

SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

MONDAY 11th JANUARY, 2021

MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Kyle (Chairperson);
Alderman Rodgers; and
Councillors Kelly, Lyons, Magennis and O'Hara.

External Members: Mr. J. Donnelly, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Miss. G. Duggan, Belfast City Centre Management;
Mrs. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
Ms. J. Irwin, Community Relations Council;
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast and District Trades Union Council;
Mr. I. McLaughlin, Community and Voluntary Sector; and
Father. E. O'Neill, Faith Sector.

In attendance: Ms. N. Lane, Good Relations Manager;
Ms. D. McKinney, Programme Manager;
Ms. L. Dolan, Good Relations Officer; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Mrs. B. Arthurs, Mrs. O. Barron, Mr. J. Currie, Mr. S. Hamilton, Mr. M. McBride,
Mr. M. McGinley, Mr. M. O'Donnell and Ms. Ann Marie White.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 7th December, 2020 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

Mr. J. Donnelly declared an interest in item 2, namely, Peace IV Updates, in that he was involved with Active Communities Network, which acted as the delivery agent for two of the Peace IV projects under the Children and Young Peoples Theme.

Peace IV Updates

Update on Peace IV Secretariat

The PEACE IV Programme Manager provided the Members with an update in respect of the Secretariat activity associated with the implementation of the Peace IV Local Action Plan.

The officer reported that the ongoing government restrictions, particularly the recent tighter measures, continued to have a severe impact on delivery. She reported that

discussions with some of the delivery partners had already taken place and, whilst the partners were making every effort to continue to engage with participant groups, valuable time had been lost and it would be extremely difficult to make up and the SEUPB continued to be slow in acknowledging the problem.

In addition, the SEUPB had recently introduced a further step in the approval of project modifications by the Accountable Department (TEO), the process / timeframe for handling the requests was still unclear. She explained that this would impact the Council's ability to provide quick decisions that were necessary for delivery partners to respond to an every changing environment. The Members were advised that modifications submitted to the SEUPB in November had not yet been approved. This additional step added further uncertainty. In the absence of clarity from SEUPB, officers had sought clarity directly from TEO regarding the process and timeframe.

She referred the Members to the guidance from the SEUPB on project modifications, as follows:

- Modifications in light of COVID were temporary interventions to aid project delivery during the pandemic and government restrictions;
- Modifications during this time were not for the purposes of re-scoping the approved work packages and deliverables;
- Approved changes in OIG tolerances and contact hours should not be amended/reflected in contracts with delivery agents;
 - Delivery agents essentially were working towards the outputs as detailed in the Belfast Local Action Plan (LAP) application.
 - Changes requested with regards to contact hours were essentially asking for an increase to the tolerances allowed under OIG as a temporary measure during COVID to aid delivery agents in achieving the outputs.
- Changes to contact timeframes were the remit of the LP. These would be dependent on the submission and approval of a LAPs extension request by the SEUPB;
- SEUPB was unable to reduce participant targets at this time as the BCC LAP had 18 months (potentially up to a possible 27 months pending submission/request for a project extension) of project activity left, as such, it would not be prudent to agree re-scopes or reductions to participant targets. This would be looked at again in Q2 - 2021 when the situation and impact of COVID was further understood.

The Programme Manager detailed that the latest advice from the SEUPB was concerning as it appeared to minimise the seriousness of the Covid-19 impact on the community and PEACE IV delivery and also did not take into account the ongoing government restrictions. She reported that a legal opinion on the advice was currently being sought and would be followed up with Senior Management within the SEUPB.

She also updated that:

- St Comgalls - The assessment process of the submissions received were currently being progressing in line with the procurement timeframe, with an award anticipated at the end of January 21, subject to successful evaluation;
- Programme Workplan - The PEACE IV Drive In Cinema, of two films sessions each providing space for 60 cars, had been successfully delivered on 19th December

2020. In addition, ND Events had been appointed to deliver a wide range of peace building events, including culture cafés, seminars, workshops and a conference during 2021 and 2022. Planning for the first events, which would all be delivered virtually, was ongoing;

- Verification and Audit – the internal audit of PEACE IV by AGRS was progressing.

