

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

MONDAY, 6TH AUGUST, 2012

MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

- Members present: Councillor Hendron (Chairman); and
Councillors Attwood and McVeigh.
- External Members: Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Archdeacon B. Dodds, Church of Ireland;
Mr. R. Galway, Confederation of British
Industry/Shorts Bombardier;
Mrs. M. Marken, Catholic Church; and
Mr. B. McGivern, Belfast City Centre Management.
- 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 Councillor Kyle, Ms. O. Barron, Ms. A. Chada, Mr. M. O’Donnell and Mr. P. Scott.

Minutes

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

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Peace III - Implementation Update

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of report

To update the Partnership on the implementation of the Belfast PEACE III Plan.

Progress on Phase II Projects

Additional Funding

The PEACE III Steering Committee approved additional proposals for funding under the PEACE III Plan at its meeting on 22nd March and SEUPB issued an amended Letter of Offer to Belfast City Council as Lead Partner in July. Funding totalling £540,491 has been awarded to the Arterial Routes East Project (ref:037808) and the Interfaces Programme (ref:037807).

Activity & Financial Monitoring

A summary of each of the approved Phase II projects has been forwarded to the Partnership. This includes key activities and expenditure as at 30th June, 2012 along with a commentary on progress and financial update on the last quarter.

Actual expenditure for the April – June period is still less than profiled but the position is improving with the variance due in part to late issue of invoices from contractors and payment of invoices delayed pending clarification on compliance issues. A series of monitoring meetings were conducted with projects in early June, 2012 where the project delivery plans were scrutinised against expenditure projections. A number of issues were identified with remedial actions agreed including revision of project plans, key milestones and associated payment schedules for contracted work, additional support and guidance on compliance issues and identification of contingencies in advance of review by the Partnership in the autumn.

Review Session

Further to the report considered by the Partnership in May it is proposed to reschedule the Review session planned for 10th September. It is now proposed that this be held on Wednesday, 17th October. This will allow for the review to consider performance of projects including the critical July-September period in advance of consideration of overall progress on the Belfast PEACE III Plan by the Special European Union Programmes Body. It is proposed that agenda items will include individual project performance and progress to date and; consideration of programme underspend and identification of remedial actions.

Forthcoming Events

The SEUPB is planning a major conference on 13th November, 2012 at Belfast City Hall to highlight the work of the PEACE

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Partnerships across Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. The event will showcase the Partnerships collective experiences of peace building through a series of workshops, presentations and an interactive exhibition of project work from across the region. It will also underline the participative bottom-up approach to conflict resolution that is being delivered by the Partnerships under the EU's PEACE III Programme.

The Community Relations Council and POBAL are planning a meeting for PEACE III Partnerships on 2nd October at the Maze Long Kesh site. Agenda Items to include exchange of best practice, possible extension of Phase II period and discussion of potential for a PEACE IV Programme.

Regular meetings of all projects funded under the Plan in this phase have been scheduled to improve communications and engagement with and between projects and to foster collaborative working and to allow for discussion of key issues. Meetings will commence at 9.30 am at the Learning & Development Centre, May's Meadows, Belfast and conclude at 3.00 pm. The morning session will focus on projects funded under the grants programme and the afternoon session on partner led projects. Dates are as follows:

**29th August 2012
19th October 2012
14th December 2012
22nd February 2013
19th April 2013
21st June 2013
16th August 2013**

Representation on Project Boards and Steering groups.

The Partnership will recall that in order to increase engagement and participation with individual projects expressions of interest have been sought from members for participation on steering groups, receipt of project meeting minutes etc. This will provide an opportunity for increased involvement with projects and also allow projects to benefit from the input of individual Partnership Members. The purpose is not to replace existing reporting and monitoring arrangements or to place any direct management or operational responsibility onto Partnership members but to improve the links with individual projects as has been discussed on previous occasions by the Partnership and to help develop shared organisational space in line with the objectives of the PEACE III Plan.

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Ten representatives of the Good Relations Partnership have expressed an interest in participating in steering groups covering 15 of the 22 projects. To ensure balance across all projects and to avoid concerns or confusion over conflicts of interest it is proposed to discuss the process at the forum meeting for all projects on 29th August and to facilitate initial contacts between projects and Partnership members where this has not already taken place with an update to be brought to a future meeting of the Partnership.

