

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

MONDAY, 10th June, 2013

MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

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

External Members: Ms. O. Barron, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;
Ms. A. Chada, Minority Ethnic Groups;
Dr. C. Hughes, Belfast Regeneration Office;
Mrs. M. Marken, Catholic Church;
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;
Mr. D. Robinson, Senior Good Relations Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the Chairman (Councillor Hendron), Mr. S. Brennan, Mr. R. Galway, Ms. J. Hawthorne, Mr. P. Mackel and Mr. P. Scott.

New Member

Having been advised that Councillor Mac Giolla Mhín had replaced Councillor McVeigh on the Partnership, the Chairman welcomed him to his first meeting.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 13th May were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

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Respect Engage and Listen Project

The Partnership welcomed to the meeting Mr. J. Deery, representing the Ashton Community Trust, who had been invited to provide a presentation on the Respect Engage and Listen (REAL) project.

Mr. Deery reported that the REAL project had been established four years previously with the aim of generating personal interaction between residents and groups in the Mount Vernon and New Lodge areas of the City and creating a legacy of tolerance, understanding, truth and respect. The initiative, which was being led by the Ashton Community Trust and funded under the PEACE III Programme, had since been extended to include other parts of inner North Belfast. He explained that the project had been working with participants on areas such as equality and social cohesion, environmental issues, education, training and employment, childcare and youth engagement. The promotion of good relations at annual events and activities and of shared spaces were viewed as being key elements of the project.

He highlighted a number of activities which had been undertaken recently under the project, which had included the facilitation of training workshops for a range of diverse groups on relevant topics and of a social event for senior citizens at a local interface. In addition, children, young people and adults had participated in various arts activities and a number of people had attended a conference on sectarianism and racism which had been hosted by the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action. A North Belfast directory of services and funding opportunities had been commissioned also by the project.

In terms of future work being undertaken by the project, Mr. Deery highlighted a number of events which would be taking place within the area, the publication of the second North Belfast Voices booklet and the submission to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of a new proposal for the delivery of a strategic good relations programme for 2013/2014.

Mr. Deery then answered a number of questions on the project and, having been thanked by the Chairman, he retired from the meeting.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided and agreed to receive at a future meeting a presentation on the good relations work being undertaken in North Belfast by the Concilium group.

PEACE III – Implementation Update

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of report

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

PEACE III Programme Review Session

A session to review progress on the PEACE III Plan by Partnership members was held on 4th June 2013. In addition to findings of the Partnership consultation conducted in March, the session also considered progress to date, expenditure and forecast outturn at the end date of the Plan along with proposals for re-allocating slippage to be presented to the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB). The session also considered the approach to identifying the mainstreaming potential arising from projects funded under the PEACE III Plan. A copy of the presentations from the review session has been forwarded to the Partnership.

Programme Extension

In a memo issued on 16th May, the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) recognised that some projects which are scheduled to complete during Quarter 3 2013 might benefit from an extension into Quarter 4 2013. It is therefore proposed to seek project extensions for those projects which are unable to meet their agreed activity and objectives within the current project timescale and have budget available to fund the extension. The additional time for delivery would also assist with the orderly closure of projects.

Programme Slippage

The forecast position including slippage and those project elements currently deemed at risk would result in forecast expenditure for current project end dates being 87% of the value of the Letter of Offer. The potential slippage derives from all four themes of the Plan and reflects the following:

- the Arterial Routes East Programme is now unlikely to go ahead within the original timescale. An update report has been prepared by the Urban Development Manager and has been forwarded to the Partnership;
- savings made following public procurement exercises;
- delays to project start dates or delays to procurement or recruitment;
- delays in receipt or processing of invoices
- delays due to difficulties in securing engagement or participation

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- inability to complete all agreed project targets within the current project timescale;
- lower than anticipated project costs.

In addition to the proposed project extensions to December 2013, it is proposed to utilise project slippage to seek additional outputs and outcomes from existing projects within the permissible extension period i.e. an additional three months to 31st December. The proposed additional activities are considered to be feasible, affordable and deliverable within the proposed revised timescale and will maximise the impact of the funding while securing additional outputs, additional participation from target groups and present enhanced outcomes for beneficiaries. The proposal would also build upon the significant work already underway and assist with the aims of influencing policy development and mainstreaming.

