

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

MONDAY, 11th FEBRUARY, 2013

MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

Members present: Councillor Kyle (Deputy Chairman) (in the Chair);
Alderman Stoker and Councillors Attwood and Reynolds.

External Members: Ms. A. Chada, Minority Ethnic Groups;
Archdeacon B. Dodds, Church of Ireland;
Mrs. M. Marken, Catholic Church;
Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Mr. R. Galway, Confederation of British
Industry/Shorts Bombardier;
Mr. B. McGivern, Belfast City Centre Management; and
Ms. M. De Silva, Voluntary/Community Sector.

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; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

(Councillor Attwood in the Chair.)

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the Chairman (Councillor Hendron), Mrs. J. Hawthorne and Mr. P. Scott.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 14th January were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

In respect of item 3, viz., PEACE III Implementation Update, Mrs. Marken declared an interest in that she was a member of the Board of Public Achievement which was running the WIMPS Project (ref: 35709).

Growing Respect Programme

The Acting Chairman (Councillor Attwood) welcomed Ms. P. Irvine and Ms. M. McKnight to the meeting and they provided a presentation regarding the Growing Respect programme, which was overseen by the Council's Parks and Leisure Department.

Ms. Irvine explained that the Growing Respect programme was funded as part of the Belfast PEACE III Plan. She outlined the work which had been undertaken with young people and local community groups to help them develop their awareness of cultural diversity, respect and understanding. She indicated that the programme aimed to address issues such as race, sectarianism and inequality through the medium of sports and outdoor gardening activities.

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Such activities, she explained, highlighted the importance of teamwork as well as generating awareness and understanding of good relations within the City. The programme, which was delivered over a seventeen-week period, commenced in February each year and involved over twenty local community groups and more than 200 people of all ages from across Belfast.

Ms. McKnight then provided examples of the physical activities and cultural relations workshops which had been delivered. She outlined the successes of the initiative and the benefits which had been accrued through working with volunteers from within local communities. She detailed the future aims and objectives of the programme and answered a number of Members' questions on the success of the initiative.

(Councillor Kyle, the Deputy Chairman, in the Chair.)

The Deputy Chairman thanked the representatives of the Growing Together programme for their presentation and the Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

PEACE III - Implementation Update

The Partnership considered a report which provided an overview of the current phase of the PEACE III Plan, together with an appendix which provided a summary of the current status of each of the approved Phase II projects, a copy of which was available on the Council's modern.gov system. The key points within the report are set hereunder:

Progress on Phase II projects

The total expenditure to 31st December 2012 is £995,981 or approximately 20% of the overall budget. A number of projects are flagged as red or amber given concerns around implementation within the timescale, as has been noted previously by the Partnership and relevant issues have been raised with individual project leads with close ongoing monitoring underway. A written request has been made to the Special EU Programmes Body for additional time for delivery of the Plan (beyond Dec 2013) to take account programme slippage but no formal response has been received to date. Aside from this issue a number of projects have raised the impact of increased community tensions on their planned activities and several projects have indicated that further revisions to their project plans will be required due to procurement/ recruitment delays.

Bringing Divided Communities Together Conference 31 January

Michelle Hand of the Good Relations Unit gave a presentation on the Interfaces Programme at the *Bringing Divided Communities Together* Conference in Brussels on 31st January. This major event was organized at the request of the European Commissioner for Regional Policy who attended the event along with the First and Deputy First Ministers and the Irish Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. Other attendees included Northern Ireland's MEPS, Assembly Members from the OFMDFM Committee, country

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representatives from Belgium, Cyprus, Spain, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, United Kingdom, Croatia, Serbia and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Israel, Libya, Morocco, South Korea and Members of the European Parliament, European Commission, Economic & Social Committee, Committee of the Regions and the European

Running in parallel to the conference was an exhibition at the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels which showcased the work of the PEACE III Programme. A reception event held to mark the exhibition was addressed by the First and Deputy First Ministers. Also exhibiting were the following PEACE III projects: Donegal PEACE Partnership, Youth Education Social Inclusion Partnership, Rural Enabler Project, Maze Long Kesh Development, Skainos, Teaching Divided Communities, WAVE Trauma Centre and the Irish Football Association

Programme Review

As part of the ongoing review and evaluation of the Phase II Plan, Blueprint Development Consultancy will be commencing a key stakeholder consultation exercise in February/ March. This will include consulting with individual members of the Good Relations Partnership.”

