of these walls within the current Council term. This strategy should be inclusive and include the direct involvement of all appropriate organisations from the business, public and voluntary and community sectors, with the wishes and needs of those people who live in the interface areas being paramount.”

Accordingly, the motion was referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration on how to proceed. That Committee received a report on the development of a strategy and framework for action for incorporation into the corporate planning process and agreed that this should be taken forward by the Good Relations Partnership in conjunction with the Safer City Thematic Group, chaired by the Director of Health and Environmental Services.

- 1.2 Previously, at the monthly meeting of the Council on the 3rd March 2008, Councillor Alban Maginness had proposed:

“Belfast City Council resolves that it is now time to begin to work towards the reduction and the ultimate removal of the so called ‘peace walls’ and barriers that presently divide our City. To this end, the Council therefore agrees to establish a working group to explore ways and means to initiate such a process and to report back with proposals by September, 2008.”

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Long and the matter was referred to the Good Relations Steering Panel without debate. At that time, the Good Relations Steering Panel integrated a series of actions related to working in interface areas into its Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan (Peace III) 2009-2011 as well as the Good Relations Plan.

- 1.3 Under the Safer City Thematic Group within the Council, an internal interface officers group has recently been established with representation from officers across relevant services in the Council. The purpose of this group was to look at council service provision in interface areas and this group has now prepared a discussion document on the way forward is contained within Appendix 1, a copy of which has been circulated to the Partnership.

By way of general background, the report notes some important areas for consideration, along with some general observations and these are listed below:

- There are 88 interface barriers in Belfast according the CRC report 'Towards sustainable security – barriers and legacy of separation in Belfast'
- All bar one of these barriers are in the 10% most deprived areas in the City
- Those living at interface areas are faced with issues such as poor mobility, poor access to services, community safety issues, poor community relations, poor environment, poor health etc. In particular, health tends to decline in communities where levels of interaction are low, tensions are high and where people feel insecure
- People who live in interface areas generally have good proximity to services within their general geographical area. The issue in relation to services is access – not proximity. In addition to the presence of the physical barrier, people are not accessing services due to community safety concerns and a feeling that the facility is not 'theirs'. This has in some instances led to a duplication in service provision. For example, Woodvale Community centre is roughly 10 minutes walk from Ardoyne Community Centre.

- Funding provision is more often than not short-term or reactive in nature which does not allow for long term planning or interventions that are needed to address systemic challenges. There is a need to move beyond a conflict management mode.
- The Minister for the Department of Justice is also building momentum to enable barriers to be removed and has asked his staff to work set up a group of relevant statutory agencies to take this forward, alongside some of the other groups mentioned below.
- There was considerable publicity about the opening up of a barrier in Alexander Park Avenue. This is seen as a model to be built on.
- That the Good Relations Partnership and Unit have been focused on building capacity within communities through its Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan (Peace III) to develop a situation where in time barriers could be removed under the theme of Transforming Contested Space.

**1.4 Current Council involvement in interface issues:**

- Since 2008, the Council has provided significant investment in developing community capacity and a series of local Action Plans under the theme of Transforming Space within Phase I of the Belfast Peace Plan, funded by the European Regional Development Fund.
- The Renewing the Routes programmes and various other externally funded projects within Phase I of Peace III have contributed to dialogue and progress at interface areas
- Good Relations and Community Safety actions are ongoing in interface areas through programme delivery, core grant aid and other engagement and practical support.
- Community Services area development across the City connects strongly within areas in and around interfaces

- The Community Relations Council (CRC) coordinates an interagency Interface Working Group (IWG) to look at this issue across Northern Ireland and includes a linked interface community partners group. The Council is represented on these bodies by representatives from the Good Relations and Community safety Units.
- The IWG is working towards understanding issues at interfaces and engaging with communities and statutory partners to promote regeneration and assess the feasibility of removing barriers.
- The IWG involves Belfast City Council, DOJ, DSD, DRD, NIHE, BELB, PSNI, OFM/DFM as well as community representatives, all looking at issues related to interfaces.
- A barrier removal sub-group has been developed and a barrier removal template has also been produced to assist with this process. This is contained within Appendix 2, a copy of which has been circulated to Members.

