

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

MONDAY, 13th OCTOBER, 2014

MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

Members present: Alderman Stoker and Councillors Attwood,
Mac Giolla Mhín and Reynolds.

Also attended: Councillors Beattie and Garrett.

External Members: Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Ms. A. Chada, Minority Ethnic Groups;
Mr. R. Galway, Confederation of British Industry/
Shorts Bombardier;
Dr. C. Hughes, Department for Social Development;
Ms. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast and District Trades Union Council;
Mr. B. McGivern, Belfast City Centre Management; and
Mr. P. Scott, Catholic Church.

In attendance: Mr. C. McCarthy, Interim Strategic Director of Health and
Environmental Services;
Ms. N. Lane, Good Relations Manager;
Mr. S. Lavery, Programme Manager;
Mr. I. May, PEACE III Programme Manager;
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of the Chairman (Councillor Hendron), the Deputy Chairman (Councillor Kyle) and Mr. U. Tok.

Chairing of Meeting

In the absence of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, the Partnership agreed that Councillor Attwood chair the meeting.

(Councillor Attwood in the Chair.)

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 8th September were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

Presentation on Peace Walls

The Partnership was advised that Dr. J. Byrne, Professor C. Gormley-Heenan and Dr. D. Morrow from the University of Ulster were in attendance in order to provide an update on research work which was being undertaken around peace walls and they were welcomed to the meeting.

Professor Gormley-Heenan informed the Partnership that the University of Ulster was working in conjunction with the Department of Justice on a knowledge exchange project around the issue of peace walls in Belfast. She explained that the purpose of the one-year project, which would conclude in August, 2015 and was being sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council, was to apply existing research and knowledge on peace walls to government policy and planning, develop the evidence base and identify longer term research needs to assist policy makers, increase the level of scholarship and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policy delivery.

In terms of activities, she confirmed that research would, in association with the Department of Justice, be undertaken to review and evaluate current mechanisms for managing and delivering peace walls policy and future funding requirements and consideration would be given to the classification and interpretation of peace walls. In addition, a survey would be undertaken to determine whether public attitudes towards peace walls had changed since the exercise which had been conducted two years previously. She added that the results of the project would be publicised through academic articles, policy briefs and research reports and through a number of events and conferences. There would be engagement also with stakeholders around the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister's stated target of removing all peace walls by 2023.

The deputation then addressed a number of issues which had been raised by the members, particularly around the need for engagement with communities living in interface areas, and, having been thanked by the Chairman, they left the meeting.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided and agreed, in view of the potential implications arising from the implementation of Local Government Reform, that consideration be given to the future role and direction of the Partnership.

Update on Interface Strategy

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 8th September, it had been advised that the Department of Justice would make available funding of £96,000 towards the development of an interface strategy. The offer had been made on the basis that it be utilised only for staffing, consultation and engagement costs and that it be allocated by 31st March, 2015. The Partnership had deferred consideration of the matter to enable discussions to take place with that Department around what could be achieved within the proposed timeframe and the possibility of extending the scope of the work which would qualify for funding.

The Good Relations Manager reported that those discussions had concluded and that it had been confirmed that the funding could be utilised only for staffing costs.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

That was in line with the bid which had been submitted by the Department of Justice to the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister for funding to support resources within the Council which were dedicated specifically to working on the interface strategy, in terms of planning, design and delivery. With that in mind, she submitted for the Partnership's approval an interface strategy work plan and implementation timetable which had been developed by Council officers around the parameters and timescale stipulated under the terms of the funding being offered by the Department of Justice.

The Partnership endorsed the work plan and noted that it would receive progress reports as the initiative progressed.

Bonfire Management Programme 2014

(Mr. J. Walsh, Town Solicitor, attended in connection with this item.)

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The Partnership will recall, at its meeting on 9th September, it received an update in relation to breaches of terms and conditions in relation to the Bonfire Management Programme for 2014 but deferred consideration of the report.

1.2 This was to enable the information provided to be reviewed and to obtain clarification if approval of the Programme had been based upon the understanding that any organisation found to be in breach of the funding conditions would be penalised if they failed to use reasonable endeavours to prevent such breaches.

2 Key Issues / Update

2.1 As members are aware, this is a complicated project which is often difficult to monitor due to the number of variables that can have an impact on whether or not groups are in breach of terms and conditions.

2.2 Over the past number of years, this project has worked with local groups in a positive manner to reduce the burning of tyres, the amount of paramilitary trappings displayed at bonfires and the burning of flags and emblems. This has given Council staff and partners the opportunity to develop new relationships in local communities which previously may not have existed and continue to build on existing relationships.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

- 2.3 A further benefit of this Programme is that it allows officers from the Council and other statutory partners to work with groups on a regular basis to support them to ensure terms and conditions are adhered to and joint interventions are often taken to reduce the likelihood of the burning of tyres, flags and emblems.**
- 2.4 Although it is difficult to measure the direct benefits of the programme, there is evidence both statistical and anecdotal with regards to bonfires that are part of the Council's programme to suggest that it can have a positive impact in local communities. This is especially true in areas where the local community group receiving funding have direct influence on the bonfire builders. A more detailed report will be brought to a future partnership meeting, in terms of this year's Programme which will include relevant statistical information where available.**
- 2.5 An example of some of the good work can be shown by the fact that this year the NIFRS made 24 call-outs to deal with fires at or near to bonfire sites in Belfast between 2nd July and 12th July 2014 with 11 of these being attributed to bonfires on the programme. This was a decrease of two call-outs on the same period in 2013.**
- 2.6 The PSNI has not produced any figures for issues dealing with bonfires for the past few years. However, the general perception is that they are supportive of the Bonfire Management Programme in trying to address issues such as ASB and welcome the ongoing engagement with local community groups and bonfire builders that occurs through the scheme.**
- 2.7 Notwithstanding this, the issue of breaches to terms and conditions particularly in relation to the burning of flags and emblems continues to present difficulties within the programme. Despite significant positive engagement over the past number of years there are still some breaches of the guidelines with regards to this.**
- 2.8 As mentioned in previous reports, it is also worth pointing out that groups which are responsible for funding allocated through the Bonfire Management Programme sometimes have limited control over "last minute" breaches to the terms and conditions and ultimately are unable to prevent tyres, flags and emblems being put on bonfires.**
- 2.9 However, it is recognised that with regards to those groups who sign up to the Bonfire Management Programme it is an**

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

important element of the programme that they have influence over the local bonfire builders and can intervene on an ongoing basis to reduce breaches as outlined above.

- 2.10 This was clearly communicated to groups when they attended information seminars for this year's programme and reinforced in the Letter of Offer they signed up to in order to receive funding, see extract below;

“Failure to adhere to the guidelines and terms and conditions may result in payments being withheld and clawed back and could exclude your organisation from access to future Belfast City Council grants and funding. Any decision in this regard will be the Council's and will be final.”

- 2.11 A further difficulty that is presented with regards to monitoring this programme is that it is hard to measure if groups used “reasonable endeavours” to remove flags and emblems that were put on a bonfire at “the last minute” as there is often no evidence to back this up.

- 2.12 To allow members make an informed decision on this years breaches to the terms and conditions of the Bonfire Management Programme, Good Relations staff have been working with legal services to seek advice on the best way forward.

- 2.13 They have advised that it is within the vires of the Council to withhold funding from groups that have been deemed to have breached the terms and conditions of the programme. This decision rests with members of the Council, who will be advised through a recommendation given by the Good Relations Partnership and considered by the SP&R committee.

- 2.14 In order to assist Members in making their decision, a list is attached of those sites which need to be considered as to whether breaches of the terms and conditions for this year's programme have occurred.

- 2.15 To further assist members it is proposed that officers from the Good Relations Unit and the Town Solicitor will be present at the meeting to answer any questions members may have.