Members expressed concern regarding the progress which had been achieved to date in the implementation of certain projects, particularly those which were Council-led initiatives. It was suggested that the Council could leave itself open to criticism given the number of initiatives which had as yet to be commenced or completed. The point was made that there existed a wide range of voluntary groups which possessed significant expertise in the management and delivery of community-based projects and the Council should assess whether it possessed sufficient resources to manage effectively the range of projects which it had placed within its remit. It was suggested that the concerns expressed should be drawn to the attention of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

A further Member stated that the figures presented within the report represented only a snapshot of the Programme at a particular point in time and did not provide the Partnership with sufficient information in respect of expenditure, up-to-date projections, outcomes and timescales for the delivery of projects. It was suggested that consideration be given to the manner in which the figures were presented in future.

The Good Relations Manager and the Peace III Programme Manager clarified a range of issues and provided assurances in respect of the procedures which had been put in place to monitor the delivery of the Programme from a Council perspective. The PEACE III Programme Manager undertook to review the format of the reports currently provided to address the concerns raised. The Good Relations Manager pointed out that the issue of the delivery of the Programme would be raised with the relevant Chief Officers with a view to a further report being submitted to the Partnership and, subsequently, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

After further discussion, the Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

Summer Intervention Fund – 2013

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

Background Information

Members will be aware that the Good Relations Unit has managed and administered the Summer Intervention Fund on behalf of the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister since 2010. The Fund of approximately £100,000 is open to all areas of the city, but priority is given to groups/organisations working with young people who live at or near interface areas on programmes specifically being delivered during times of heightened tension over July and August.

Over the past few years, in delivering this programme on behalf of OFM/DFM, the Council has collaborated with a range of other agencies in Belfast in strengthening its criteria and developing a clearer focus on diversionary activities this year, in support of ongoing work led by the Department of Justice and PSNI. Partnership Members are requested to note that discussions are being held with other agencies, notably the DOJ, in efforts to develop a longer term strategy around youth intervention.

Key Issues

The application process opened on Monday 4 February and will close on Friday 1 March at 12.00 noon. This timetable is approximately two months earlier than previous years, in response to demand from the many voluntary and community groups that participate in the scheme.

Information about the Fund and application process will be distributed as widely as possible through the Good Relations Unit's mailing list, as well as publicly on the Council's website. Information will also be disseminated via other Council Departments, the BELB, CRC and OFM/DFM, who circulate the information through their mailing lists and websites. This process is being undertaken subject to the Council receiving a formal written letter of offer from OFM/DFM but indications are that the amount allocated in 2013 will be similar to previous years.

Resource Implications

All the funding under the Summer Intervention Fund will be recouped at 100% from OFM/DFM.

Equality and Good Relations Implications

The purpose of the Summer Intervention Fund is to support diversionary activity for young people within communities during times of heightened tension. This particular element of funding is part of a wider resource allocation that is also administered by the BELB, CRC and OFM/DFM. The Council's allocation seeks to prioritise those communities that have the potential for conflict and therefore this fund seeks to ensure that there is minimum negative impact on Community Relations throughout the City over the summer period.

The Partnership noted the information provided.

Decade of Centenaries – Spring Programme of Events

The Good Relations Manager tabled for the information of the Partnership the Council-sponsored spring programme of events for the Decade of Centenaries and highlighted a number of events therein.

Noted.

Community Relations in Belfast

A Member reminded the Partnership that, at its meeting on 14th January, it had discussed the issues which had arisen following the decision by the Council to fly the Union Flag on designated days only and it had been agreed that it would be an opportune time to highlight the valuable work which had been undertaken in conjunction with various agencies and groups to improve community relations between communities across the City.

The Partnership was updated in relation to the work which had been undertaken in this regard and the Elected Members provided an overview of the Council-sponsored initiative viz., the "BackIn' Belfast" campaign, which had been established to address the issues raised.

Chairman