

SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

MONDAY, 7th NOVEMBER 2016

MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

Members present: Councillor Kyle (Chairperson);
Alderman Sandford and Councillors Attwood, Johnston,
and Walsh.

External Members: Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Ms. A. Chada, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Mrs. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast and District Trades Union Council;
Mr. M. O'Donnell, Department for Communities; and
Mr. P. Scott, Catholic Church.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Toland, Assistant Director;
Mrs. M. Higgins, Senior Good Relations Officer;
Ms. N. Lane, Good Relations Manager;
Mrs. S. McNicholl, Corporate Policy and Strategic
Planning Manager; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Ms. O. Barron, Mr. K. Gibson,
Mrs. G. Duggan and Mrs. M. Marken.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th October were taken as read and signed as
correct.

Declarations of Interest

Ms. A. Chada declared an interest in respect of agenda item 8, viz., Request
for Support for Fusion+ Programme Event, in that the Fusion Programme had been
led by Springboard, of which Ms. A. Chada acted as an Executive Director.

Future Approach to Bonfire Related Issues

The Partnership considered the undernoted report.

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

**To outline the key findings from a series of engagement
activities in relation to the current operating model of the
Bonfire Programme and to ask the Shared City Partnership
(SCP) to agree principles/guidance that can be applied to the
future approach.**

2.0 Recommendations

That members of the Good Relations Partnership note the contents of the report and appendices.

2.2 That members make a recommendation to the Strategic & Policy Resources Committee that the principles outlined in the report should be adopted in relation to the 2017 Good Relations approach to bonfires and its continuing development over the next 3-5 years.

2.3 On the basis of the findings, the Partnership recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that officers will develop detailed options regarding the Programme for consideration at the December / January meeting.

3.0 Main Report

Bonfire Programme Review

Background

3.1 The Good Relations Unit of Belfast City Council has facilitated a Bonfire Programme for twelve years. Following the delivery of the 2015 approach, the then Good Relations Partnership identified a need to review the existing operating model with a view to developing a new approach to the issue of bonfires and cultural expression.

A number of engagement exercises were undertaken to identify key learning and challenges for future delivery.

3.2 These have included:

- Review undertaken with stakeholder groups in Jan 2016 – J Byrne
- Monitoring and evaluation in August 2016 – J Byrne
- Direct engagement with participating groups through survey in Sept 2016
- Roundtable discussion with members of the Shared City Partnership – Oct 2016
- Cultural expression project delivered by TIDES training April 2016 – present

Information gathered from these exercises have been presented to the Partnership at previous meetings. Summaries of the two most recent exercises from the focus

group meeting on 18 October and TIDES Training project on cultural expression are attached to this report.

3.3 Developing an approach for 2017

In order to inform the development of options that can be implemented in 2017, Members are asked to consider and provide recommendations in relation to the suggested principles listed below.

The adoption of these or amended principles/guidance will inform the options for the 2017 approach and its continuing development over the next 3-5 years.

Suggested principles/guidance

- 1. Agree a vision for the Programme – This should reflect support for safe, positive, inclusive forms of celebration.**
- 2. Change the name of the programme from Bonfire programme to reflect the vision. Potential examples include: Community Celebration Fund/Programme; Cultural Celebration Fund/Programme; Cultural Festival Fund/Programme or other**
- 3. Support the use of beacons and other creative forms of cultural expression where possible**
- 4. Offer support for the positive expression of culture within the PUL community through a capacity building programme that includes area cultural networks**
- 5. Introduce indicators which are in line with the vision for the Programme.**
- 6. Recognise that the issues addressed by groups associated with August bonfires are not related to good relations outcomes and should be supported accordingly.**
- 7. Recognise that the wider issue of bonfires and cultural celebration is a complex issue. A further set of principles should be developed that will underpin all activity funded through this programme (a similar approach was used to agree principles for Decade of Centenaries commemorations).**
- 8. Recognise that cultural celebrations operate with different levels of support and participation in communities. An approach should be developed to measure levels of support and engage with residents.**

3.4 Wider Context

Members will note that any of the above options will operate alongside a range of other approaches including:

3.4 Strategic Interagency Bonfire Group – This grouping has demonstrated improved communication and co-ordination in relation to issues associated with bonfires. Emerging workstreams for 2017 will focus on clean up by site owners, cleansing, use of tyres, agreed priority sites and communication.

- **Belfast City Council approach to bonfires - the council will continue to address the negative issues that sometimes result from bonfires, particularly in relation to community safety and environmental concerns.**
- **Other Statutory agency approaches – other agencies will continue to address issues that emanate from bonfires that fall within their specific remits. This includes NIHE, NIFRS, PSNI, DfC and NIEA amongst others.**
- **Community Relations Council is considering a scoping exercise on bonfires with SOLACE – this work hopes to identify common approaches and issues in relation to bonfires across all council areas in NI.**
- **Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition – the Commission will produce a report by December 2017 which will include recommendations in relation to issues of direct relevance to this programme.**

3.5 Financial & Resource Implications

To date no budget has been finalised. Officers are still negotiating and working with partners to obtain funding. The development of options will make reference to available and potential budgets.