Management and Support Costs

SEUPB also acknowledged that there may be resource demands for Lead Partners after December 2013 in terms of monitoring, post project evaluation, audit and ultimately closure of the Phase II Peace and Reconciliation Action Plans.

As the current allocation for management and support costs does not provide for extension beyond December 2013, SEUPB has indicated that they will consider proposals to meet these costs from any slippage in the Phase II budget. It is, therefore, proposed to increase the allocation for management and support costs to June 2014 to allow for final vouching and validation of claims and activity; Aid for Peace reporting and completion of evaluation; formal project closure and mainstreaming actions and staffing costs for six months. The Partnership is asked to note that even with this proposed increase the percentage of the Letter of Offer allocation going towards management and support would be just under 13%, still below the threshold set by SEUPB for management of the local action plans.

Request for project activity beyond 2013

As has been brought to SEUPB's attention, the current end date of December 2013 is considered unrealistic for the delivery of those projects within Theme 2 Transforming Contested Space as has been noted by the Partnership on previous occasions. It is, therefore, proposed that a request be submitted to SEUPB to allow for an extension of project activities into 2014 for key projects within this theme.

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In addition, a request will be made for approval for an additional Growing Respect Programme to run from February to May 2014 under Theme 1 Shared City Space.

In summary, it is proposed that the following changes are made to the Phase II Plan budget:

	Current Budget	Revised Budget	Diff	% change
Theme 1	£418,087.11	£354,907.35	-£63,179.76	-15.11%
Theme 2	£2,021,698.46	£2,113,310.43	£91,611.97	4.53%
Theme 3	£856,267.37	£872,089.08	£15,821.71	1.85%
Theme 4	£1,190,285.06	£1,041,158.67	£149,126.39	-12.53%
Mgmt & Admin	£545,570.00	£649,634.00	£104,064.00	19.07%
Total	£5,031,908.00	£5,031,099.53	-£808.47	-0.02%

It is, therefore, recommended that the Partnership approve the proposal to revise the current budget allocations under each of the four themes and seek approval for the additional activity from SEUPB. Following this a report will be brought back to the Partnership in advance of any formal changes to project budgets and end dates.

Timescale

If the Partnership were to approve the proposal the anticipated timescale would be as follows:

Change request prepared for SEUPB	by end June 2013
Change request considered by SEUPB	July/Aug
Review and final approval by the Partnership	August
Formal project notification	Aug/Sept
Additional activities	Oct- June 2014

Project Issues

Youth Engagement Project (034054)

The Project has requested to utilise project slippage of £30,000 to enable two additional elements in each interface area:

The first element would cover the facilitation costs and handover processes of YEP youths during the critical phase

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of transfer from Phase One diversionary activities to the Phase Two packages of intensive service provision. The second element would be to provide additional support for diversionary activities in each of the four interface areas during the summer months of 2013. It has been estimated that an additional £7,500.00 per area (approximately a 25% increase in the original Phase One contract awards) would be sufficient to meet the additional expense of staffing, planning and provision. The need for the additional work has been assessed by the Project's Operational Group comprising key statutory stakeholders.

It is proposed that the existing contracts are amended to facilitate the additional activities but SEUPB has confirmed that this is subject to the approval of their Financial Control Unit. In this case, the additional work will be subject to a new procurement exercise. A general update on progress to date has been prepared by the Youth Engagement Project Manager has been forwarded to the Partnership. The Partnership is requested to approve the additional activity.

PEACE III Projects Forum

The next all projects forum is scheduled for the morning of 19th June and will be held in the Farset International centre. The Forum will receive presentations on community planning and the Migrant & Minority Ethnic Project.

Resource Implications

None at present

HR Implications

None at present

Equality Implications

None at present

Recommendation

The Partnership is requested to approve:

- 1) approve the proposal to revise the current budget allocations under each of the four themes and seek approval for the additional activity from SEUPB; and
- 2) the additional activity on the Youth Engagement Project as outlined."

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The PEACE III Programme Manager highlighted various aspects of the report and drew the Partnership's attention to an additional recommendation which had been tabled at the meeting in respect of the Inner East/Outer West project. That initiative, which was being managed by the Belfast Interface Project, sought to build relationships within and between communities in the Inner East Belfast and Suffolk/Lenadoon areas.