The Partnership were informed that claims for all aspects of the Programme for Period 24 totalling £710, 727 were currently being verified by the SEUPB.

Update on Peace IV – Children and Young People (CYP)

The Partnership considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To provide the Shared City Partnership (SCP) with a progress report in respect of the Children and Young People’s (CYP) theme of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

2.0 Recommendations

The Partnership is requested to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report.

3.0 Main report

Project Updates

Delivery of project activity is progressing, where possible. Covid 19 restrictions continue to impact delivery and the risk to achieving LoO deliverables is increasing, as the new restrictions announced on 17th December, which includes an 8pm curfew, will be in place for a minimum of 6 weeks. An appendix attached to the agenda shows the Risk Tracker which outlines risks and project progress, as reported to SEUPB.

3.1 CYP 1 – Tech Connects

GIGA Training (Afterschool’s & Digital Arts Academies (Tech Camps) (6-16 Yr. Olds)

Delivery agent had replacement W5 Activity approved to a Virtual Reality technology activity to explore different cultures. As participants did not engage in using the LEGO we do kits as part of the programme, due to COVID, delivery was completed virtually. The young people will also have access to a range of apps, both fun and educational, they will have the opportunity to learn about and experience cutting edge VR technology which the delivery agent found appropriate for the Tech Connects programme. Additionally, it will add value to the projects and will help aid recruitment and retention of participants. A Digital Arts Academy is planned for Mid Term Break 15th-18th February 2021.

Afterschool's (school setting) activity outreach is ongoing and planning in progress will include collaboration with Lyric theatre, Ulster Orchestra & Strand Arts Centre. This will involve exploring instruments & music from various cultures and how to mix genres /styles with contemporary music.

Belfast Metropolitan College (Digital Insights Programme)
(17- 4 yr. olds)

Delivery agent targeted email at community contacts in North & West Belfast with a targeted Facebook messaging campaign, posting on Belfast Met Social Media channels.

This was combined with targeted engagement by project partner Bytes Project in Shankill; Peters Hill; Oldpark and Ardoyne. This resulted in over 1800 visits to the Eventbrite registration page where individuals could express their interest in participating.

However, as this is a hard to reach age group, there was low uptake and low attendance at the November sessions, BMC are to seek feedback from registrations to identify barriers to learning / attending.

Cohort 2 completed sessions on 16 & 17 December, with analysis of participants to be completed following submission of Registrations & Baseline surveys.

3.2 CYP 2 - Playing our Part in the City

A.C.N. is progressing with a condensed delivery to complete year 3 targets, via week long camps. A proposal to reduce participant contact hours from 44 to 26 hours for young people and from 30 to 24 hours for parents is awaiting a decision from SEUPB.

A change in the delivery approach is due to a number of factors: COVID 19 restrictions on group sizes making general youth provision increasingly difficult; cancellation of events and activities; new/changing COVID lockdown restrictions; lack of digital access; requirement to reduce group sizes; reduced numbers of bookings for trips and availability of activities.

Many participant groups are aligned with the Education Authority (EANI) and following EANI guidance in Aug 20, all generic youth work provision was suspended which impacted delivery of the project. The Youth Restart guidance outlines recovery of Youth Work in a gradual and phased approach in line with the Executive's recovery strategy and public health guidance. Limitations such as group sizes of approx. 6 people including staff, is continuing to impact the level of engagement from the groups.

3.3 CYP3 – On the Right Track – Sports and Personal Change elements

Residential Activity & Cross border activity is on hold at present, due to government restrictions, travel advice caused by COVID and availability of venues.

Given the government restrictions on sporting activity, delivery is focusing on participants completing VRQ & Sports coaching / OCN qualifications – scheduled to take place with staggered start times and smaller group sizes in order to comply with social distancing requirements.