Resource Implications

Financial Implications

Increase in funding allocation to the Phase II Plan of £540,491.

HR Implications

None at present.

Equality Implications

Equality monitoring data is being collected on project participants in line with Council's equality scheme and NISRA requirements for PEACE III Monitoring.

Recommendation

The Partnership is requested to note the information provided relating to implementation of the Belfast PEACE III Plan."

After discussion, the Partnership adopted the recommendation.

Annual Reports to Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

The Partnership was advised that the Council was required to submit to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland annual reports 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 and its compliance with disability legislative responsibilities set out within Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order 2006. Accordingly, the Good Relations Manager submitted for the Partnership's consideration the reports for the period from 1st April, 2011 till 31st March, 2012. She added that the Council had submitted also to the Equality Commission its Annual Monitoring Return as at 1st January, 2011 and pointed out that all of the documents would be made available on the Council's website.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

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Lower Shankill Area Improvement Proposal

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that the Council had, over the years, worked closely with communities across the City in order to improve the image of local neighbourhoods. That work had included the removal and replacement of murals, which had been funded in the first instance through the Brighter Belfast initiative and, more recently, via the Arts Council's Re-Imaging Communities Programme. She explained that the Council had, in 2008, been awarded funding from the latter Programme to re-image ten paramilitary-type murals in the Lower Shankill area. Artists had worked closely from the outset with both the Lower Shankill Community Association and local residents to deliver a successful project which it was recognised had contributed to improving that area.

She reported that, due to the fact that the Re-Imaging Communities Programme was suspended currently and that it was unlikely to re-open in the foreseeable future, the Lower Shankill Community Association had sought the Council's assistance with a view to refreshing several of the artworks which had been completed in 2008 and undertaking other environmental improvements in the area. As a result, Council officers, together with the artists who had been involved in the initial project, had assessed the Group's proposals and, with the agreement of the local community, had developed a programme of work to provide five small artwork projects aimed at enhancing the area. She pointed out that the Association had played a central role in transforming murals in that area, had participated fully over the past five years in the Council's Bonfire Management Programme and was contributing also to the wider consultation on the Council's Interfaces Strategy. Accordingly, she recommended that funding of £2,500 be allocated to the Association to undertake the programme of work, as outlined, the cost of which would be met from within the Good Relations Unit's existing budget.

The Partnership adopted the recommendation and agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Special European Union Programmes Body highlighting the valuable work which had been undertaken through the Re-Imaging Communities Programme and requesting that the Programme be re-instated at the earliest opportunity.

Summer Interventions Review Event

The Partnership was advised that over one hundred local groups and organisations across the City had obtained funding from a number of sources, including the Council, the Belfast Education and Library Board, the Department of Justice and the Community Relations Council, to undertake diversionary and intervention work over the summer months, particularly at times of tension in interface areas. The Good Relations Manager reported that it was now proposed that an event be held in the City Hall at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 5th September to review the effectiveness of that work and to commence the planning process for 2013. The cost of the event would include facilitation and the provision of small-scale hospitality, 75% of which would be recouped from the Council's Good Relations Programme.

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The Partnership agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to approve the hosting of the review event.

Interfaces – Local Project

The Good Relations Manager reported that the Draw Down the Walls organisation, which was a collaboration of the North Belfast Interface Network, the Lower Shankill Community Association and the Golden Thread Gallery, had requested support from the Council to undertake an art project, as part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad. The resulting 'Ambulatorio Belfast' project was a local art initiative which had been developed on a cross-community basis at the Flax Street interface, situated in the space between the two security gates. She explained that the project was an inherent element within the Council's over-arching Interfaces Strategy and that its launch in July had been attended by four Assembly Ministers, thereby highlighting its significance. Funding of £2,000 had been allocated to the project from within the Council's Interfaces budget.

The Partnership approved expenditure in the sum of £2,000 towards the project.

Decade of Centenaries Programme

The Partnership noted the contents of a report providing information on the launch of an exhibition covering the period from 1912 to 1914 and associated range of events taking place over the coming months in the City Hall and the Ulster Hall to mark the Decade of Centenaries.

Noted.

Good Relations Grant-Aid Fund

The Partnership noted that the second call for applications under the Good Relations Grant-Aid Fund had opened earlier in the day and that it would close on 24th August. It was envisaged that a list of those organisations being recommended for funding would be submitted to the Partnership meeting in October.

Chairman