He reported that the project was now proposing to recruit a new partner to facilitate the delivery of the youth intervention element, together with new partners to facilitate the adult programme, including an input from the Inner East Belfast Local Area Network. In addition, the project was keen to continue to engage with the Exit community group, which was working with residents in Inner East Belfast and which had been represented previously on its steering group. A revised programme was being proposed for the Exit group, which would see it operating initially on a single identity basis but with the aim of developing cross-community contact in the longer term.

During discussion, a Member made the point that community groups involved in the Tension Monitoring and Youth Engagement Projects which had developed detailed neighbourhood actions plans had been advised recently that they would be required to participate in a procurement process to deliver those projects.

In response, the PEACE III Programme Manager pointed out that the procurement process was a requirement of the Special European Union Programmes Body for the allocation of funding and undertook to submit to the meeting of the Partnership in August delivery options for the Tension Monitoring Project regarding the implementation of neighbourhood plans.

After further discussion, the Partnership approved:

- (i) the proposed revision to the current budget allocations under each of the four themes, as set out within the report, and agreed to seek approval from the Special European Union Programmes Body to undertake the associated additional activity;
- (ii) the additional activity on the Youth Engagement Project; as outlined within the report; and
- (iii) in principle, the revisions to the Inner East/Outer West Project, subject to adequate assurances being received on value-for-money, the feasibility of planned interventions and complementarity with other current and planned interventions in the area.

Update on Good Relations and Interface Work

The Partnership was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st September, 2011, had referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee a Notice of Motion which had been proposed by Alderman Ekin, calling for the removal of Peace Walls. Subsequent to that, the Council had developed a strategy and framework for action which focused on interface areas and which had been incorporated into the corporate

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planning process and was being progressed by the Good Relations Partnership in conjunction with the Safer City Thematic Group.

The Good Relations Manager reported that the recent paper, entitled, 'Together: Building A United Community', which had been published by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister had, under the theme of 'Our Safe Community', made specific reference to interfaces. The creation of a ten-year programme to reduce and remove by 2023 all interface barriers had been confirmed, together with the establishment of an interface barrier support package. She tabled copies of the Executive Summary of the paper and explained that the strategy had implications for the Council and, particularly, the District Council Good Relations Programme insofar as there was now a requirement to reflect the new themes within action plans. That revision was underway currently, with one of the targets for inclusion being the participation/facilitation of discussion with local people on physical barriers and on perceived interface barriers.

She informed the Partnership that the Good Relations Unit had, towards the end of 2012, secured funding of £421,538 through the theme of 'Transforming Contested Spaces', under Phase II of the PEACE III Peace and Reconciliation Plan. The funding would be utilised to deliver a programme aimed at transforming or removing up to fourteen interface barriers which had, in conjunction with the Department of Justice, been identified across the City. She pointed out that the project would work closely with local communities to develop an inclusive community approach towards the regeneration of the identified interface barriers in three clusters at Ardoyne/Woodvale, Duncairn Gardens and Lower Falls/Lower Shankill. A three stage process involving consultation, visioning and physical/environmental improvement works had been established and an advisory group comprised of statutory and community partners would oversee the project.

She reported further that Council officers had been engaging also with communities living in those interface areas which fell outside of the aforementioned project. Some of those communities had approached the Good Relations Unit with a view to securing funding to support community-led consultation in interface areas, through, for example, venue hire, door-to-door surveys and the production and distribution of leaflets. She pointed out that the funding would be directed solely at those community organisations which engaged with the Council and the Department of Justice, in terms of transforming interface barriers and the immediate environs. The funding would be capped at £1,000 per community organisation and, in line with the Unit's standard grant-aid procedure, 70% of the amount being awarded would be released in advance and the remaining 30% upon the production of valid receipts,.

After discussion, the Partnership agreed that an amount of £10,000 be set aside from within the Good Relations Unit's budget to support community-led organisations, as outlined, and noted that it would, in due course, receive a list of participants in the project.

Update on the Bonfire Management Programme

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The Partnership was advised that the Council had, for several years, been working with agencies and communities to address issues surrounding the management of bonfires across the City. That work had now been included within the Council's PEACE III Phase II Programme, entitled, 'Promoting the Positive Expression of Cultural Heritage'. The Senior Good Relations Officer reminded the Partnership that, in 2010, it had agreed that a list of those groups participating in either bonfire or diversionary programmes be presented in June of each year to the Good Relations Partnership and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee seeking approval for funding to be allocated to them under the Bonfire Management Programme.