It should be noted that the main principle contained within the IWG process is that:

***“In all responses to the legacy of physical segregation, the safety and security of the people living near to interfaces and interface barriers will be the priority. At the same time it is the responsibility of government to develop responses to the real challenges of fear and threat which do not rely on permanent barriers or patterns of exclusion and violence. With this in mind, Departments should create the conditions for the removal of all interface barriers across the region. The process of removing interface barriers should be part of an inclusive, community approach towards building a shared society. New barriers will only be built if all other avenues of intervention have been tried and failed; rather priority must be given to other forms of investment in communities to ensure their safety and security without the need for physical structures”.***

The barrier removal template identifies a 19 staged process for engagement around the removal of barriers and contains separate processes to deliver statutory led initiatives as well as community led initiatives.

- 1.5 It is clear that segregation in the city inhibits regeneration, adds to costs of service delivery, distortion of labour markets, urban blight, etc. at a time when Belfast needs to be promoting itself as an outward looking location for living, investment and tourism.

Therefore, the Council needs to now have a clear defined role in addressing these issues.

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The Council is not directly responsible for the erection or removal of interface barriers. However, given its Civic Leadership responsibilities it should have a key role in addressing segregation so that barrier removal may become possible. The Safer Cities sub group on interfaces discussion document identifies three key roles for Belfast City Council in relation to interfaces:

1. A civic leadership role – setting the vision of a City with improved cohesion, less segregation and fewer physical barriers. The Council should make an explicit commitment in its plans and in its work with partners and communities to promote cohesion with a long term vision of barrier removal.
2. An influencing role – seeking to use the influence of the Council to ensure that all master plans, capital projects and developments and regeneration projects seek to contribute to a City with improved cohesion and less segregation.
3. A practical role – using the resources of the Council (assets, facilities, funding) to complement and support wider initiatives aimed at promoting and ultimately achieving a more cohesive City with fewer physical barriers. Examples of this practical work could include:
  - creating funding criteria across funding streams that could support less segregation and the long-term vision of barrier removal.
  - Identifying opportunities to direct resources to dealing with underlying problems at interface areas, for example the Peace III Youth Engagement Project (YEP) and Tension Monitoring Project (which will draw in over £1m)

- Integrating good relations and community cohesion outcomes within the themes of the corporate plan, via the place shaping agenda by transforming contested space through capital projects and regeneration, tailoring our approach to local area working, cultural tourism, better employment mobility or improved transport connections.
- Providing leadership in joined up thinking and collaboration with regard to regeneration in interface areas with other organisations
- Working with DoJ and others to support the Collaborative Working in Disadvantaged Areas work and the barrier removal agenda
- Identifying immediate projects that can be developed and delivered

## 2.2 Proposals

The Safer Cities discussion paper also suggests that the following could be included in the framework for action:

1. The Council should identify high level opportunities to promote cohesion through the corporate planning process, under each of the corporate plan strategic themes. Promoting cohesion should be a responsibility of each of the relevant Project Boards and should feature in the project briefs and high level performance reviews. These opportunities should include:
  - The implementation of Phase II of the Peace III plan
  - Promoting the city centre and any new public space as a shared space
  - Ensuring that iconic projects and major developments where the Council is leading, including Connswater Community Greenway, Titanic, cultural quarters, North Foreshore, etc.
  - Integrating this approach into our plans for neighbourhood working – a particular emphasis should be placed on cohesion within each of the pilot areas chosen.