- 2.16 Finally, for the purposes of making a decision we are proposing four possible options:

Option 1 – Withhold final payment to all those groups who breached the terms and conditions of the programme.

Option 2 – Release final payment to those groups who have used their best endeavours to prevent breaches to the terms and conditions of the programme and withhold final payment to those who did not.

Option 3 – Release final payment to those groups who have breached the terms and conditions of the programme and send a conditional letter outlining that any future breaches will result in financial sanctions and being removed from future Bonfire Management Programmes.

Option 4 – Exclude those groups that have breached the terms and conditions from accessing funding in the future (or a defined period).

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

Funding has already been secured for this project.

3.2 Human Resources

This project is being delivered through existing staff resources

4 Recommendation

4.1 The Partnership is requested to advise the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of the option which should be followed regarding alleged breaches of this year's programme.

5 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

5.1 This programme endeavours to support all communities in the positive expression of their cultural heritage and support better community relations through tackling negative cultural manifestations such as the burning of flags and emblems at bonfires.

Updated Information relating to Bonfires with alleged breaches of Terms and Conditions

Community Group	Bonfire Site	Breaches of Guidelines	Photo Evidence	Comments / Update
1. Belfast South Community Resources	Sandy Row - Days Hotel car park	Numerous tricolours, SF election posters and tyres were on the bonfire.	Yes	Council officers were advised that the local community group were unsuccessful in persuading the bonfire builders to adhere to the guidelines. It was agreed they would not receive final payment for this year's programme which was originally allocated to a peer mentoring diversionary day for bonfire builders.
2. Graymount Community Group	Grays Lane / Shore Road	Numerous Tricolours, SF, Alliance and SDLP election posters; Celtic football shirts and tyres. KAT graffiti also on the bonfire site	Yes	Council officers were advised that a group of adults with no connection to the community group put flags, election posters and tyres on the bonfire pre 11 th July and would not remove them. The local community and bonfire builders were unable to stop this due to concerns for personal safety.
3. Lower Oldpark Community Association	Off Old Park Rd - Manor/Mountview St	Single Tricolour on top of bonfire	Yes	Council officers were advised that they worked with young people, local residents, and statutory agencies to manage the site and had tyres and other such issues dealt with throughout programme. However, the group were unable to stop the flag going up on the 11 th evening due to concerns for personal safety.
4. Lower Shankill Community Association	Hopewell Ave - off Crumlin Road	A single SF poster was on the bonfire at 7 pm.	Yes	Council officers were advised that the group implemented robust procedures in the run up to the 11 th night to successfully prevent numerous breaches. They have also provided written assurances that the SF poster was removed before the bonfire was lit at the request of the lead contact managing the Council's funding.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

Community Group	Bonfire Site	Breaches of Guidelines	Photo Evidence	Comments / Update
5. Pitt Park	Pitt Park – off Newtownards Rd	Single Tricolour on top of the bonfire.	No	Council officers were advised that the local community group worked with local people to advise of the negative issues associated with burning flags and emblems but were unable to stop this breach due to concerns for personal safety.
6. South Belfast Malecare	Junction of Rydalmore Street and Milners Street, off Roden St	Election posters of Alliance and SF members were on the bonfire at approx 6pm.	Yes	Council officers were advised that once it was made known to the local community group that there were potential breaches, the posters were removed within an hour. This was verified by the local elected member for the area.
7. Suffolk Community Forum	Kells Avenue	A number of tricolours and election posters were on the bonfire.	No	Council officers were advised that the bonfire was left unattended for a few hours and breaches occurred between 17.30 – 18.30. The community contact for the funding advised they did not take the items down due to concerns for personal safety.
8. The Hubb on behalf of York Park Bonfire Committee	Asda Site - Shore Road	There were two Tricolours flying on the bonfire.	Yes	Council officers were advised by the group contact that the organisers of the family fun day were not aware of the criteria and possible penalties with regards to the programme.
9. Walkway Community Association	Beside community centre facing Finvoy St	The bonfire had two Tricolours plus a SF election poster.	Yes	Council officers were advised the group positively engaged with local young people in the lead up to the bonfire but there were difficulties with people from outside the area who put up the flags and election posters on the 11th day and those responsible refused to take them down.

The Programme Manager provided an overview of the report. He reminded the Partnership that forty-six groups had participated in this year's Bonfire Management Programme and drew the Partnership's attention to the list which provided details on the extent of the alleged breaches at nine bonfire sites. He pointed out that one of the participants, namely, Belfast South Community Resources, had confirmed that, in view of the fact that it had been unable to persuade its bonfire builders to adhere to the Council's conditions, it would not be claiming the remaining 30% of its funding allocation for this year.

The Town Solicitor informed the Partnership that the funding for the Programme was provided by the Council acting under a broad discretion and that it was at liberty to attach terms and conditions to the funding and to assess if there had been compliance. This, he explained, was more of a policy issue than a legal question and that it was for the Partnership to determine if it required absolute compliance or whether it would permit something less than that, perhaps justifying such an approach by reference to reasonable endeavour. It was for the Partnership and, ultimately, the Council to determine also whether a penalty should apply and the circumstances in which that would be the case.

Councillor Garrett, with the permission of the Chairman, informed the Partnership that he had clear evidence that his election posters, together with several tricolours, had been burned on a Council-funded bonfire which had been organised by the Suffolk Community Forum.

A Member highlighted the fact that the Partnership, in considering the matter at its meeting on 11th August, had agreed, amongst other things, that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing statistics, where available, from the relevant agencies on the number of reported assaults, incidences of hate crime, theft of materials for use on bonfires, damage to roads and properties, their impact upon service delivery, including healthcare, and on air quality arising from this year's bonfires. Since it had been established that that information was not yet available he requested that the matter be deferred.

The Town Solicitor informed the Partnership that, whilst it could defer the matter on grounds relating directly to the Bonfire Management Programme, it should give careful consideration to adopting that course of action for reasons/incidents which could not be attributed directly to the Programme.

A further Member stressed that the Partnership, in assessing the alleged breaches, should take into account factors such as concerns for personal safety, which had prevented some groups from taking the action necessary to ensure their compliance with the conditions set out within the Programme. It was highlighted that the rate of compliance for 2014 had been considerably higher than in previous years and, therefore, the Council should continue to work with groups to improve the scheme and increase participation.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

The Partnership then proceeded to review the alleged breaches and supporting information relating to the remaining eight bonfires on the list, following which it was

Moved by Mr. P. Mackel,
Seconded by Councillor Attwood,

That the Good Relations Partnership agrees to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the remaining 30% of funding be allocated to the Lower Shankill Community Association and South Belfast Malecare and agrees to recommend also that that portion of funding in relation to the Graymount Community Group, the Lower Oldpark Community Association, Pitt Park, Suffolk Community Forum, The Hub (on behalf of York Park Bonfire Committee) and Walkway Community Association be withheld, on the basis that they had failed to use best endeavours to comply with the conditions governing the Council's Bonfire Management Programme.

Further Proposal

Moved by Alderman Stoker,
Seconded by Councillor Reynolds,

That the Goods Relations Partnership take no decision on the matter and that it be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

On a vote by show of hands two members voted for the proposal and ten against and it was declared lost.

The original proposal standing in the name of Mr. P. Mackel and seconded by Councillor Attwood was thereupon put to the meeting when ten members voted for and two against and it was declared carried.

The Partnership noted that a report on the potential delivery by the Council of a Bonfire Management Programme for 2015 would be submitted to a future meeting.