He explained that the Council, at its meeting on 7th January, had approved the programme for 2013 and that the Good Relations Unit had, subsequently, been working with groups across the City with a view to securing their participation in this year's Programme. He outlined the extent of the difficulties which had been experienced by the Unit in dealing with prospective groups. For example, some groups had not attended all of the requisite meetings, as laid down within the Programme's guidelines, and bonfire materials had, reportedly, been collected in some areas prior to the permitted date of 1st June. Several meetings had taken place with groups and individuals to resolve the issues and, as a result, a large number of groups had now decided to commit to the Programme for 2013. However, he pointed out that the Inverary/Sydenham group, which had been included on the list of participants for Council approval, had now advised that it did not wish to participate in this year's Programme.

After discussion, the Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the following groups be approved for participation in this year's Programme:

List of Proposed Groups for 2013

North Belfast (9)

Greymount

Lower Oldpark

Shore Crescent

Sunningdale (Beacon)

Tiger's Bay (Beacon)

The HUBB, Shore Road

Wheatfield Community (Beacon)

Whitecity (Beacon)

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York Park (ASDA site)

South Belfast (11)

Annadale

Donegall Pass

Donegall Road (Monarch)

Dunluce Avenue/Lisburn Road

Erinvale/Wedderburn

Flush Park

Finaghy – Benmore

Roden Street

Sandy Row

Suffolk

Taughmonagh

East Belfast (16)

Ardcarn

Clara Street (East Belfast Alternatives)

Clarawood

Cosy Somme Association/Woodstock Road

Cluan Place

Forward Group

Island Street

Isthmus Street (East Belfast Alternatives)

Knocknagoney

Lower Castlereagh Community Group (Avoniel)

Mount – Woodstock link bonfire

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Orangefield

Pitt Park

Tamar Street (Connswater Community Centre)

Templemore Avenue Residents Action Group

Walkway Community Association

West Belfast (10)

Browne Square (off Shankill Road) (Beacon)

Conway Street

Denmark Street

Dover Street – Lower Shankill

Glencairn 1

Glencairn 2

Highfield

Springmartin

Woodvale

West Belfast Athletic and Cultural Society

Diversionsary/Alternative Programmes in August (11)

Beechmount

New Lodge

Clonard

Parkside/Newington

Grosvenor

Short strand Community Forum

Lower Falls Youth Providers

Upper Springfield

Lower Ormeau

Markets Development association

Annual Report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

The Partnership was advised that the Council was required to submit to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland an annual report on the progress which had been achieved on implementing the arrangements set out within its Equality Scheme, in terms of discharging the duties imposed under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Accordingly, the Good Relations Manager submitted for the Partnership's consideration the report for the period from 1st April, 2012 till 31st March, 2013 and advised that a copy of the document was available on the Modern.gov website. She added that the Council had submitted also to the Equality Commission its Annual Monitoring Return as at 1st January, 2013, a copy of which could be obtained from the Human Resources Section.

During discussion, a Member circulated for the Partnership's attention a report which he had obtained from the Council's Human Resources Section on posts which had been advertised and filled specifically under Year 1 of the Investment Programme. The report provided a breakdown of the gender and perceived religious affiliation of applicants and appointees. He pointed out that, whilst the results relating to gender had been positive, those relating to religious composition did not, in his view, reflect the overall make-up of Protestants within the wider community. He suggested that the Executive Summary of the annual report should, under the heading "Human Resources – Employability, be amended to reflect that imbalance and made the point that the Council needed to take action to address the issue. The Member suggested also that that part of Section 2 of the report, relating to examples of policies which had been changed as a result of an Equality Impact Assessment, should be expanded to include the fact that there had been a significant number of complaints and public protests in response to the Council's decision to fly the Union Flag on the City Hall on designated days and that it had had a negative impact on good relations within the City.

However, several Members expressed the view that the annual report to the Equality Commission should be merely an objective statement of the Council's work under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and that no additions to the document were necessary.