Participant targets of 1800 remain high risk due to this uncertain environment, with regards to club closures & overlapping sporting governing guidance have been major barriers in terms of participation. Additional measures announced 17 December including no outdoor mixing with other households, is also restricting progression & recruitment. Sports clubs must not organise, operate or participate in an indoor or outdoor gathering, which consists of more than 15 people. Outdoor exercise is only permitted with members of your own household and the 8pm curfew will affect delivery. No sporting events at any level, either indoors or outdoors, can be held between 26 December and 2 January. This will be reviewed by the Executive after 4 weeks.

The target for this project is approximately 72 participants per month averaging 24 participants per programme, which is offering Council some flexibility in terms of numbers, as COVID may impact on clubs ability to recruit and engage. However, this number per month is ambitious given the current environment and will be risk assessed following additional 6 week restrictions announced in December, principally the no mixing of households which restricts cross community contact time.

Personal Change

SEUPB approved reduced contact hours for Cohort 1 from 305-265 per participants which aligns with contact hours for Cohort 2 (265 hours per participant). This is due to COVID preventing cross border travel/ residential activity.

Extern is progressing with delivery of OCN around Personal Identity which is planned to complete in the new year. The delivery agent is also progressing with recruitment for the final cohort 3 to complete in Jan/ Feb 21. Focus of current delivery has been on OCN personal identity & exploring family relationships, with the group planning to celebrate full achievement at a recognition event in Feb / March 2021.

3.4 CYP 4 – Cooperation Ireland (Young Advocates)

Project was paused from November 20 due to COVID and the delivery partner is now planning to remobilise activity from

February to December 2021, primarily through residential based work. This decision is based on the current challenges and restrictions of being able to bring groups of young people together 'face-to-face' in the present environment.

Most of the project activity and focus is about young people from different parts of Belfast mixing and being together for sustained periods of time. Rotating around different areas and being together is a key component of the Young Advocates Project. At this time, the delivery agent has expressed concern about community transmission and health and safety. In terms of preparing and remobilising the Young Advocates Programme, Cooperation Ireland will utilise the support of the respective partners as well as social media platforms to generate local interest. They are considering working on a short video and will explore using local press where possible. At this stage, participants have been identified by partners with young people yet to be registered for activity.

3.5 CYP 5 – NIHE Local Area Network Partner Delivery

Engagement packs on exploring a range of cultures and traditions in December and Christmas were delivered to participants with online discussions facilitated by Artsekta taking place. Discussions will explore the range of celebrations marked by different cultures. This pilot project may be used in the future to include other cultural celebrations.

Procurement is progressing with the Digital Inclusion tender in the final stages of award, with the Social Justice tender to progress in the new year. Tender closed 04 December 2020 with the appointment of the award being approved by SEUPB 21 December 2020. NIHE to issue award to successful delivery agent.

A launch has been combined with the BPR NIHE programme, due to the level of investment of £2,5m in both projects and is scheduled to take place virtually on 28 January 2021. This will also be promoted via a socially distanced photo opportunity with presentations from BCC & SEUPB and NIHE. This event will increase the profile of the 2 programmes to encourage participation from local communities & tenants.

Financial and Resource Implications

CYP projects have identified necessary delivery modifications to mitigate the level and impact of COVID 19 crisis.

PEACE IV costs are recoverable from SEUPB, as the funding body, subject to eligibility of expenditure. The CYP Claim for Period 24 expenditure was submitted to SEUPB on 1 December 2020 valued £109,202.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The draft plan has been equality screened and discussed at the Equality Consultative Forum on 13 May 2015.”

The Members briefly discussed the impact that the pandemic was having on young people. The Programme Manager explained that with remote learning they were often saturated with online engagement and did not have the desire to undertake any more online activities. In addition, not all of the participants had access to devices or the internet (or good internet connection) and there was potential privacy issues which made progressing the programmes extremely challenging.

The Partnership agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to note the information contained within the report.

Update on Shared Spaces and Services (SSS) theme

The Programme Manager provided an update on the progress made to date in respect of the SSS theme, within the Peace IV Local Action Plan.