Consultation on Racial Equality Strategy and Associated Indicators

The Partnership was advised that the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister's Racial Equality Unit had invited comments on the Northern Ireland Executive's Racial Equality Strategy and associated indicators. The Good Relations Manager reported that the Strategy had been formulated to establish a framework for Government Departments and others to primarily tackle racial inequalities and promote opportunity for all, eradicate racism and hate crime and, in conjunction with the Together: Building a United Community Strategy, to advocate good race relations and social cohesion. The indicators measured progress under the four key strategic priorities of Equality of Service Provision; Combating Prejudice, Racism and Hate Crime; Participation, Representation and Belonging; and Respecting Cultural Diversity.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

She reminded the Partnership that the Council had in place a Good Relations Plan, which sought to tackle sectarianism and racism and promote cultural diversity, and that the Chief Executive was facilitating currently a multi-agency response to recent hate crimes across the City. She reported that the following responses had been formulated in relation to the Strategy and associated indicators and recommended that the Partnership commend them to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval:

Appendix 1

**“Belfast City Council Consultation Response to Racial
Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 – 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 – 2024, which will establish a framework for Government departments (and others) to tackle racial inequalities, to eradicate racism and hate crime and along with *Together: Building a United Community* (TBUC), to promote good race relations and social cohesion.

The issues raised by the Consultation are especially germane for Belfast, being the largest centre of population and arguably the most diverse. The comments made below can only scratch the surface. Belfast officers would be pleased to meet with Department representatives to ensure that a fuller appreciation of the points made can be had.

We note the particular emphasis on ‘community’ highlighting that this is a complicated term as an introduction to the Racial Equality Strategy. We have based our response not on an undefined definition of community but through the understanding provided by the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, which defines “racial groups” as “a group of persons defined by reference to colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins”.

The Council response is structured below. As requested, we have responded to the specific questions as outlined in the consultation document which are in italics and underlined. The response in most cases covers a number of questions within the various chapters, although in most cases there is an individual response to each question. We have also provided additional comments in relation to the Racial Equality Strategy where relevant.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

- *Do you agree that the strategy should last for 10 years with reviews to fit with the Comprehensive Spending Review?*

The Strategy will establish a framework for Government departments and others to do the following:

- to tackle racial inequalities and to open up opportunity for all;
- to eradicate racism and hate crime; and
- along with Together: Building a United Community, to promote good race relations and social cohesion.

The absence of an action plan to address these challenging areas makes it more difficult to make a complete assessment of the period of delivery for the strategy. The underpinning focus of the strategy on equality and good relations, are principles that are inherent to Belfast City Council's Corporate Plan, Investment Programme, Good Relations Plan and all its activity. Therefore it is critical that resource allocation for the Racial Equality Strategy is additional and not simply re-directing funding to mainstream programme and policy responsibilities or re-packaging existing activity towards actions to tackle Racial Inequalities.

- *Do you agree that these are the most important instruments? AND*
- *Are there any other instruments that should be considered?*

The instruments considered are fundamental to the development of the strategy; however the role of local government is unclear. One particular instrument not included is the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 which is now in place, and introduces the legislative framework for the new councils. This provides a framework within which councils, departments, statutory bodies and other relevant agencies and sectors can work together to develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area based on effective engagement with the community.

Local government will lead on community planning, which can help strengthen and support both TBUC and race relations, by connecting national and local priorities. This should be recognised. Local government should also provide a conduit back to central government ensuring that local issues are understood and reflected in regional priorities and plans, and related resources.

In addition Section 75 and the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 provide a contextual background within which the strategy's action plan can be developed. Promoting good Race Relations should be an integral part of the wider promotion of Good Relations. Therefore the Together; Building a United Community

Strategy and the Racial Equality Strategy should, collectively underpin all community planning activities.

CHAPTER 2: RACISM AND RACIAL INEQUALITIES – THE SCALE OF THE CHALLENGE

- *Do you agree that the issues identified by Paul Connolly are still relevant? Are there any issues that you would add?*
- *Do you have any comments on the key issues identified by the Joseph Rowntree research?*
- *Are there any specific inequalities that you would wish to highlight? Any information or evidence you can give us will be greatly appreciated.*

The Equality Commission's *Racial Equality Policy: Priorities and Recommendations* position paper published in April 2014 listed a series of issues which they proposed the Executive and Department should focus on. They were:

- i. Law Reform
- ii. Advancing equality in education and employment
- iii. Tackling racist hate crime, prejudicial attitudes and institutional racism
- iv. Advancing equality in access to accommodation, healthcare and social welfare
- v. Recommendations regarding multiple identities and inclusion in public services
- vi. Monitoring and evaluation BME groups

It is unclear how some of these recommendations, informed by a robust evidence base will correlate with the six strategic aims of the strategy which the Executive will pursue.

- i. Elimination of Racial Inequality
- ii. Combating racism and hate crime
- iii. Equality of Service Provision
- iv. Participation
- v. Social Cohesion
- vi. Capacity Building

In relation to the identification of key issues within the racial equality theme, we would also like to highlight the following:

As part of Belfast City Council's Good Relations Programme, 75% of which is funded by OFMDFM, the Good Relations Action Plan has incorporated "The Participation and Inclusion of Migrant and Minority Ethnic Communities" as a key theme. The Action Plan was

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

based on an audit of Good Relations need within Belfast in January and February 2014 and has developed a series of initiatives that will seek to do the following:

- improve the employability prospects of Migrant and Minority Ethnic Communities,
- Ensure that service delivery is aware of the needs of diverse communities
- Support for communities where racism is prevalent
- Development of an integrated approach to supporting victims of race hate crime

CHAPTER 3: THE PURPOSE, VISION AND AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

• Do you agree that the strategy should also provide a framework for tackling inequalities experienced by followers of minority non-Christian faiths?

• Are you happy with the vision and the six shared aims?

• Do any of them need to be reworded?

• Is there need for an additional shared aim concerning the rights to maintain one's cultural identity?

• Do you agree that positive action measures should be used in certain circumstances to achieve the six shared aims?

• What do you think of the idea of "a sense of belonging" in the vision and as the title? Does it make sense? Is it easy enough to understand?

• Do we need to have research on "the sense of belonging of ethnic minority people in NI" to benchmark the progress of this strategy?

• Do you agree that there is a need for a specific Refugee Integration Strategy?

• Do you agree that there is a need for specific programmes of work to address particular challenges and vulnerabilities facing particular groups?

The Council welcomes the publication of the strategy, related indicators and the opportunity to comment on these. We note the development of the proposals has been informed by the views of minority ethnic representative groups and representatives of the wider community through the Racial Equality Panel who are best informed to make recommendations in this area. The strategy's

action plan should be delivered in partnership with those involved with its development.

We have some concerns with using the term 'sense of belonging' as this is an important community development concept and a key enabler for building strong, active and engaged communities, which in some areas is being eroded due to factors completely unrelated to race. Also in GB, councils ask a 'sense of belonging question' in their resident surveys which is then used as a community outcome indicator, it is likely councils here will follow suit. By capturing the term specifically in relation to racial equality, this may cause confusion and erode its significance and potential for future community development and planning work.

The purpose, vision and aims of the strategy could be more clearly defined particularly in relation to the specific programmes which will be designed. For example, Travellers are the most vulnerable single identity group in Northern Ireland but the measures to be taken in the strategy are not targeted.

CHAPTER 4 THE RELATIONSHIP WITH TBUC AND DSC

- *How should we focus on addressing the issue of multiple identities and multiple discrimination?*
- *Do you agree that we should refer to TBUC and DSC?*
- *Do you agree that we should retain the Racial Equality Panel and a specific focus on race?*

There are clear linkages with TBUC and DSC and this connectivity will make a positive contribution to tackling inequalities including racial inequalities and to eradicate racism and hate crime. The Council has a Good Relations Plan which aims to 'tackle sectarianism and racism and to promote cultural diversity'. The two issues are directly related and integral to the promotion of Good Relations in Northern Ireland. The Council's experience is that some individuals object to being aligned to a specific community (particularly within the NI context) and classify themselves as belonging to neither the Protestant nor the Roman Catholic community and we would query whether this issue should be specifically considered in addressing identities, with guidance being issued.