In response, the Good Relations Manager undertook to refer the Member's comments regarding the perceived religious affiliation of applicants and appointees to the Head of Human Resources for her consideration. She undertook also to include within Part A, Section 9 of the report, which covered complaints, a comment stating that multiple complaints had been received in relation to the Council's decision on the flying of the Union Flag and to provide under Part A, Section 5, which related to training, clarification that the Diversity e-learning mentioned was a new initiative and related to refresher training.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided and endorsed the actions to be taken by the Good Relations Manager.

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**Local Government Staff Commission
Equality and Diversity Framework**

The Good Relations Manager informed the Partnership that Equality Officers from councils throughout Northern Ireland had met on a regular basis to share information and best practice. Based upon that work, the Local Government Staff Commission had formulated an Equality and Diversity Framework for endorsement by councils, which was designed to assist them in meeting their equality and diversity obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Framework, which had been launched officially in May by the Commission, had set out five principles which, in terms of the Council would require it to:

- ensure that it worked in a non-discriminatory environment, promote equality and model best practice in equality and good relations;
- ensure that all decisions were based on evidence to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations;
- provide access to services, facilities and information;
- recruit and employ people fairly; and
- respond to and learn from complaints and incidents in a positive and proactive way.

She confirmed that the Council had, for a number of years, been undertaking its duties in line with those principles and that its policies and procedures complied fully with the Framework.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources that the Council endorse the Local Government Staff Commission Equality and Diversity Framework and its principles.

Forum for Cities in Transition Conference

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that the Forum for Cities in Transition had been founded in April, 2009 by Derry/Londonderry, Kirkuk, the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities of Nicosia and Mitrovicë/Kosovska Mitrovica, with the aim of encouraging mutual learning, dialogue and the resolution of conflict through non-violent methods. The Forum operated on the principle that cities which were in conflict were in the best position to assist others in similar situations.

She reminded the members that the Forum had, in 2011, hosted its annual conference in Derry/Londonderry and that four Elected Members from the Partnership had, in October, 2012, travelled to Kirkuk in Iraq to attend last year's event. She reported that an invitation had been received from the Forum's founding director, Mr. P. O'Malley, Moakley Professor of Peace and Reconciliation, University of Massachusetts, inviting Elected Members from the Partnership to attend this year's conference which would take place from 4th till 11th November in Kaduna, Northern Nigeria. Up to six places were being made available to participating cities, with the Forum meeting the

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travel and accommodation costs of four delegates. Professor O'Malley had pointed out that, although the event was still some five months away, that timeframe was required to enable delegates to obtain a medical certificate confirming that they had been vaccinated against yellow fever which, in line with the requirements of the Nigerian authorities, must be submitted with their visa application.

The Good Relations Manager explained that, whilst Professor O'Malley recognised that there had been some concerns surrounding the security situation in Northern Nigeria, he had confirmed that the Forum for Cities in Transition would provide all necessary assurances for delegates wishing to attend the conference. However, she drew the Partnership's attention to the fact that the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office was, at present, advising against all but essential travel to the Kaduna State.

After discussion, the Partnership agreed that the nomination of delegates to the Forum for Transition conference be considered in the first instance by each of the Political Parties. The Partnership agreed also, in view of the valuable work which was undertaken by the Forum in striving for peace and reconciliation in troubled cities, that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to make available an appropriate level of funding to assist it in that work.

Launch of the Belfast City of Sanctuary Initiative

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 3rd April, 2012, it had received from Rev. Dr. I. Bhogal, Leader of the Corrymeela Community, a presentation on the City of Sanctuary movement which sought to emphasise the contributions which asylum seekers and refugees had made to the various cities within the initiative.

The Good Relations Manager reported that an event to launch the Belfast City of Sanctuary initiative would take place at 10.00 a.m. on Friday, 21st June in the Conor Lecture Theatre, University of Ulster, York Street. An invitation had been extended to the members of the Partnership.

Noted.

Ms. M. De Silva

Ms. M. De Silva reported that this would be the last meeting of the Good Relations Partnership which she would be attending, as she was due to leave Northern Ireland in the near future.

The Chairman, on behalf of the members, thanked Ms. De Silva for the valuable contribution which she had made to the Partnership over the past five years and wished her every success in the future.

Ms. De Silva thanked the Chairman for his best wishes and stated that she was appreciative of the support and assistance which she had received during her time on the Partnership.

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Chairman