She referred to a number of capital projects which were being undertaken as part of the initiative, including:

- **Springfield Dam** – the project was handed over to Council and the Park was opened to the public on 21st December 2020. Opening arrangements were in line with other Council parks. Press coverage on the opening featured a press release with photographs of local school children. An official opening of the Dam would take place in 2021 when Government restrictions permitted. Two cross community site visits with 15 local community representatives had taken place on 15th December 2020. The representatives had been extremely positive about the site and were keen to be involved in progressing activity at the Dam and also to engage in discussion in regard to the future management approach.

Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) would be closely monitored with joint patrols involving BCC, SNOs and PSNI scheduled to put out a strong message that ASB would be addressed. A site visit with PSNI, BCC, SNOs and Local Youth Outreach Workers had taken place on 14th December 2020 and it was agreed that Community Safety would liaise weekly with the Clonard Monastery Youth Centre and Forthspring Inter Community Group (funded through the Social Clause to carry out Outreach Work) for updates, to map any patterns and to link them into the wider ASB Citywide Tasking meeting. In addition, the potential of SNOs monitoring the site in the evenings to ensure it was secure was also being explored, although this would be dependent on other demands throughout the city.

The Programme Manager reported that the allocation of the remaining £6,000 of the Social Clause to support local schools with biodiversity activity at the Dam site had been approved by SEUPB and was being progressed.

- **PEACE IV Network Scheme – Capital Works** - The assessment of tenders, for work on the remaining Greenway had taken place and the appointment of the contractor was currently being finalised with CPD and the SEUPB. The contractors were due to commence Section 1 - Glencairn in early 2021.

In regard to programming, the Partnership was informed that MDLs report, with the finding and recommendations, was currently being finalised and printed copies were expected later in the month. The next step was consideration of the recommendations, development of an Action Plan for implementation and the development of a quotation for further engagement and facilitation. Ongoing dialogue and engagement would be critical to the success of the project and should align with the capital works as each of the sections were developed.

In regard to the other Programmes:

- **Shared History, Heritage and Identity Content / Narratives for Shared Space -**
Due to COVID restrictions, delivery partners were still focusing on the preparation of engagement and research. Representatives from both the Osborne Partnership and Mediation NI had participated in site visits with community representatives on 15th December and had established links with local community groups. In addition, further walk and talk possibilities for 21st January were being explored. She highlighted that it was key that the research and work aligned with the Capital element of the programme and the development of the greenway with the initial project work anticipated in Section 1 (Glencairn/Clarendon) and public outreach planned for late January/early February 2021.
- **Shared Space Volunteer Training -** Sustrans and their community partner Intercomm had participated in both site visits to Springfield Dam Park with the Community Representatives on 15th December 2020. This had provided an opportunity to network with community contacts and to view the facilities. Sustrans hoped to launch and promote the training to the communities during mid-January via press release and email. The training was likely to begin February early March 2021 and they were looking at different venues, depending on numbers etc. Following feedback from organisations who had previously registered an interest in the volunteer training around the Shared Space Ambassadors, Heritage and Nature Guides programmes, ITT documents were being prepared to open a call for applications in early January 2021.
- **Springfield Dam activities -** With the opening of Springfield Dam Park to the public, activities led by Council's Parks and Community Services departments, along with outside providers, would be developed and supported. The volunteer training project would also make use of the newly developed site. All activities would work towards promoting the site and modular building as a shared site and facility.

The Partnership were provided with a breakdown of the costs associated with the projects and were informed that the Peace IV costs were recoverable, subject to eligibility from SEUPB. The Period 24 claim of £472,310 had been submitted to SEUPB for verification. Details of the Department for Infrastructure contribution to the project was being progressed and confirmation of Department for Communities input was being prioritised.

A Member referred to social clauses and noted the important difference that they could make to a community and he sought clarification as to how these were calculated and allocated against contracts.

Following discussion, the Programme Manager agreed to liaise with the Physical Programmes Section to clarify the social clause terms and conditions and to share these with the Members.

The Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report.