- Promoting cohesion through our Neighbourhood Investment Funded projects as well as cultural, art, tourism and night time economy projects, whilst also recognising multiple cultural identities
  - Developing outcomes to reduce segregation within our Active Belfast strategy and community development strategy
2. All relevant Council departments should incorporate actions which support less segregation within neighbourhoods located at interfaces within the business planning process.
  3. The Council should, through the Safer Cities interface officers group, work with others, such as the DoJ, to identify neighbourhoods seeking to reduce barriers and provide support to the communities and also identify additional projects to help regenerate the area. This work should be overseen by the Neighbourhood working Board. This should be done in conjunction with the DOJ and others and may be linked to the Neighbourhood Investment Fund.
  4. The Council's response to the consultation on the Social Investment Fund should include the need to invest in areas where there is a will to move towards barrier removal.
  5. Relevant community funding streams should be adjusted to make explicit support for less segregation and greater cohesion so as to support communities to develop a long-term positive vision for their community and the city as a whole. Summer intervention funding in particular is being reviewed to ensure that it can be used more effectively in the future. The Council is also reviewing its summer activity programmes aimed particularly at young people.
  6. For each interface area, a detailed profile should be produced by the SNAP team to identify underlying problems in the area. This could enable identification of key initiatives to help reduce segregation.

7. The dedicated internal officer working group on interfaces should continue to act as a key internal point of contact in order to drive forward work around interfaces in the areas of regeneration, grant aid funding and barrier removal issues. This group will ensure that this work will link with that being taken forward by the barrier removal sub-group of the Interface Working Group and the DoJ led statutory agencies group. It will also identify immediate projects that could be supported by the Council, in partnership with these agencies. The partnership will recall that a proposal to address the interfaces issue was submitted as part of the original bid for funding to SEUPB as part of Phase II of the Belfast PEACE III Plan. The economic appraisal recognised that the proposal had the potential to address the aims and objectives of the Peace III Operational Programme and recommended that the Council is provided with an opportunity to strengthen the case for this project specifically to allow for assessment of value for money, additionality and identified need. In line with the development the new Council strategy on interfaces it is proposed that the proposal outlined at Appendix 4 is presented to SEUPB for their consideration.
8. The Council should identify a mechanism to influence the inclusion of a long-term goal reducing segregation within major infrastructural, transport, regeneration and other major developments within the City. This should include rapid transit, Girdwood, University of Ulster, etc.
9. Lobbying for changes in housing and planning policy and controls to promote social cohesion.

2.3 The above proposals and the Safer Cities discussion document should form the basis of the strategy and action plan to be recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as a response to the aforementioned Notices of Motion that have been brought to Council. It is recognised that the Good Relations Partnership will have a vital role to play in driving this process forward. Elected Representatives will need have a key role and in addition to reporting to Committee it is suggested that the Party Group Leaders will be invited to influence and inform the strategy, plan and framework for action. A proposed timetable on the development of these proposals is attached as Appendix 3.

## Resource Implications

### Financial

There is no requirement for any additional resources at this stage. The proposals seek to build on what the Council already provides within its services through developing actions within the business planning process to support a positive agenda around interfaces. A specific proposal on identifying immediate projects is attached as appendix 4 for resubmission to SEUPB under the Phase II plan and will be 100% recoupable from EU funding.

### Equality and Good Relations Implications

This report seeks to ultimately build better relations amongst the most deprived communities within the City with the goal of improvement in the quality of life at these areas, leading better cohesion and fewer physical barriers.

### Recommendations

The Partnership is requested to:

- (i) note the information contained within this report and the discussion document
- (ii) recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee the proposals within the report for the development of a strategy and plan as outlined
- (iii) note the proposal that the Party Group Leaders participate in a 6 month process to oversee and contribute to the development of these proposals
- (iv) authorise the submission of a specific proposal to SEUPB as part of Phase II of the Belfast Peace Plan, as attached, to identify immediate projects that could be supported by the Council in partnership with other agencies.

### Decision Tracking

Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, Suzanne Wylie, Director of Health and Environmental Services, Isaac May, Peace III Programme Manager, David Robinson, Senior Good Relations Officer and Richard McLernon, Community Safety Co-ordinator, will be responsible for tasks arising out of this report.

