

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

TUESDAY, 3rd APRIL, 2012

MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

- Members present: Councillor Hendron (Chairman);
Alderman Stoker; and
Councillors Attwood, Kyle, McVeigh and Reynolds.
- External Members: Ms. O. Barron, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;
Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Archdeacon B. Dodds, Church of Ireland;
Ms. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
Mrs. M. Marken, Catholic Church;
Mr. B. McGivern, Belfast City Centre Management;
Mr. P. Scott, Catholic Church; and
Mr. U. Tok, Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum.
- Also attended: Ms. D. O'Loan, Community Relations Council/Pobal.
- 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 Ms. A. Chada, Mr. P. Bunting, Mr. R. Galway, Mr. M. O'Donnell and Ms. M. De Silva.

Minutes

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

New Members

It was reported that Ms. Orla Barron and Ms. Deirdre O'Loan had replaced Ms. J. Peden and Ms. K. McErlean respectively on the Partnership. The Chairman, on behalf of the Members, welcomed them to their first meeting.

Congratulations

The Chairman extended, on behalf of the Partnership, congratulations to Mr. U. Tok on the recent birth of his daughter.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Tuesday, 3rd April, 2012**

City of Sanctuary Initiative

The Partnership was informed that Rev. Dr. I. Bhogal, Leader of the Corrymeela Community, was in attendance in order to provide information on the City of Sanctuary initiative and he was welcomed to the meeting.

Rev. Dr. Bhogal explained that the City of Sanctuary movement had originated in Sheffield in 2005, with a group of local people enlisting the support of businesses, organisations and community groups to make a resolution welcoming asylum seekers and refugees to that city. That had led to Sheffield becoming in 2007 the United Kingdom's first official City of Sanctuary. A manifesto had been drafted which set out key areas of concern for asylum seekers and refugees and that was adopted in 2009 by Sheffield City Council. The list of participants had since grown to include more than one hundred organisations.

He informed the Partnership that the initiative had, since its formation, been expanded to include almost twenty cities which were either working towards attaining City of Sanctuary status or had achieved it. He reviewed the key concepts associated with the movement and explained that it emphasised the contributions which asylum seekers and refugees had made to the various cities. The movement provided also an opportunity for local communities to meet and form relationships with those seeking sanctuary through the staging of a range of events aimed at enabling them to communicate their individual experiences to different audiences. It sought also to offer a positive vision of hospitality within local communities seeking to build cities which were proud to be seen as being welcoming to those seeking sanctuary. He pointed out that a working group was being launched in Belfast in June, as part of Refugee Week, and that it would in due course be enlisting the support of a wide range of organisations and individuals in its efforts to attain City of Sanctuary status for Belfast.

After discussion, Rev. Dr. Bhogal was thanked by the Chairman and retired from the meeting.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

Peace III – Implementation Update

The Peace III Programme Manager submitted for the Partnership's consideration a report which provided an update in respect of the implementation of Phase 1 of the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan. He informed the Members that actual expenditure for the last quarter of 2011 had been approximately £173,000 less than anticipated, with an estimated underspend of £53,000 being forecast for the first three months of 2012. He pointed out that, should current expenditure patterns be maintained for the remainder of the Phase II Plan, it was likely that there would be a significant final underspend over the life of the Peace III Programme and a consequential loss of available funding for the City.

He explained that the difference in actual expenditure compared to profiled budgets had been due mainly to delays in the completion of economic appraisals relating to the Youth Engagement and the Tension Monitoring Programmes and in project implementation arising from issues involving recruitment, stakeholder

**Good Relations Partnership,
Tuesday, 3rd April, 2012**

consultation, detailed project planning and finalising of delivery options. He informed the Partnership that, in line with the requirements of the Peace III Programme, budgets would be re-profiled and submitted to the Special European Union Programmes Body for its approval. Budget monitoring at project level would continue to be undertaken on a monthly basis to ensure that expenditure targets were met and regular updates in this regard would be provided for the Good Relations Partnership. He added that it was proposed that contingency plans be developed to ensure that the full benefit of the Letter of Offer allocation was realised over the course of Phase II of the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan. Such a move would involve the stringent monitoring of expenditure and performance, both actual and anticipated, with the option of de-committing funding from projects to enable alternative initiatives to be identified and delivered within the requisite timescale. Those could be identified from the reserve list of Strategic Grant Project proposals and/or new proposals which would be identified by the Good Relations Partnership.