We understand the need for the development of a separate RES, however, the Good Relations agenda always sought to incorporate the issue of racism within sectarian division. It would be useful for OFM/DFM to view both strategies as one and the same with regard to the promotion of Good Relations. The need to successfully

connect policies has been made evident in the Children and Young People Sector (CYP) sector where significant tensions have arisen due to DSC's impact on established CYP indicators. Recognition must be given within the strategy's action plan on how outputs will add to and complement outcomes within associated plans.

CHAPTER 5: THE EVIDENCE OF RACIAL INEQUALITIES AND ETHNIC MONITORING

- *Do you agree that ethnic monitoring is a critically important measure that Government must undertake?*
- *What form should this monitoring take so that we can move to outcomes as a matter of urgency?*

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's report on Poverty and Ethnicity in Northern Ireland clearly highlights the current absence of statistical evidence to inform policy making. We understand the significance of these gaps, which should be addressed as part of the strategy to inform future policy making. However there is evidence in particular policy areas to inform the intervention required, for example within the Equality Commissions *Racial Equality Policy: Priorities and Recommendations* position paper.

CHAPTER 6: THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- *Do you agree that an effective legal protection will enhance the achievement of the six shared aims of this Strategy?*

Yes, this is essential to progress racial equality not only on six shared aims.

- *Do you think that reform of Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 is a priority?*

The Council notes the lack of comprehensive, harmonised race equality legislation in Northern Ireland and further notes that this has been criticised by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (the Advisory Committee) and the UN Committee on the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination (UN Committee on CERD). In particular the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities expressed concern in June 2011 that, despite the commitment undertaken in the St Andrew's Agreement, there had been no progress made towards adopting comprehensive equality legislation in Northern Ireland.

The Council also notes that the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has a legislative duty to keep equality legislation under review and has called for the urgent need for legislative reform to strengthen the rights of individuals in Northern Ireland against racial discrimination and harassment. Given the views expressed by the Advisory Committee, the UN Committee on CERD and the Equality Commission, the Council does believe that the reform of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 is a priority.

• Do you agree with the Equality Commission's proposals?

The Council notes that the Equality Commission is tasked with keeping under review the working of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and notes the priorities and recommendations contained in its document *Equality Commission for NI – Racial Equality Policy*. The Commission recommends the race equality legislation is amended to:-

- provide increased protection against racial discrimination and harassment on the grounds of colour and nationality; and introduce protection against multiple discrimination;
- ensure increased protection against racial discrimination and harassment by public bodies, giving stronger protection against victimisation and racial discrimination and harassment and employment;
- remove or modify certain exceptions, including those relating to immigration, and the employment of foreign nationals; and expand the scope of positive action which employers or service providers can take orders and promote racial equality;
- strengthen tribunal powers to ensure effective remedies; amend the enforcement mechanism for education complaints; improve the powers of the Commission to issue additional Codes of Practice and to enforce the race equality legislation.

The Council believes these amendments would strengthen race equality legislation in Northern Ireland and therefore endorses the recommendations made by the Equality Commission.

• Do you think that there are any areas of Race Relations law which require reform, additional to those identified by the Equality Commission?

In its report *Racial Equality – Policy Priorities and Recommendations* the Equality Commission also recommended changes to the Fair Employment legislation to include workforce monitoring on racial grounds. The Council is content with and endorses this approach and currently monitors applicants and its workforce.

CHAPTER 7: IMMIGRATION

• Are there any actions that we can and should take under existing devolved powers in this area? • What should be the aims of a regional immigration policy?

A regional immigration policy should act to support the participation and inclusion of migrant and minority ethnic communities. It should also seek to support host communities in the acceptance of diversity and to debunk myths around the contribution of migrants to the local economy, promote inclusion and tackle hate crime.

CHAPTER 8: MAKING IT HAPPEN – IMPLEMENTING THE RACIAL EQUALITY STRATEGY

• Are you content with the proposals as defined above?

Generally, yes.

• Are you content with the terms of reference and membership of the Racial Equality Panel?

Yes

• Do you agree with these proposals for developing a programme of work?

Yes

• How do you think the proposed Equality and Good Relations Commission should fulfill the role outlined above in respect of racial equality and race relations?

As an oversight body, the Commission should seek to provide advice and guidance to bodies like Councils in the implementation of Action Plans, programmes of work and policy development.

CHAPTER 9: RESOURCING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RACIAL EQUALITY STRATEGY

- *Do you wish to make any comment on the resourcing of the Racial Equality Strategy?*

The absence of an action plan to address the issues identified makes it difficult to make a complete assessment of the resourcing implementation for delivery for the strategy. The underpinning focus of the strategy on equality and good relations, are principles that are inherent to Belfast City Council's Corporate Plan, Investment Programme, Good Relations Plan and all its activity, as is the case with many public authorities. Therefore it is critical that resource allocation for the Racial Equality Strategy is additional and not simply re-directing funding to mainstream programme and policy responsibilities or a simple re-packaging of existing activity.

CHAPTER 10: MONITORING AND REVIEWING PROGRESS

- *Do you agree on the need to treat TBUC indicators and Indicators for the Racial Equality Strategy separately?*

The Council's response to the recent Good Relations Indicators sought to incorporate indicators within TBUC that tracked progress in relation to relationships between indigenous communities and migrant and minority ethnic communities. The Good Relations Unit within the Council felt that these relationships were worth tracking as they were a good indicator to measure attitudes within local communities to wider issues of diversity.

EQUALITY ASSESSMENT CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

- *Do you agree that using positive action as a mitigation measure or alternative policy is appropriate to redress the experience of racial inequalities, social exclusion disadvantage of minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland?*
- *Are there any other data or information that might be drawn upon to assess the equality impact of the proposals in this Strategy?*
- *Do you consider that the proposals have any positive or negative equality impacts on any of the groups included within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and if so how?*
- *Do you consider that, taking account of existing legislation, there are alternative approaches to the promotion of racial equality, and, if so, what are they?*

- *Do you have any other comments on the assessment of the equality impact of these proposals?*

Screening of the policy for equality and good relations impacts should be completed taking into account the available evidence and research which has been utilised in the development of this strategy and ECNI's position paper on racial equality.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS IN RELATION TO RACIAL EQUALITY

The Council is committed to supporting the integration, inclusion and participation of members of migrant and minority ethnic communities in Belfast. For our own workforce, we have developed a Race Action Plan, which includes a range of activities which aim to:

1. To raise awareness and understanding of race issues
2. To promote positive attitudes, respect and tolerance for people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds
3. To attract more job applications from people of different race and ethnic background

The Council continues to work in partnership with a number of agencies, organisations, trades unions and the wider community to support greater integration, inclusion and participation of members of migrant and minority ethnic communities in Belfast. Outlined below are practical examples of actions that could be delivered against the stated aims of the proposed strategy.

Migrant Forum: The Council leads a multi-agency migrant forum to ensure that everyone in Belfast has equal and appropriate access to the services in the city. We also deliver training in partnership with local community organisations on migration awareness and ending hate in our communities. This work included delivery of the Belfast Integration and Participation project which promoted integration and participation through provision of economic opportunities, built the capacity of practitioners/advisors; provided access to information and created an anti rumour network as well as promoted the social aspects of integration.