**Documents Attached**

**Appendix 3: Proposed timetable for development of actions**

**Appendix 4: Project Proposal for submission to SEUPB for inclusion in the Belfast Peace Plan to support immediate projects.**

**Appendix 3**

**Proposed timetable for the development of the strategy, plan and framework on the proposals to improve cohesion, reduce segregation and contribute to the removal of physical barriers**

<b><u>Area of work</u></b>	<b><u>Responsibility</u></b>	<b><u>Timeframe</u></b>
<b>Identify high level opportunities to promote cohesion through the corporate planning process, under each of the corporate plan strategic themes</b>	<b>Chief Officers and Heads of Service</b>	<b>By March 2011</b>
<b>All relevant Council departments should incorporate actions which support less segregation within neighbourhoods located at interfaces within the business planning process</b>	<b>Chief Officers and Heads of Service</b>	<b>By March 2011</b>
<b>Identify neighbourhoods seeking to reduce barriers and provide support to the communities and also identify additional projects to help regenerate the area</b>	<b>Internal interface officers group</b>	<b>Immediate</b>

<u>Area of work</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>
Respond to the consultation on the Social Investment Fund to include the need to invest in areas where there is a will to move towards barrier removal	Policy Officers	By close of consultation Dec 2011
Relevant community funding streams should be adjusted to make explicit support for less segregation and greater cohesion so as to support communities to develop a long-term positive vision for their community and the city as a whole	Chief Officers and Heads of Service, delegated to the funding review	By March 2011
A detailed profile should be produced by the SNAP team to identify underlying problems in the 88 defined interface areas	SNAP team	By March 2011
A dedicated internal officer working group on interfaces should continue to act as a key internal point of contact in order to drive forward work around interfaces in the areas of regeneration, grant aid funding and barrier removal issues	Current interface officers group, reporting to the Safer Cities group	Immediate

<u>Area of work</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>
The officers working group will ensure that this work will link with that being taken forward by the barrier removal sub-group of the Interface Working Group and the DoJ led statutory agencies group	BCC representatives on the Interface Working Group	Immediate
It will also identify immediate projects that could be supported by the Council, in partnership with the Interface Working Group, with support from Peace III Phase I slippage monies	BCC representatives on the Interface Working Group plus Peace III team	Immediate
The Council should identify a mechanism to influence the inclusion of a long-term goal reducing segregation within major infrastructural, transport, regeneration and other major developments within the City	Elected Members and the internal interface officers group	Immediate
Lobbying for changes in housing and planning policy and controls to promote social cohesion	Elected Members and Chief Officers	Immediate

Appendix 4

Interfaces Programme – PEACE III Proposal

1. Background

Under Phase I of Peace III, Belfast City Council delivered a number of projects under the theme of Transforming Contested Space. These included:

- Developing capacity within individuals and communities operating in and around interface areas
- Providing a mediation resource for a number of communities at interface areas
- Developing 4 specific action plans in north, south, east and west of the City to identify regeneration projects at interface areas
- A Youth Intervention Programme

A Notice of Motion brought to the September meeting of Council on 'Removal of Peace Walls', stated the following:

"This Council can demonstrate true civic leadership by agreeing to tackle one of the biggest problems which affects all of the citizens of the City, that is, the continued existence of the so called 'Peace Walls'. These walls performed a necessary security purpose in the past in the several interface areas of the City but now serve to increase alienation and to inhibit regeneration and development of those very same areas and the time has now come to seek to move towards their removal.

The Council agrees to take the lead in devising a strategy which seeks to move towards the removal of a number of these walls within the current Council term. This strategy should be inclusive and include the direct involvement of all appropriate organisations from the business, public and voluntary and community sectors, with the wishes and needs of those people who live in the interface areas being paramount."

In addition to the work of the Council under Phase I of Peace III, the Council has been working with the city-wide interface working group (IWG) which seeks to develop a coordinated response to interface issues. This group has now developed a process to assist in the transformation and removal of barriers. It identifies a staged process for both community led initiatives as well as statutory led initiatives. Already,

some progress has been made, with the addition of the new gate at the interface wall in Alexandra Park and the progress on the Newington Street barrier, both in North Belfast.