3.6 Equality or Good Relations Implications

The Bonfire Programme aims to promote the positive celebration of culture which will have a positive impact on good relations. This is a sensitive issue and the detail of any agreed programme will have to be equality screened.”

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During discussion, a Member made a suggestion regarding the name of the Programme and suggested that it could possibly include the word 'beacon'. Another Member suggested that whilst the Programme specifically addressed issues around the bonfires in July and August it should actually focus on greater cultural expression and understanding throughout the whole year and not just over this period.

The Senior Good Relations Officer advised the Partnership that the suggested principles/guidance outlined in the report included feedback and comments from many of the organisations which had participated in the Programme. She reiterated that the work on bonfires and the use of beacons was complex, not least in respect of funding, and it was important that any changes to the programme should be carried out in a measured manner. She undertook to feed the comments made by the Members into the next update report.

The Good Relations Manager advised the Partnership that the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition had been established as part of the commitments made under the Stormont House and Fresh Start Agreements. She detailed that, in order to inform its work, the Commission had now commenced a process of engagement to gather the views and opinions of those who wished to contribute from across the community. She reported that an engagement session for the Good Relations Sector was being held on Tuesday, 15th November at Conway Mill, Belfast at 10.00 a.m. and she undertook to forward more information on the event directly to Members and encouraged them to attend if they were available.

The Good Relations Manager advised further that, following agreement by the Partnership at its October meeting, correspondence had been sent to the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition seeking engagement with the Commission. A response had been received from the Secretariat indicating that the Commission would like to attend a meeting of the Partnership and the Good Relations Manager advised that a date would be confirmed shortly.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that:

- the principles outlined in the report should be adopted in relation to the 2017 Good Relations approach to bonfires and its continuing development over the next three to five years;
- on the basis of the findings, that officers continue to develop detailed options regarding the Programme for consideration at the December/January meeting of the Partnership, to include the comments of the Members as detailed above;

Presentation – Update on the Belfast Agenda

(Mrs. S. McNicholl, Corporate Policy and Strategic Planning Manager attended in connection with this item.)

The Chairman reminded the Partnership that it had agreed to receive regular updates on the progress of the Belfast Agenda from a Good Relations perspective.

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The Members were reminded that the Belfast Agenda was the Council's framework for progressing Community Planning and had been used as the basis for developing the City's first Community Plan.

The Corporate Policy and Strategic Planning Manager reviewed the extent of the work which had been carried out and highlighted a number of activities which had been undertaken. She advised that a consultation draft of the Belfast Agenda was being developed by community planning partners and it was expected that this would be published for a twelve week formal public consultation and further engagement at the beginning of December. She then highlighted the following key dates:

- draft Belfast Agenda for consultation to be published early December 2016;
- twelve week public consultation to run until the end of February 2017; and
- consultation to include a formal launch, local area events, tailored sessions for organisations/partnerships and an online survey.

She then drew the Members' attention to a one page summary of the working draft, which highlighted the key aspects of the emerging Belfast Agenda.

The Corporate Policy and Strategic Planning Manager advised that the Council wished to continue to engage with the Shared City Partnership and reiterated the importance of good relations, community relations and diversity within the Belfast Agenda.

Noted.

Good Relations Events November 2016

The Partnership was reminded of the specific details regarding public events that the Good Relations Unit would be holding during November as follows:

- Evaluation of the Summer Intervention Programme - a best practice event would be held to highlight the success of the projects funded through the summer intervention fund on 28th November in the City Hall;
- Good Relations Audit – the online survey was now available at <https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk/goodrelations/audit>, the closing date for submissions was 28th November. The survey was also available in hard copy by contacting the Good Relations Units at goodrelations@belfastcity.gov.uk; and
- Public Engagement Event – as part of the Good Relations Audit a public engagement event was being held on 22nd November at the Girdwood Community Hub from 9.30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m., both the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson would be speaking at the event.

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The Senior Good Relations Officer concluded her update by encouraging the Members to complete the online survey and to circulate it through their contact lists as widely as possible.

Noted.

International Women's Day 2017

The Partnership was advised that next year's International Women's Day would take place on 4th March and that the Council would be organising a number of activities to mark the event. The Good Relations Manager reported that the main event would take the form of a public rally at the front of the City Hall on Saturday, 4th March, which would focus upon the theme 'Peace, Solidarity and Sustenance'.

The officer outlined, in terms of the event being planned for 4th March, the cost of erecting a temporary stage and sound system, hiring singers and providing afterwards a light lunch in the City Hall for up to 200 women would be in the region of £6,500. It was proposed that that expenditure be met from within the Council's Organisational Development budget, as had been the case for the 2016 event.