The forum has also made representation to the DEL Implementation Group and the Labour Relations Agency Roundtable for a fundamental change to dispute resolution for workers outside of the workplace, i.e. the Tribunal system. Black and Ethnic Minority workers have had, under the present system, great difficulties in accessing their statutory employment rights.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

We have also produced a guide for those who have recently arrived in Belfast. This is available on the Council's website and includes information about a range of support services, including:

- **business advice**
- **education**
- **community safety**
- **family support**
- **language classes**
- **recreation activities.**

As part of the Belfast PEACE III Plan we invested £4million of European Regional Development Funds in 21 projects and engaged with over 13,000 people of all ages from all parts of the city through dialogue, activities and events. Our audience was diverse, reflecting the cultural diversity of the city. A target for participation of ethnic minorities in projects supported under the Plan was set at 10% of all participants. Analysis of monitoring returns by the various projects supported under the Belfast PEACE III Plan indicate that just over 11% of participants were from ethnic minorities. In addition, several projects were specifically designed with the needs of ethnic minorities in mind.

The *A Century Later* Project – led by Northern Visions produced a film documenting the experiences of immigrants to Belfast in the latter half of the 20th century and the Belfast Suitcase Stories project developed by Arts Ekta worked with the Belfast Islamic Centre and the Over 50's Indian Senior Citizens group in designing an exhibition reflecting the experiences of living in Belfast for these communities.

A specific example of a community led intervention that could be replicated elsewhere in Belfast and Northern Ireland is the Creating a Cohesive Community Project which was funded under the Strategic Grants Programme in the Belfast PEACE III Plan. This project ran in South Belfast in 2012/13 and was led by the local community represented by the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG) and the South Belfast Roundtable in partnership with the following key agencies:

- **Belfast City Council**
- **Belfast Health and Social Care Trust**
- **Police Service of Northern Ireland**
- **Bryson Intercultural**
- **Northern Ireland Housing Executive**
- **Belfast Education & Library Board**
- **Belfast Migrant Centre**
- **Community Relations in Schools**

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

The catchment area for the project contained a high number of minority ethnic families (more than any other electoral wards in Belfast) and particularly with the end of the accession period for Bulgarian and Romanian families in January 2014 it was anticipated that there would be an increase in the numbers of minority ethnic families moving to the area.

The project partners felt that it was an opportune time to begin to introduce new projects, structures and initiatives to enable minority ethnic and majority established communities to live cohesively together.

The project has identified the key factors in what makes a cohesive community e.g.:

- Developing the bonds between and within communities
- Developing the 'glue' that holds a community together and identifying what must happen in a community to enable different groups of people to get on well together
- Developing ways of living together and a sense of belonging
- Providing a mechanism where concerns and issues can be raised and addressed
- Addressing 'Actual' and 'Perceived' Fairness
- People from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities and where people understand their rights and responsibilities
- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly

The project addressed these issues through:

- Promoting interaction between groups and individuals;
- Tackling attitudes, perceptions and myths through community based training and programmes in local primary and post primary schools;
- Building trust in local institutions;
- Supporting effective community leadership;
- Developing sense of belonging;
- Developing commitment to shared future;
- Building community resilience;
- Working on underlying causes.

The project developed an overarching strategy for cohesion, focusing specifically on 3 key issues:

- Early Intervention and Engagement,
- Housing

- **Emergency Response.**

In developing these strategies the project conducted a widespread community consultation involving more than 250 individuals and over 30 organisations. 42% of consultees were representative of minority ethnic communities or organisations that provide specific support for minority ethnic communities. Based on one of the recommendations from the 3 strategies, project partners trained 15 Active Citizens in partnership with Belfast Alternatives and CRJ. The training took place at QUB Student Union initially with Active Citizens participating in the Strategic Network Forum. Participants were recruited from the Botanic and Lower Ormeau areas. An example of feedback from a participant is given below:

“The active citizens training was a fantastic opportunity to listen to the views of the refugee community and understand their perspective, it helps me empathise with them when I deal with them on a daily basis now”

(Active Citizen, young man, aged 23)

The following summary of an Intercultural Festival held on 8th August 2013 provided by the Project Coordinator gives an indication of the reach of the project.

“The Intercultural Day proved very successful with up to 200 participants attending the day. Alongside established/settled community members from the Lower Ormeau area, a wide and diverse range of residents from Botanic, Ballynafeigh, Annadale and Lisburn Road joined us to celebrate the distinctiveness of this changing inner city South Belfast community. With a vast age range from newborns to residents in their 70s, this truly was an intergenerational, intercultural event, with something for everyone! Participants came from a wide range of countries, including China, Sudan, Somalia, Italy, Romania, India, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, Poland, Peru and of course, Northern Ireland.”

The Council’s Youth Forum provides up to 40 opportunities for all young people across the city and actively worked with partners to link to hard to reach young people. This was key as relationships often take time and the partner organisations mean that trust exists to try and enable young people to aspire or indeed be involved.

It is important to see a reflection of the role and contribution the arts make to racial equality in the strategy.

- **Belfast City Council’s Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012–15** recognises that having a diverse range of cultures and traditions in the city can positively influence the quality, richness and distinctiveness of our art.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

- It is also essential everyone in the city has an opportunity to participate in high-quality cultural activities as this can have a positive impact on quality of life. Community arts, outreach and audience development all create opportunity and encourage people to learn new skills. Different cultural identities and traditions can be explored through heritage, providing opportunities for shared learning and community ownership. Festivals and other events can offer new experiences, challenge preconceptions of identity and open up communities to new people and other cultures.
- Under the Framework's *Distinctly Belfast* theme, we aim to support and encourage work that reflects and engages with our people and communities, their issues and interests in an increasingly globalising world, while minority ethnic communities are identified as a priority group under the Inspiring communities theme.
- These core values of excellence and equality underpin the Cultural Framework as reflected in its vision that "By 2020, everyone in Belfast experiences and is inspired by our city's diverse and distinctive culture and arts".

Some additional background from the equality impact assessment:

- In 2010/2011, the Arts Council (ACNI) reported evidence that 8 per cent of arts activities funded by ACNI specifically targeted ethnic groups. 9 per cent of people employed in the arts in Northern Ireland are also from a minority ethnic background, while 8 per cent of professional artists practising in Northern Ireland were born outside Northern Ireland, the UK and ROI.
- In Belfast, the Council is improving its monitoring and evaluation of its grant funding as part of the Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012–15. However, it is estimated that 6 per cent of applications for arts and heritage funding between 2007 and 2011 were primarily aimed at minority ethnic groups or promoting minority ethnic arts (to people from all or a variety of ethnic backgrounds). Of these, 63 per cent were successful, which is 5 per cent higher than the average success rate.

Council's PEACE III funded work has been highlighted as examples of good practice, e.g. Creative Legacies II and City of Festivals II,

which aimed to engage children, young people, older people, women, people from ethnic minority groups and people from deprived or hard-to-reach areas in culture and arts. The independent evaluation found that “As a result of the Programme delivery, outreach projects have affected attitudinal change in participants including an increased awareness of and a willingness to engage with culture and arts activities, a willingness to go outside of their own area and in cross-community working and an increase in respect and understanding between generations and cultures.”

The Council, in partnership with the PSNI, DOJ, NIHE, Victim Support, YJNI and a range of community groups is currently involved in an initiative to develop better coordinated support services to victims of race hate crime. This initiative also involved developing positive communication and messaging, delivering training and supporting community activity to promote and support better inclusion and participation of migrant and minority ethnic communities.”

Appendix 2

Response to the Consultation on the Racial Equality Indicators

Belfast City Council is pleased to be able to offer the following response in relation to the draft indicators for the Racial Equality Strategy, which is also currently being consulted upon.

Council representatives participated in the Advisory Group and have already had input into the formation of the draft indicators. Therefore the following is forwarded as our latest response into this process:

1. Equality of Service Provision (including health, education, housing, employment, learning and sport)

1.a % of school leavers with 5 GCSEs with grades A* - C by ethnicity (NI School Leavers Survey)

Yes, this is a good indicator to have. It can be used to assess progress in educational attainment by minority ethnic (ME) students over the life of the strategy and indicate whether progress is being made. Interventions can be developed to improve the comparable performance of ME students if required.