As part of the work of the IWG, the Department of Justice is conducting an exercise to identify those barriers across Belfast that currently do not pose any significant security issue. This proposal seeks to develop a plan in partnership with the Department of Justice and the Interface Working Group which will focus on these areas, working towards the agreed outcome of removal of these physical barriers over a two-year period.

**2. Aim of Proposal**

The proposal aims to reduce inter-community tensions and conflict and to support the integrated regeneration of those communities at the interface, having dealt with the legacies of conflict. This will be achieved through a programme to remove physical barriers and support the regeneration of a number of interface areas of the city.

**3. Objectives**

1. To identify potential areas in partnership with the Department of Justice, where a statutory led initiative could be instigated to address the continuing presence of specific physical barriers.
2. To carry out a full and comprehensive consultation exercise within the areas identified.
3. To devise regeneration plans which are aligned to broader regeneration priorities that would be specific to the barrier issue, through identifying what would replace it/how it might be transformed, and providing the resources to fund this.
4. Identify what other resources are required to build confidence in the community following removal of the barrier, such as some community safety or good relations initiatives.



4. Activities

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timing (est.)</i>
Development of Project Steering Group	January 2012
Initial consultation	Jan - Feb 2012
Initial scoping of areas	Jan - Feb 2012
Procurement of managing agent	By April 2012
Local Consultation	May - Oct 2012
Development of removal and regeneration plan	Oct – Nov 2012
Permissions and consents	December 2012
Works	Jan - March 2013
Shared Space Programming	April - Sep 2013
Monitoring and Evaluation	Ongoing
Project Closure	December 2013

5. Delivery approach

The proposal will develop an interagency approach to work towards the removal of physical interface barriers with the agreement and support of local residents. This will be in line with best practice in conflict resolution and mediation and seek to build upon work done in Phase I of the Belfast PEACE III Plan and support multi-agency working and decision making, aligned to the work of the Interface Working Group. The work will be in line with the recommended phases for development of locally based regeneration strategies outlined in Towards Sustainable Security, published by the Community Relations Council and the ongoing work of the Interface Working Group and the Department for Justice. The project will require an inter agency approach involving current and new partner organisations working alongside the Council for oversight and project delivery. Goods and services will be procured in line with public procurement guidelines. Engagement and consultation will ensure that no activity is undertaken that does not have the support of local residents.

6. Timescales

January 2012 – December 2013. A detailed programme plan will be developed by the partners at the outset of the project. Members of the proposed steering group for the project will be asked to attend preparatory meetings to develop a detailed time-table of work in anticipation of support from SEUPB.

7. Outputs

A series of detailed measures and targets will be established for the project. These will include both qualitative and quantitative information which will permit benchmarking over time and with different locations.

Basic outputs would include an expectation of a reduction in offences and antisocial behaviour committed by scheme participants; and an overall reduction of antisocial behaviour in the areas where the projects operate.

8. Outcomes & Impacts

Desired outcomes for this proposal include:

- Local residents feel safe and protected following the removal of interface barriers
- Increase in community interaction and diminution of suspicion and mistrust
- Increased access to shared spaces and high quality services

The proposal will leave a lasting impact in that the removal of interface barriers can be considered critical to the future success and prosperity and quality of life of its residents.

9. Indicative Costs

There are a number of key activities required within this proposal, which would be in line with the process that has been set out through the barrier removal template of the Interface Working Group:

- Consultation with communities
- Assessment of risk and impact of removing/transforming the barrier
- Exploration with communities of the possibilities for what happens with the space following the removal/transformation of the barrier
- Visioning process with communities on the possibilities for the regeneration of their area
- Design of alternatives to the physical barrier
- Communication within communities on these designs
- Delivery of the project – works, landscaping, traffic calming etc.
- Removal of the barrier
- Monitoring of the area following the removal

An outline budget with Indicative costs, excluding costs of removal/ landscaping etc has been prepared. The overall projects costs would reflect the number of initial areas and following consultation with project partners and Special EU Programmes Body.

Stages 1 - 6: 11 days @ £300 per day = £3,300

Stage 7: £24,000

Stage 8: Department of Justice responsibility.

