

From: The Permanent Secretary
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Chief Executive's Office		
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5 April 2011

Dear Peter,

REVIEW OF THE BELFAST AREA PARTNERSHIPS

My purpose in writing to you is to initiate a formal discussion between officials of the City Council and the Department on the future structure and functions of the five Belfast Area Partnerships established by the Department to assist in the regeneration of the city.

The Area Partnerships were put in place in the mid 1990s under the Making Belfast Work initiative to draw together key stakeholders in the regeneration of the city. As such the Partnerships have been an integral part of the Department's approach to regeneration in Belfast. "People and Place", the strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal saw the Partnerships as an important intermediary between Government and the community sector, and the Partnerships were given a specific role in the establishment and support of the 18 Neighbourhood Partnerships across Belfast.

Throughout their existence the Area Partnerships have taken a significant role in determining and expressing the needs of their communities. In a number of cases, they have initiated and delivered innovative services; established social enterprises; and each has led the development of a Strategic Regeneration Framework for their area. The Partnerships represent a significant investment by the Department in the



delivery of area based regeneration with funding in 2010/11 amounting to some £1.1 million.

As the baseline conditions that informed the formation of the Area Partnerships have changed in terms of the shifts in the spatial economy, in investment priorities for the city, political developments, public sector finances and the need to develop a more competitive and interconnected city, the Department considers it appropriate now to look again at their role and operation.

We of course recognise the significant and growing role that the City Council plays in the regeneration of the city as a whole and the mutual benefits we have found in the Department and the City Council working closely within areas of disadvantage. Given the current position of the Area Partnerships in the infrastructure of such work, and the emergence of community planning function I believe that DSD needs to regard the Council as its key stakeholder in its review of the Partnerships.

I should be grateful therefore if you would nominate a contact with whom arrangements could be made to initiate discussions between the City Council and Belfast Regeneration Office. Mark O'Donnell will be leading on this work for the Department. It will be useful to keep this work on the agenda for our regular meetings.

Yours sincerely
Will Haire

WILL HAIRE