1.b % of students leaving school with no qualifications by ethnicity (NI School Leavers Survey)

Yes, this is a good indicator to have. It can be used to assess progress in educational attainment by minority ethnic (ME) students over the life of the strategy and indicate any comparable differences with the general population. Interventions can be developed to improve the comparable performance of ME students if required.

1.c % of students from minority ethnic communities who go on to higher, further education, employment, unemployment, training compared with the general population (NI School Leavers Survey)

Yes, this is a good indicator to have. It can be used to assess progress in educational attainment and pathways into further training and/or employment by minority ethnic (ME) students over the life of the strategy and indicate whether progress is being made. Interventions can be developed to improve the comparable performance of ME students if required.

1.d % of minority ethnic people who are in 'managerial' or 'professional' occupations (NI Census)

Yes, this is a good indicator to have. It can be used to assess the career pathways of minority ethnic (ME) workers over the life of the strategy and indicate whether progress is being made. Interventions can be developed to improve the comparable performance of ME students if required.

1.e % of people who think it is important that public bodies take into account the needs of minority ethnic communities (NI Life and Times survey)

Yes, this is a good indicator that can be used to assess attitudes regarding the rights and entitlements of ME communities

2. Combating prejudice, Racism and Hate Crime

**2.a % who would accept minority ethnic people as residents in their area
% who would accept minority ethnic people as a work colleague
% who would accept minority ethnic people as relatives by marrying a member of their family**

Yes these indicators are useful in tracking any changes in the attitudes of the general population towards people from ME communities.

2.b % of people who are prejudiced against people from minority ethnic communities (NI Life and Times Survey)

Yes, this is a good indicator. However it would be useful to know how prejudice is defined in this survey question? Ideally this indicator would indicate that as the RES is delivered, prejudice would decrease and therefore this is useful to track.

2.c % of people who think that there is more racial prejudice against people from minority ethnic communities in N Ireland than 5 years ago (NI Life and Times Survey)

Yes this is a good indicator on general perceptions within the broad community on the place and treatment of ME communities.

2.d The number of racial incidents and crimes reported (PSNI)

Yes, a crucial indicator to have.

2.e % of young people who have witnessed racist bullying or harassment in their school (Young Life and Times Survey)

Yes this is a good indicator to have in.

3. Participation, Representation and Belonging

3.a % of people who think minority ethnic people participate 'a little' or 'a lot' in public life (NILT)

Yes, this can provide an insight on the perceptions of the general population on integration. However, what defines public life?

3.b % of people who believe organisations and leaders should encourage members of minority ethnic communities to participate in public life (NILT)

Yes, this can provide an insight on the perceptions on integration. However, what defines public life?

3.c % and number of applications for public appointments from ME people; % and number of appointments made to ME people (Public appointments annual reports OFMDFM)

Yes, this is a good indicator to have. It can be used to assess progress in participation in public bodies by minority ethnic people over the life of the strategy and indicate whether progress is being made. Interventions can be developed to improve the comparable performance with the general population if required and develop any relevant interventions.

3.d % of people who say they feel like they belong to their neighbourhood and to Northern Ireland (NILT)

Yes, the sense of belonging amongst all communities can be tracked over the life of the strategy

3.e % of young people who socialise or play sport with people from a different ethnic background (YLT)

Yes, this is a good indicator which can assess levels of interaction between different groupings over the life of the strategy

4. Respecting Cultural Diversity

4.a % who think that the culture and traditions of the ME community add to the richness and diversity of Northern Ireland (NILT)

Yes, this is a positively worded indicator to assess attitudes and perceptions.

4.b % of people who believe that the culture of Irish Travellers is more respected than it once was (NILT)

Yes, this is a positively worded indicator to assess attitudes and perceptions.

4.c % of people who have friends from ME Communities (NILT)

Yes, this is a positively worded indicator to assess attitudes and perceptions.

4.d % of children and young people (aged 16) indicating schools are covering issues of diversity (YLT)

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

Yes, this is a positively worded indicator to assess whether diversity in an educational setting is positive and welcoming.”

Inquiry into the Together: Building a United Community Strategy

The Partnership was reminded that the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister had initiated an Inquiry into the ‘Together: Building a United Community Strategy’. The Good Relations Manager explained that that Inquiry would seek to inform the Northern Ireland Executive’s approach to tackling sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance and to make recommendations in order to support and enhance policy in uniting communities and community integration. In particular, the views of respondents had been sought on sectarianism, division and good relations and on their understanding of the term ‘good relations’ and how sectarianism and division could be addressed, with a particular focus being placed upon the challenges faced by communities living at both rural and urban interfaces.

She reminded the Partnership that the Council had extensive experience in delivering good relations work, through, for example, the District Councils’ Good Relations Programme, and that the Inquiry would provide it with an opportunity to highlight that work and potentially influence future policy making. Accordingly, she recommended that the Partnership commend the following response to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval:

“Draft Council Submission - Together; Building a United Community.

Introduction

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to submit the enclosed information to the Committee of the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister as part of its inquiry into the Government’s Together Building a United Community Strategy.

As the Council understands it, the Inquiry seeks to undertake the following:

- **Explore perspectives on sectarianism, division and good relations including:**
 - **an examination of theory and practice with regard to good relations, shared space and shared services;**
 - **consideration of best practice, both locally and internationally, in bringing divided communities together, and in developing shared space and shared services;**

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

- **Seek views on what good relations means and how sectarianism and division can be addressed, with a particular focus on the challenges at interface areas, both urban and rural. This might include:**
 - **seeking views on what issues need to be addressed in order for interface barriers to be removed;**
 - **examining the role of communities in policy and decision making in relation to community integration and particularly, the removal of interface barriers; and**
 - **consideration of the effectiveness of the Good Relations Indicators in monitoring and measuring the progress of government interventions.**
- **Make recommendations in order to support and enhance policy and decision-making with regard to building a united community, including on actions to tackle sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance, and to help deliver the Executive's commitment on removing interface barriers.**

The Council hopes that the following may assist the Committee in its tasks and is happy to provide any follow-up information should this be required:

Response

1. Explore perspectives on sectarianism, division and good relations including:

- **an examination of theory and practice with regard to good relations, shared space and shared services;**
- **consideration of best practice, both locally and internationally, in bringing divided communities together, and in developing shared space and shared services;**

Through all-party agreement, the Council adopted 'Promoting Good Relations' as a key corporate objective in 2001 and established a dedicated Good Relations Unit within the organisation. It developed an initial Good Relations Strategy in 2003 which was underpinned by the reconciliation theory outlined by Hamber and Kelly.

The Council's own Good Relations Strategy states that we 'will encourage and support good relations between all citizens, promoting fair treatment, understanding and respect for people of all cultures'. The principle of equality of opportunity underpins the Council's approach to all good relations issues.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

The Council set up a Good Relations Steering Panel in 2004 – later becoming the Good Relations Partnership – and developed a City-wide Good Relations Plan in 2007. The purpose of this plan was aimed at ‘tackling sectarianism and racism & promoting cultural diversity’. The underpinning objectives of the plan were to:

- Secure Shared City Space
- Transform Contested Space
- Promote Shared Cultural Space
- Build Shared Organisational Space.

Within this, the Council developed a series of ‘shared space principles’. It is important to understand that ‘shared space’ is not neutral space; it is a place where ones identity can be expressed in an open and non-hostile environment. Shared space should therefore be:

- Welcoming - where people feel secure to take part in unfamiliar interactions, and increase an overall sense of shared experience and community
- Accessible – well-connected in terms of transport and pedestrian links within a network of similar spaces across the city and managed to promote maximum participation by all communities
- Good quality – attractive, high quality unique services and well-designed buildings and spaces
- Safe – for all persons and groups, and trusted by both locals and visitors.