Stage 9: 3 days per mth for 3 months = £300 per day = £2,700

Total indicative cost per area = £30,000. This could be scaled appropriately depending on the number of initial areas to be included with the identification of economies of scale, more cost efficient consultation etc.

10. Strategic Fit with PEACE III Plan and additionality

The proposal is considered to demonstrate a high level of strategic fit with the objectives of the Peace III programme and may lever complementary resources from participating agencies.

Key target groups

The project targets deprived interface areas where investment and development opportunities have been negatively affected by historical and underlying sectarian conflict.

Promoting reconciliation

The project aims to promote cohesion and agreed solutions in interface areas built on the learning from previous Peace programmes and by applying lessons observed from successful interventions both locally and abroad.

Fit with Belfast PEACE III Plan

The project displays an excellent fit with the Belfast Peace III plan, particularly the theme of Transforming Contested Space. The proposal contributes strongly to transforming contested space by assisting the development of collective responsibility within communities and working towards physical transformation and regeneration of those areas. The focussed approach advocated will provide synergy with other projects and will result in enhanced mutual benefits. The method to be applied in this project is clearly aligned to a creating a strong, inclusive community base.

Projects within the Belfast PEACE III Plan which will be complemented by the proposal include:

- **Community Cohesion Networks** – the proposal will support a longer term approach to re-imagining whole communities.
- **City of Neighbourhoods through health and well-being** – by creating further opportunities and support for the engagement and participation of young people within their communities.
- **Belfast Sectarianism/Racism Tension Monitoring and Response Project** – by providing targeted support and positive engagement for families and communities around interfaces.
- **Youth Engagement Programme** – to support the package of interventions provided through this programme to engage with young people and their families previously involved in youth led violence at interface areas and reducing their involvement in these activities.

#### Added Value

The proposal is based around new thinking on policy and practice as to how the Council and other agencies best address problems in interface areas to create shared space. The proposal provides as basis for focused engagement work within local communities to deal with difficult issues, often considered intractable, to support integrated regeneration. This proposal provides a timely opportunity to test the effectiveness and practicalities of new thinking on interfaces. Cooperation anticipated from other partners involved may, of itself, lever resources towards a shared approach which benefits all parties.

#### Addressing Need

The experience of communities across the city is that whilst significant improvements have been made in tackling antisocial behaviour and violence at interfaces, the continued existence of physical barriers impairs the future prosperity of Belfast and quality of life of its citizens.

11. Option and priority analysis

A full appraisal and analysis of delivery options and priorities will be conducted in advance of final proposals. This will be in line with best practice in economic appraisal and will consider the options around the scale, quality, techniques, location, timing and funding of the proposed project which may offer either a better fit with the identified need and/or an increase in the quality of the outputs and outcomes, ensuring better value for money.

12. Rationale for Partner to deliver

The Council is the democratically elected leader charged with improving the city. Its ambitions to effect change in Belfast are clearly outlined in its Corporate Plan. The Peace III programme continues to provide an essential supplement and means of direction where public investment is used to maximum effect. The rationale for the project assumes that EU funds are placed alongside Council and other public sector resources to address sectarianism and racist attitudes, focussing on conflict resolution and mediation at the local community level. In fulfilling the Council's ambition to progress a Community Planning approach to local issues, we will use our influence to bring together statutory and non statutory partners, combined with local community involvement to address issues related to a city emerging from conflict.

13. Evidence of capacity to deliver

Belfast City Council has an excellent track record in the delivery of projects and proven ability to secure co-operation of partners necessary for the completion of this project. The Council's commitment and ability to deliver have been evidenced through its partnership working and its response to managing crisis situations within the city, for example, the impact of flooding, issues around hate crime and interface violence. The Council has successful partnerships which already involve many of the partners referenced in this proposal, notably through the Good Relations Partnership which has overseen the implementation of Phase 1 of the Belfast PEACE III Plan 2009-2011 and the Community Safety Partnership which has successfully delivered projects and programmes within the Safer Belfast Plan 2009-2011.