The Partnership were also reminded that International Men's Day was being held on Friday, 18 November at the City Hall and they were encouraged to attend the relevant event if available.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that approval be granted for the hosting of the aforementioned event to mark International Women's Day 2017.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2017

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that Holocaust Memorial Day was an internationally recognised event which sought to honour and remember the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides in other countries across the world. She reported that the Council held an annual event and this year it would focus upon the theme 'How can life go on'.

She stated that the Good Relations Unit planned to mark Holocaust Memorial Day through a number of awareness raising activities. As part of the Good Relations Diverse City Programme a visit to the Belfast Jewish Synagogue had been scheduled for Wednesday, 25th January. She reported that this event would be widened in context to include the opportunity to reflect on Holocaust Memorial Day and to consider the impacts of holocausts on victims and survivors.

It was reported that the proposed event would in the region of £1,000 and that there was sufficient funding available within the existing Good Relations Budget.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it approve the hosting of an event to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day as part of the Good Relations Unit's Diversecity Programme and noted

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that the Good Relations Unit had developed a small Holocaust Memorial Display which would be located in the City Hall.

Mural Transformation Programme

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that, at its meeting on 11th April, it had allocated up to £20,000 towards a mural transformation programme, under the theme Our Safe Community, within the current Good Relations Action Plan.

She reminded the Partnership further that, at its meeting on 10th October, the Partnership had approved funding for one project which had been successful under the open application process. In addition, the Members had requested that officers prepare a report for a future meeting of the Partnership which would outline options regarding the underspend in the budget.

The Senior Good Relations Officer advised that the East Belfast Football Club had approached officers from the Council's Sports Development Unit regarding a mural that was currently on the Bowling Pavilion at Inverary Playing Fields in East Belfast. She outlined that the club had expressed a desire to have this mural removed and replaced with a more welcoming image. She continued that, following consultations between the Council's Sports Development, Good Relations and Community Services staff, it was proposed that the officers would work collectively with the club to progress the proposal.

Following a query regarding duplication, the Senior Good Relations Officer undertook to confirm that there was no overlap with this proposal and Northern Ireland Housing Executive initiatives.

The Partnership noted that the Council's Sports Development Officer would be the initial point of contact with the club and that the final image would be agreed between the Good Relations, Community Service and Sports Development sections, using the same criteria that had already been applied to the Mural Transformation Programme.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that funding of up to a maximum of £5,000 be allocated to East Belfast Football Club to transform a mural on the Bowling Pavilion at Inverary Playing Fields.

Request for Support for Fusion+ Programme Event

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 6th June, it had viewed a DVD on the original Fusion Programme. The Good Relations Officer advised that the Fusion+ Programme was a new initiative. She explained that former Fusion participants, with the help of Springboard staff, were working as mentors with local schools to deliver a learning programme on good relations.

The Partnership noted that ten pupils from each of the following schools in North and West Belfast had been involved in the seven month programme:

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- Belfast Model School for Boys;
- Belfast Model School for Girls;
- Christian Brothers School;
- Colaiste Feirste;
- Hazelwood Integrated College; and
- St Patricks College, Bearnagheea;

The Members were advised that six sessions would be held for each school (youth group) which would include workshops on identity and diversity, stereotypes and prejudice, community identity and traditions and the richness and benefits of diversity. Around sixty pupils from the schools would then come together to share their perspectives and experiences and to work on a finale performance that would reflect not only individual identity and traditions, but critically also their shared understanding.

The Partnership was advised that the finale performance would be in March 2017 and the organisers were keen for this to be held in the City Hall and had requested the Council's support for the use of the Great Hall and the associated expenditure.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that its supports the use of the City Hall for the Fusion+ Programme to hold their finale event in March 2017 and noted that the costs of the event were estimated to be in region of £2000, which would be met through the existing budgets.

Christmas 'Goodwill' Events – Small Scale Grants

The Good Relations Manager reported that every year a number of requests were received for financial assistance from groups living on interfaces to assist in the hosting of cross-community Christmas events during December. She advised that it was anticipated that up to a maximum of six groups might approach the Good Relations Unit with requests for funding and she sought delegated authority for the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services to award an amount of up to £500 to each suitable scheme for a maximum of 6 in total.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources the contribution of up to £500 for a maximum of six local interface groups be awarded under the scheme of delegated authority up to a maximum of 6 groups in total.

Refugee Awareness and Arabic Culture Information Session

The Good Relations Manager advised that as the Partnership was already aware, over the past year, a number of Syrian families had been resettled in Northern Ireland as part of the Government's participation in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation (VPR) Scheme. She outlined that, should the Members be interested in learning more about how the VPR scheme operated and to develop a better understanding about refugee and asylum issues in Northern Ireland, the Consortium supporting the resettlement of families in Northern Ireland had organised a Refugee Awareness and Arabic Culture Information Session in partnership with Belfast City

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Council. This was being held on 29th November from 9.45 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. with the venue still to be confirmed. She undertook to forward more information on the event directly to Members and encouraged them to attend the event.

Noted.

Chairperson