The Good Relations work of the Council is 75% funded by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister under the District Council’s Good Relations Programme. Each year the Council develops an annual Action Plan, which is based on an independent audit of Good Relations needs within the City. The Action Plan seeks to develop programmes that can address the issues within the audit and also challenge others to embed these shared space principles into all activity. Most of the activity in the Action Plan is delivered through a grants programme by third party community and voluntary organisations, or through direct delivery by Council officers. The Action Plan is targeted at areas such as work around interfaces, bonfires, decade of centenaries, participation & inclusion of migrant and minority ethnic communities, mural replacement programmes and training.

In relation to Council delivered programmes, the funding is targeted at those programmes and projects that primarily contain interactive activity on specific Good Relations issues. Therefore, the following criteria are a central component for participation in Council funded or delivered programmes:

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

- Ideally programmes and projects should contain participation that is cross community. However it is also recognised that some groups require single identity projects, which can be supported on the understanding that this LEADS to inter-community engagement.
- Projects that demonstrate ‘interactive’ engagement between participants will command a higher score for funding than those where engagement is ‘social’ or ‘passive’.
- Interactive dialogue commands the highest funding award, in recognition of the reality that this will have the best Good Relations outcomes.
- Good Relations events will be open to all and there will be no elements (music/flags/bunting etc) that the general public could perceive as being offensive present at such events.
- Generally projects should achieve an outcome that facilitates participants in respecting differences through greater understanding of the ‘other’.

The Good Relations Unit is a small unit of staff and therefore it relies on the role of community leaders in actual delivery of projects. The Council sees its role as being to support them in the delivery of projects at a neighbourhood level under the above criteria. This can be challenging for local workers. However as a Unit, the Good Relations team in the Council spend a lot of their time in relationship building and fostering trust between the Council and community leaders. This in itself is a crucial engagement process in the task of building Good Relations within the City.

The Council, as the Civic leader in the City, sets the criteria, vision and envisaged outcomes for Good Relations work – but delivery is reliant on buy-in from community leaders, community groups and the general public.

Good Relations Partnership

The Good Relations Partnership is a working group of the council’s Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Partnership is comprised of political and external representatives, which deals with issues around equality, good relations, sectarianism, racism and cultural diversity. This group was formed to include cross-party representation in addition to people from a range of other sectors,

including minority ethnic organisations, churches, trade unions, business, and the community and voluntary sectors to ensure that it is as representative of the wider community. It is the only council working group to include external representatives in recognition of the importance of being accountable to, and engaging with the wider community on good relations issues. It has been central to gaining the political and community buy-in to Good Relations practice and delivery in the City and adds 'external voices' to the challenges faced by the political make-up of the Council.

Shared Space

The 'welcoming, accessible, good quality & safe' principles, as detailed above underpin the development of shared space in Belfast and should be reflected in the design, programming and management of project activity, particularly emerging capital projects.

PEACE III

It is important to note the significant contribution made by the European Union's support for peace building and reconciliation work funded under the various PEACE Programmes.

Many worthwhile projects have been delivered in Belfast and the Council has led the delivery of a successful local action Plan under the current PEACE III programme which is now drawing to a close.

The opportunities presented by the proposed new PEACE IV Programme have also been welcomed by the Council as reflected in its submission to the Special EU Programmes Body's consultation on the Draft Operational Programme for PEACE IV.

Collaborative approach

There is a huge transformative potential of major developments which have Good Relations and Shared Space principles at their core. City master plans, community planning, transport networks and other major initiatives all have the potential to build better relationships between people from different neighbourhoods. Such projects can facilitate the opening up of civic space, collaboration at a local level on development, networking of ideas and ultimately promote local engagement and relationship building.

There is a need for increased consideration of shared space principles and good relations impacts of major infrastructure/ capital projects.

Some examples of projects which demonstrate good practice:

1. Preventing a return to conflict:

From 2010 – 2011, 3 ex-prisoners organisations got together to develop 2 booklets called 'Preventing a return to conflict' and 'Time stands still'. The first of these booklets was a summary of the experiences of former Republican and Loyalist Prisoners of prison life. They sought to de-romanticise prison life by detailing their experiences. This booklet was then used for workshops with young people involved in interface conflict and the result was a reduction in incidents at one notorious interface flashpoint area in Belfast. The second booklet sought to document the forgotten experiences of the partners, wives and children of prisoners. Their powerful story brought different communities together in a common human experience and provided former prisoners with a story that had not been heard before. These booklets had a number of outcomes: a sharing of a common story between former enemies, greater understanding of the reality of prison life, education for young people who were 'romanticising' conflict and prison life, the reality of the experiences of families of prisoners and a reduction in interface conflict.

2. Creating Cohesive Community project

This was led by LORAG and South Belfast RoundTable and was funded under the PEACE III Programme. The project sought to promote cohesive community relations in south Belfast and tackling discrimination & prejudice and building links between migrants and host communities. It targeted mainly the Roma community in an effort to foster greater education and cultural awareness as well as providing social activities for young people to interact and integrate.

3. Decade of Centenaries Programme

The Council has led on a series of actions and activities to support the City in marking and commemorating the current Decade of Centenaries. In 2011 the all-party group of Councillors agreed to a series of Principles around which the Decade of Centenaries would operate. Following this agreement the Good Relations Unit facilitated Members in developing a series of programmes to cover three areas, the first of which would be the 1912 – 1914 period. For this period, the Council produced a unique exhibition entitled 'Shared History, Different Allegiances'. The exhibition incorporated the events of the signing of the Ulster Covenant, the Gaelic Revival, the Larne and Howth gun running, the Suffragette movement and the rise of the Labour movement. There were huge numbers from across the political divide who viewed the exhibition. In addition there were a series of talks and events held which drew large

numbers in a programme that brought people together for a joint exploration of our common history.

Other examples of good practice include:

- an inter-agency joined up collaborative approach to tackling anti-social behaviour and needs of young people especially around interfaces in the city.
- Drawing Down the Walls Project and associated re-imaging programmes
- Creative Legacies Project led by Belfast City Council's Tourism, Culture & Arts Unit
- Numerous Good Relations and intervention programmes funded by the Council and OFM/DFM and delivered by community and voluntary organisations

2. Seek views on what good relations means and how sectarianism and division can be addressed, with a particular focus on the challenges at interface areas, both urban and rural. This might include:

- seeking views on what issues need to be addressed in order for interface barriers to be removed;
- examining the role of communities in policy and decision making in relation to community integration and particularly, the removal of interface barriers; and
- consideration of the effectiveness of the Good Relations Indicators in monitoring and measuring the progress of government interventions.

In 2011, Belfast City Council agreed to a notice of motion on interfaces which called for work to begin to seek to remove all barriers within the City. This was a political initiative. Following this motion, the Good Relations Unit in the Council developed a 'framework for action' to put together a series of interventions to begin this process within the City. Also in 2011, the Community Relations Council developed a guide to tackling interface issues. It cannot be stressed enough of the importance of putting communities at heart of any process with regard to any intervention on interface barriers. The two underpinning principles to the Council's work on interfaces are that the safety and security of those living closest to any barrier is paramount & nothing will be done to any barrier without the involvement and consent of those living closest to it. Those who live closest to interface barriers must be willing to consent to change and this involves intensive, effective engagement and communication with residents. Part of this is to manage expectations and allay concerns and fears.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

The Council has developed a programme of work, in partnership with the Department of Justice, on 15 physical barriers in the City. The current process centres on what we have termed a “softening” of the barrier through small scale environmental works, addition of art-works, removal of items such as barbed wire, replacement of a steel gate with a see-through fence and other elements. It is deemed to be the case that a softening will build confidence and could lead to a further transformation of the barrier, possible adjustment of the barrier and may lead to ultimate removal.

There are huge resources required for this work as much of the physical works require an injection of capital moneys. In addition, there are significant barriers placed on this work by a lack of a joined up approach to the issue by statutory and Government agencies. Emergency powers legislation catered for the erection of barriers, but there is no equivalent in place to facilitate their removal.