14. Cross-cutting themes: - Impact on poverty, Partnership, Sustainable Development and Equality of opportunity

Impact on poverty

There is a strong correlation between areas with physical interface barriers and areas of multiple deprivation. Removal of interfaces should lead to increased investor confidence in the city generally and in making local areas more attractive places in which to live and work. The proposal complements the Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy and current proposals for neighbourhood renewal. Threat and fear are major deterrents to attracting highly skilled and mobile investment and labour as are any impediments to mobility, free movement and environmental degradation/ urban blight in the city. Labour mobility is critical in reinforcing peace in the city and the wider region as is promoting Belfast as an attractive global city where its resident talent pool is able to move freely and safely, as well as attracting the best international employers to the city and increased numbers of visitors with a corresponding beneficial impact upon local communities through increased investment and visitor spend.

Partnership

The proposal is aligned principally to the Council's core objective of supporting people and communities. An overriding ambition for the project will be to demonstrate the Council's leadership role in delivering what is an inter agency, community planning based approach which contributes to the resolution of shared problems. Specific Council strategies which will be progressed by the project include Partnership working, Good Relations, Health Development, Regeneration, Community Development and Anti Poverty. This proposed project will be delivered in partnership at a steering level and delivery level; these structures will be brought together at regular points across the life of the project. The project will also link to the Community Safety Partnership at a strategic level and with the tackling antisocial behaviour thematic group and Belfast City Council's Safer City Group. Council is committed to partnership working and the proposal will focus on collaborative interagency working and continuous community consultation and engagement.

### Sustainability

Sustainability is about balancing social and economic needs, with the need to protect the environment and its resources. It involves meeting the demands of today's population, without compromising the quality of life of future generations. This proposal will be designed, developed and delivered within this context and in accordance with council's Sustainable Development Action Plan. This will include adherence to environmental purchasing policies; energy and carbon management within offices; efforts to ensure waste reduction and recycling and promotion of the sustainability message.

With regard to sustainability the Good Relations Partnership has already identified the issue of identifying and mainstreaming good practice wherever possible. This is reflected through the actions which will be partner led but will be developed through inter-sectoral participation and representation. Utilisation of the Aid for Peace Framework should deliver outcomes which are more sustainable as a result of the intervention. Removal of physical interfaces will be a long lasting legacy of the PEACE III intervention.

### Equality of opportunity

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Council, in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without.

The Act also requires the Council, in carrying out its functions, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Council's Equality Scheme, which details how the Council will fulfil its duties, was approved in April 2001. A part of that Equality Scheme was the production of a Good Relations Strategy. The Council's Good Relations Strategy was prepared and adopted in February 2003; it was commended as a model of good practice in the Shared Future document by the Office of the First Minister/Deputy First Minister.

**As these recommendations are based on Section 75(2), this proposal, as all projects in the Belfast PEACE III Plan will be focused on the three dimensions associated with section 75(2) and, since it aims to promote good relations positively between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group, is likely to have a differential but positive impact in terms of all three dimensions.**

**Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006) (DDO), from 1 January 2007, public authorities, when carrying out their functions must have due regard to the need to:**

- **promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and encourage participation by disabled people in public life.**

**These duties are referred to as the ‘disability duties’. Council’s Equality Toolkit and Reference Guide provide details on accessibility to services through event management, travel and accessibility, amongst others. This proposal will be designed, developed and delivered in accordance with Council policy on equality.”**

During discussion, the following points were made in relation to the Strategy and Action Plan:

- the initiative should apply not only to interfaces but should seek to improve relations across all of the City and create a positive vision for all communities in terms of reducing segregation and increasing cohesion;
- participation in the Strategy at corporate level and across all Council Departments and support at Northern Ireland Executive level would be crucial to ensure its success;
- more emphasis was required on the potential involvement of the private sector, for example, in housing development;
- more work was required to enhance the community safety element of the Strategy;
- any changes to interface barriers should be undertaken in consultation with the Police Service of Northern Ireland and other relevant agencies;



- it was important to ensure that communities were supported throughout the process and a long-term strategy was required to address issues such as health, housing, educational attainment and unemployment;
- the Strategy should draw upon the experience of initiatives being undertaken currently by interface organisations across the City, such as the Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group.