He reported that, as has been agreed by the Good Relations Partnership at its meeting on 5th March, site visits and pre-contract checks were being undertaken on strategic grant applications and it was proposed that an update be submitted to the Partnership's meeting in May setting out recommendations in relation to the issuing of Letters of Offer. In addition, in the light of correspondence which had been received from the Special European Union Programmes Body, it was proposed that advance funding be sought for Phase II of the Peace and Reconciliation Plan. Requests would be prepared in line with the guidance issued by the Programmes Body and would be accompanied by a detailed cashflow forecast and repayment schedule, based upon quarterly claims and arrears. Accordingly, he sought the Partnership's approval to seek advance funding as outlined.

During discussion, several Members voiced concern in relation to the underspends which had been identified, which included a number of Council-managed projects.

In response, the Peace III Programme Manager explained that the underspends could be attributed to delays primarily by the Special European Union Programmes Body in approving various projects and confirmed that the Good Relations Unit would be seeking to ensure that projects, once approved, were rigorously reviewed to make certain that every measure was being taken to ensure that expenditure targets were met.

After further discussion, the Partnership approved the seeking of advance funding in relation to Phase II of the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Plan as outlined. The Partnership agreed also that a report be submitted on a quarterly basis providing information on those projects where delays were evident.

**Tenders for the Delivery of Peace III
Phase II Interfaces Programme**

The Partnership was informed that the Interfaces Programme, which would be delivered by the Council's Good Relations Unit, would seek to support the delivery of work at interface areas across the City as part of the Council's Strategy and Action Plan on Interface Areas. The Good Relations Officer reported that the Interfaces Programme

**Good Relations Partnership,
Tuesday, 3rd April, 2012**

had been awarded funding of £410,000 by the Special European Union Programmes Body under Phase II of the Peace III Programme and that, as was the case for all Peace III projects being delivered by the Council, formal approval to seek tenders for its delivery was required. Accordingly, she recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to grant authority to seek tenders for the delivery of the Interfaces Programme and delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor to award the tender to the most economically advantageous submission received which fulfilled the relevant criteria, including quality and cost.

The Partnership adopted the recommendation and agreed that it be represented on the tender evaluation panel.

(Councillor McVeigh in the Chair.)

Peace III – Partnership Agreement

The Partnership was informed that, under the terms and conditions set out by the Special European Union Programmes Body in its Letter of Offer to the Council, a formal partnership agreement was required for Phase II of the Belfast Peace III Plan. The Peace III Programme Manager reported that the Programmes Body had requested that the Good Relations Partnership review its current agreement, with any revisions being forwarded to it before 30th April, 2012. No drawing down of funding or processing of claims would be possible until the Partnership Agreement was agreed and put in place. Accordingly, he submitted for the Partnership's approval a draft Partnership Agreement relating specifically to the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan being funded by the European Regional Development Fund under Priority 1.1 of the Peace III Programme for Northern Ireland. The draft agreement covered a number of areas, such as the role of the Partnership, the lead partner and individual Members, the organisational structure of the Good Relations Partnership, negotiation of business and co-operation with third parties. It covered also project budget and eligible expenditure, monitoring evaluation and reporting, communication and publicity and confidentiality.

The Peace III Programme Manager pointed out that the composition of the Good Relations Partnership could be subject to further review as Phase II progressed and that it was proposed that an in-depth review session on the operation of the Plan, to which the Members of the Partnership would be invited, would take place later in the year.

The Partnership approved the revised Partnership Agreement, a copy of which was available on the Modern.gov website.

International Day of Peace 2012

The Partnership was advised that the United Nations' International Day of Peace, which had been established in 1982, took place each year on 21st September. The Good Relations Manager explained that the aim of the Day of Peace, which had been founded by resolution, was to provide an opportunity for individuals, communities and organisations to highlight efforts to end conflict and promote practical acts of peace. In addition, events would be organised, ranging in scale from private gatherings to public concerts and forums. In Belfast, the Day of Peace was led each year by Springboard, of which Ms. Angila Chada, a Member of the Good Relations Partnership,

**Good Relations Partnership,
Tuesday, 3rd April, 2012**

acted as Director. That organisation was encouraging Belfast citizens, organisations and governmental bodies to mark the day either privately or publicly and to re-dedicate their ongoing commitment to non-violence, reconciliation and peace building.