A long term strategy is required with the appropriate resources and a comprehensive inter-agency approach. Legislation may also be required in order to speed up the process (planning permission, ownership, confidence building measures)

In addition, the issue of interface barriers has become one of equality. The poorest people within our City (from all communities) are those who live closest to interface barriers, where their life expectancy is 10 years less than people who do not live at an interface. The quality of life and health & well-being for such residents suffers as a result of their address where safety fears, lack of opportunity and poor health dominate their daily lives. All statutory and government interventions should seek to tackle these inequalities at interfaces, which can ultimately have a positive outcome on the removal of physical structures.

3. Make recommendations in order to support and enhance policy and decision-making with regard to building a united community, including on actions to tackle sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance, and to help deliver the Executive’s commitment on removing interface barriers.

Tackling sectarianism and racism needs to be at the core of all public policy and programming. The goal of tackling sectarianism and racism should underpin capital projects, educational programmes, community initiatives and civic events. Such initiatives should seek to define how their project or programme will build better relationships between people from different political, racial and religious backgrounds.

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

Dedicated and adequate resources for programmes such as the District Council's Good Relations Programme need to be long term and sufficient to deliver real change within and between neighbourhoods. The recommendations within the recent NISRA evaluation of the District Council's Good Relations programme need to be adopted by OFM/DFM and implemented into strategic policy and delivery.

The District Council's Good Relations programme can be the best tool under which to deliver effective intervention programmes that meet the needs and requirements of locally elected and accountable civic leaders. Grant aided programmes should be intercommunity (or single identity leading on to intercommunity engagement) and interactive in order to positively change attitudes and perceptions of the 'other'. Grant aid programmes should also seek to develop interactive engagement between minority ethnic communities and host communities. Some good examples of projects that engage on participation and inclusion of minority ethnic communities include the Council's Migrant Forum and the PEACE III funded 'Creating Cohesive Communities' programme which seeks to undertake practical programmes to support inclusion and participation.

As part of the impending devolution of Community Planning powers to Councils, Good Relations needs to be at the heart of this process. A community plan that facilitates connectivity and mobility within and between neighbourhoods can succeed in connecting people across communities.

Civic leadership, from the top of Government down needs to be prominent, focussed and dedicated to the promotion of Good Relations and have an impact into all aspects of civic and social life.

Progress on interface barriers requires a need to place communities at the centre of this process. Validation and resources are required to the phased approach as set out in point 2 above.

In relation to making progress on interfaces and changes to physical structures, legislation may be required to force statutory agencies and Government Departments to speed up the delivery of any interface intervention."

The Partnership adopted the recommendation, subject to that paragraph within the response under the heading 'Good Relations Partnership' being amended to reflect the fact that there was Central Government and statutory representation also on the Partnership.

Evaluation of Summer Camps/Schools

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 11th August, it had agreed that the Council commission, on behalf of the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister, a regional evaluation of a range of activities and projects which would inform the design of the summer camps/schools programme for 2015 onwards. The Good Relations Manager reported that, following a procurement exercise, Wallace Consulting had been appointed to undertake that work. It was anticipated that its initial findings would be available in November and that a final report on the outcome of the evaluation would be completed by January, 2015.

Noted.

Update on Funding Allocation for Good Relations Programme

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The Council has recently received its Letter of Offer in respect of the District Council Good Relations Programme from OFMDFM for the amount of £402,000.00 towards salary and programme costs; the latter of which includes grant aid. Council is required to make a minimum contribution of £134,000.00 which has been included within the current Good Relations budget.**
- 1.2 We have been advised that the Letter of Offer reflects the gap between the current central District Council Good Relations Programme allocation and the level of funding requested from councils. The Office of First and Deputy First Minister have advised they have to deliver substantial budget savings in this financial year and the funding available reflects this pressure.**
- 1.3 The funding sought from OFMDFM per the 2014/15 revenue estimates for grants, programmes and staff resources (excluding the summer intervention programme which is 100% funded and subject to a separate Letter of Offer) amounted to £501,000. Therefore there is a shortfall between the amount of funding requested and the Letter of Offer, which amounts to £99,000.**
- 1.4 Councils have also been advised, following the June monitoring round, additional funding has been made available for the delivery of the Together: Building a United Community Strategy. However Ministers are currently considering how to allocate this additional funding and this could result in an increase in the amount available to the District Council Good Relations Programme; OFMDFM will be in contact regarding**

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

the possibility of extra money being allocated to the Councils. However, there is no guarantee that additional funding will be forthcoming.

- 1.5 The letter of offer has therefore been issued on the confirmed committed budget allocation of £402,000.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 One of the most pressing concerns is that of the grant aid opportunity offered to support good relation programmes across the city which would normally be in the region of £302,000.00 annually. So far this year, £157,578.00 has been granted from the Good Relations Fund under Tranche 1 for activities from April-September 2014.
- 2.2 In September 2014, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approved further expenditure of £121,963.40 under Tranche 2 for October-March 2015 activities; however, this was subject to receipt of a Letter of Offer being received from OFMDFM for the Programme with sufficient funding being available. A copy of the grant aid allocated along with a description of the projects has been circulated to the Partnership
- 2.3 The above grant aid figures do not include the Bonfire Management Programme (£89,748 already committed) or the amount required for St Patrick's Day 2015 Grant applications (estimated at 26,819) which are currently being assessed and have not been taken to Council as yet.
- 2.4 Programme costs as outlined in the Action Plan will be curtailed this year even should the shortfall be addressed as the Plan had represented an increase in funding from last year.
- 2.5 A review of programme costs to date and what has been committed to has been undertaken which includes Decade of Centenaries activities and work relating to Hate Crime It should be noted that there is no provision for a review, reactionary/service convergence work or any other requests which may be submitted during the year.
- 2.6 Members should also note that the next round of funding for Good Relations and Summer Intervention for activities from April, 2015-September, 2015 would normally be advertised in November. The reduction in funding for the Programme this year will have implications on how this funding is advertised and allocated in the incoming year.

2.7 It is proposed that the budget for Tranche 2 of the Good Relations/St Patrick's Grants and Programme costs be prioritised in this order to absorb the shortfall thus reducing the allocation by £99,000. In addition, programme costs are limited to what has already been committed. The Officers will continue to seek a meeting with the Officers at OFMDFM to discuss this shortfall and opportunities under the Together: Building a United Community Strategy fund that may be available. It is unclear even if this was announced whether it can be allocated to the Good Relations programme.

2.8 In addition, the Partnership could consider recommending that the Council request that an all party delegation meet with OFMDFM to discuss the reduction in funding and the impact on the Programme.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

OFMDFM has advised they have to deliver substantial budget savings in this financial year and the funding available reflects this pressure. The letter of offer has therefore been issued on the confirmed committed budget allocation of £402,000 to Council a shortfall of £99, 000.

3.2 Human Resources

None at this time

3.3 Asset and Other Implications

None

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 There are no equality considerations at this stage but a reduction in funding may have an impact on good relations work.

5 Recommendation

5.1 The Partnership is requested to note the information in the report and consider the proposal that the budget for Tranche 2 of the Good Relations/St Patrick's Grants and programme costs be prioritised, as outlined, to absorb the shortfall thus reducing the allocation by £99,000.

In addition, programme costs are limited to what has already been committed and to make this a recommended approach to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.”

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 13th October, 2014**

The Partnership adopted the recommendation and agreed that an All-Party deputation from the Council seek a meeting with representatives of the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister to discuss the reduction in funding and its impact upon the Council's delivery of its Good Relations Programme.

Date of Next Meeting

The Partnership noted that its next monthly meeting would take place at 1.00 p.m. on Monday, 10th November.

Chairman