In response, the Good Relations Manager confirmed that those comments would be reflected within the report being submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 18th November seeking approval for the development of the strategy and plan. She emphasised that any work to be undertaken regarding the transformation of physical barriers would only be conducted with the agreement of local communities.

After further discussion, the Partnership adopted the recommendations contained within the report and agreed that the Good Relations Manager investigate the possibility of holding the next meeting of the Partnership at the offices of the Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group.

**Tender for the Delivery of PEACE III Phase II Programmes**  
**“Promoting the Positive Expression of Cultural Heritage”**  
**and “Migrant and Minority Ethnic Project”**

The Good Relations Manager informed the Partnership that all of the projects contained within Phase II of the Council’s PEACE III Programme had, following an assessment process, been approved for delivery by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 23rd September. She reported that approval was now being sought for the undertaking of the above-mentioned projects, which would cost £300,000 and £150,000 respectively, and which would be delivered by the Good Relations Unit. She explained that the cost associated with both projects, which would each seek to promote positive expressions of cultural heritage in all communities within the City, would be recouped in full from European Union funding which was administered by the Special European Union Programmes Body under Phase II of the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Plan. Accordingly, she recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to:

- (i) grant authority to invite tenders for the delivery of the “Promoting the Positive Expression of Cultural Heritage” and “Migrant and Minority Ethnic Project” initiatives; and
- (ii) delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive to award the tenders on the basis of the most economically advantageous submissions which fulfilled the criteria of both projects.

The Partnership adopted the recommendation.

**Disability Action Plan**

The Good Relations Manager informed the Partnership that the Council had a duty, under the provisions of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage participation by disabled people in public life. In order to meet its disability legislative responsibilities, the Council was required to draft a Disability Action Plan which it submitted annually to the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland. She explained that the first Plan had been formulated in June 2007 and that, since then, the Council had provided annual updates, the latest of which was available on its website. She reported that the Disability Action Plan for 2011 had, together with the revised Equality Scheme, been issued to consultees seeking their views thereon. She reviewed the key elements of the Plan, which had been divided for ease of reference into Departmental actions, and pointed out that the Council had renewed recently its contract with DisabledGo for a further three years which would enable it to provide up-to-date access to over 900 venues throughout the City.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided and that the information on outputs relating to Year 4 of the Disability Action Plan was available on the Modern.gov website.

**Stained Glass Window – Celtic Myths and Legends**

The Partnership was advised that the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister had agreed to contribute 75% of the cost, that is, £16,500 out of a total estimated cost of £22,000 for a Celtic Myths and Legends stained glass window to be erected in the City Hall. The Good Relations Manager reported that, following a request for expressions of interest from artists interested in creating the window and a resulting selection process, a panel consisting of Alderman Stalford and Councillors Hendron and McVeigh together with external Members J. Hawthorne and M. Marken and two Council officers, had agreed that Mr. Martin Donlin be commissioned to undertake the work. She explained that the window, which it was envisaged would be completed by March 2012, would be placed in the ground floor of City Hall, close to the Conor Room.

Noted.

**King James Bible Commemoration Event**

The Partnership was advised that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 23rd September, had agreed to hold a lunch-time event in the City Hall, in partnership with the Bible Society Northern Ireland, to mark the 400th anniversary of the publication of the King James Bible. The Good Relations Manager reported that the event had taken place on 2nd November and that a letter had since been received from Mr. J. Doherty, General Secretary of the Bible Society Northern Ireland, commending the Council on the success of the event and its commitment to making the City Hall a shared place bringing together many strands of the City's diverse culture.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

**St. Patrick's Day 2012 - Small Grants Scheme**

The Partnership noted that the closing date for the submission of applications by community groups seeking to hold small-scale events under the Small Grants Scheme to celebrate St. Patrick's Day was 25th November.

Chairman