Update on Building Positive Relations - (BPR) theme

The Partnership considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To provide the Shared City Partnership (SCP) with a progress report in respect of the Building Positive Relations (BPR) theme of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note the contents and appendices within the report and to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

- **BPR3 – Transformational Leadership Project –**
To agree in principle to pool the £4,000 resource allocation for community projects in the event where Clusters have merged and to delegate authority to the Good Relations Manager and the PEACE IV Programme Manager to consider the Resource Allocation requests on a case by case basis
- To invite NICVA to present an update to the Shared City Partnership at a future meeting.
- **BPR4 – Belfast and the World –** that the Ligoniel and Ballynafeigh cohorts complete in March 2021 subject to COVID restrictions.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 Delivery of project activity is continuing where possible, although ongoing and ever changing government restrictions have impacted the delivery of condensed programmes and residential activity that was scheduled for October/November/December. An appendix attached to the agenda provides detail on project progress and Risk tracker as at December 20.

3.2 BPR1 – Cross Community Area Networks

The project team has received positive responses from key players in most of the identified CCAN areas. The public tender for the Good Relations programme is now open with a view to award in early 2021. The ITT for the Place Visioning programme is currently under NIHE internal review. A joint virtual launch with the CYP5 project is scheduled for the 28th January (subject to current

restrictions). Officers liaising with SEUPB and Chair of SCP in relation to the agreed approach given recent restrictions.

3.3 BPR2 – Creative Communities Project

Artist/Heritage residency programme has commenced in Woodvale/Ardoyne cluster. It is anticipated that Shankill/Clonard, Carlisle Circus, Divis/Lower Shankill and St Malachy's/ Albert Foundry FC will commence mid January 2021 with a further 3/8 clusters commencing by Spring 2021.

Discussions are continuing with the LGBTQ+ and Malone Integrated College thematic clusters.

3.4 BPR3 – Transform for Change Project

Year 1 delivery was completed mid October, with 13 TLP courses delivered across 11 Clusters. 143 participants have completed the Transformative Leadership Programme (TLP) training element with an 84.6% completion rate.

Year 2; Autumn cohorts completed with an anticipated 104 participant meeting the required contact hours (subject to verification). Promotion and recruitment is underway for spring cohorts with approximately 130 EOIs received to date. Scheduled to commence mid-January 2021.

In certain areas, such as North clusters have merged on an area based leadership course being delivered, due to low uptake. It is anticipated that South and West may deliver in a similar fashion again due to low EOI uptake in certain Clusters.

Members are requested to consider inviting NICVA, the delivery partner for the TLP training, to present an update on the project to Shared City Partnership at the February meeting.

A request from the BPR Project Manager to pool the £4,000 resource allocation for cluster community projects in cases whereby the cluster areas have merged was considered by the Programme Board. By way of example during Year 2 7 cluster areas across North Belfast merged into one larger Area based cluster to complete the Transformative Leadership Programme (TLP) training.

The Programme Board agreed in principle with the request to pool resources and agreed to delegate authority to the Good Relations Manager and the PEACE IV Programme Manager to consider the Cluster Resource Allocation requests on a case by case basis. Procurement regulations will be taken into account and there is no budgetary impact. Members are requested to note and agree the approach as outlined.

Approval for support from NSM/NIMS for Area Teams to assist in the delivery and progression of project development workshops

and ideas for the £4,000 Resource Allocation to the cluster is under consideration and discussion are ongoing.

The delivery of collaborative project workshops (led by BCC) is progressing in the following Cluster areas: Lower Oldpark/Manor Street; Falls/Shankill; Suffolk/Lenadoon; Crumlin Rd/Ardoyne/Glenbryn/ North Belfast area Cluster. Continued efforts to re-energise participation in Village/Westlink; Lower Ormeau/Market. The Inner East/Short Strand's project, a Kids Zone/Urban garden at the interface has been implemented.

Due to current government restrictions, project activity including the organisation of local community engagement events, citywide networking events and a cross border/UK study visit is currently on hold.

3.5 BPR4 – Belfast and the World (BATW)

Corrymeela continue to work with two live cohorts- Ligoniel (Year 2-to make up shortfall) and Ballynafeigh. In order to complete programmes and ensure contact hours have been met, the delivery agent had arranged for residentials to take place. However, due to government restrictions they have been unable to take place, despite four attempts.