She reported that the Council had, since 2009, supported the Belfast Peace Day event and that, since 2010, the Good Relations Partnership had hosted a principal event in the City Hall. Accordingly, she recommended that the Partnership consider the hosting of an appropriate event in the City Hall on 21st September to mark the International Day of Peace. She pointed out that the Partnership's recognition of the day would deliver a powerful message that it condemned the use of violence and supported peace building. She added that information on the International Day of Peace would be included on both the Council's website and its events calendar and that it would be circulated to all Council employees through the internal Intercom magazine.

The Partnership granted authority for the hosting of an appropriate event on 21st September to mark International Day of Peace 2012. It was noted that appropriate hospitality, provision for which had been made in the Good Relations Unit's budget, would be provided.

Community Relations Week 2012

The Partnership was advised that the Community Relations Council co-ordinated annually the holding of Community Relations Week in Northern Ireland. The Good Relations Manager pointed out that its aim was to raise awareness of community relations work and to encourage others to become involved in similar initiatives. She reported that Community Relations Week in 2012 would take place from 14th till 19th May under the theme "No More 'Them and Us'?" and that the Council would be organising two events, the first of which would be a Human Library event taking place on 15th May. She explained that the Human Library, where a person, rather than a book, was on temporary loan, was an innovative method designed to promote dialogue, reduce prejudices and encourage understanding between communities and individuals. It enabled groups to break stereotypes by challenging the most common prejudices in a positive and humorous manner. Visitors to the mobile library were afforded an opportunity to speak informally with participants who varied in age, sex and community and cultural backgrounds. The second event involving the Council would be the conducting of 'Ending Hate in Our Communities' training on 16th May. The training would provide participants with practical information on how to address hate crime and acquire the skills to deal with bias and harassment. Accordingly, she sought the Partnership's approval for the hosting of the two events, the total cost of which would not exceed £700 and which would be recouped in full from the Peace III Migrant and Minority Ethnic Project.

The Partnership granted the approval sought.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Tuesday, 3rd April, 2012**

Seminar – Awareness of Human Trafficking

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that, at its meeting on 5th March, it had granted approval for the hosting of a seminar on the following day to increase awareness amongst agencies and organisations of the issues surrounding human trafficking. She reported that the Good Relations Unit was now proposing to host a similar event in the City Hall on 18th April for Elected Members, staff and external agencies. The seminar would seek to increase knowledge of the extent and nature of human trafficking and increase skills in identifying victims of trafficking. The cost of staging the seminar would be £200, which would be recouped in full through the Peace III funded Growing a Shared City Project.

The Partnership granted approval for the hosting of the seminar.

Publication of Belfast Place Names Booklet

The Partnership was informed that, at a recent Irish language event which had been held in the City Hall, it had been evident that the issue of the derivation of local place names had been of great interest. In view of this, the Good Relations Unit had contacted the ULTACH Trust to investigate the feasibility of producing a booklet of local place names. The Good Relations Manager reported that such a booklet would be of general local interest and would contribute to the understanding of the origins of local place names and their meanings. Accordingly, she sought the Partnership's approval for the publication of the booklet, the cost of which would not exceed £5,000, and pointed out that 75% of its cost could be recouped through the Council's Good Relations Programme.

The Partnership granted the approval sought.

Launch of Refugee Week 2012

The Good Relations Manager informed the Partnership that the Northern Ireland Community for Refugees and Asylum Seekers organised annually a week of activities to celebrate the contribution which refugees made to Northern Ireland. She explained that the Week was dedicated to broadening horizons and breaking down barriers and sought to promote understanding of the reasons why people sought sanctuary. Refugee Week would this year be celebrated from 18th till 24th June and the Northern Ireland Community for Refugees and Asylum Seekers had requested the Good Relations Unit to host its launch in the City Hall on 18th June. The cost of the launch would be £400, 75% of which would be recouped from the Council's Good Relations Programme.

The Partnership approved the hosting of the event.

Belfast City Council's Equality Scheme

The Partnership noted the contents of correspondence which had been received from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland advising that the Council's Equality Scheme had been approved officially by the Commission on 28th March.

Chairman