Due to limited online access for Ligoniel participants, the delivery agent propose to fully complete this cohort in January 2021 either via small group work sessions or a residential if permissible. The Partnership is requested to consider approving the completion of Ligoniel and Ballynafeigh cohorts in January 2021, subject to COVID restrictions.

An open call for participants is underway to form final cohort and reach year 3 target numbers. Despite numerous efforts participant numbers remain low. Scheduled to commence late January 2021.

The former project coordinator has taken up a new role within the organisation but will continue to deliver project until new arrangements have been explored and approved.

3.6 BPR5 – Supporting Connected Communities - LINCS Projects

The delivery agent continues limited project delivery during ever changing restrictions. Currently a schedule of events/workshops for 2021 is being planned and continues to engage with participants across 4 NPFS, with Christmas events held.

The Board should note that core participant numbers have been affected due to COVID-19.

3.7 BPR5 – Traveller element of Supporting Connected Communities

Managed by BCC, a second public recruitment exercise is progressing, with applications received and shortlisting on

23 December 20. Interviews are scheduled for the 11 January and it is anticipated the successful applicant will commence mid February 2021.

3.8 BPR5 – Roma elements of Supporting Connected Communities

Project initiation and mobilisation is progressing. The delivery partner has commenced a recruitment exercise for dedicated project staff and discussions with key delivery partners are underway.

3.9 Financial and Resource Implications

All BPR project delivery partners undertaking delivery modification exercise which will determine the level and impact of COVID 19 crisis.

PEACE IV costs are recoverable from SEUPB, as the funding body, subject to eligibility of expenditure. Claim for BPR Period 24 expenditure was submitted to SEUPB on 1 December valued at £90,954.66

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The draft plan has been equality screened and discussed at the Equality Consultative Forum on 13 May 2015.”

As with the previous Programmes, the Programme Manager advised the Partnership that the different elements of the delivery of the various themes had been greatly impacted by the latest lockdown measures and as a result some of the timescales for delivery had already been impacted since the report had been circulated.

Following consideration of the impact that the pandemic was having on the proposed delivery timescales, the Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee:

- BPR3 – Transformational Leadership Project – That it agrees, in principle, to pool the £4,000 resource allocation for community projects in the event where Clusters had merged and to delegate authority to the Good Relations Manager and the PEACE IV Programme Manager to consider the Resource Allocation requests on a case by case basis;
- that representatives from NICVA be invited to present an update to the Shared City Partnership at its March meeting; and
- BPR4 – Belfast and the World – that the Ligoniel and Ballynaveigh cohorts complete in March 2021, subject to the ongoing COVID restrictions.

Notice of Motion - Racism Free Zone

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 At the Council meeting on 1st October 2020, the following motion was proposed by Councillor Canavan and seconded by Councillor Garrett:**

‘That this Council recognises that racism is a scourge across this society. This Council further recognises the positive contribution made: to society by those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds; deplores the discrimination Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities face regularly; condemns racism in all its forms; and calls on this Council to work together with the sector; local BAME representative groups; schools and colleges; private businesses; and public enterprises to ensure that this Council area becomes a racism free zone.’

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred without debate to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. On 23rd October, the Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report on the issues raised therein be considered, in the first instance, by the Shared City Partnership.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Partnership is asked to consider the Notice of Motion on a Racism Free Zone which was proposed by Councillor Canavan and seconded by Councillor Garrett at the Council meeting on 1st October 2020 and to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that the Council develops an action plan to frame delivery around the proposed actions set out in this report.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

Background

- 3.1 Promoting Good Relations is a key feature of the Council’s work and is also a duty for all public authorities in our society. The Good Relations mandate within Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act states:
- 3.2 ***‘Without prejudice to its obligations under subsection (1), a public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group’***

Therefore, tackling sectarianism and racism is a duty placed upon all public authorities.

- 3.3 In 2019, the Council launched its new and revised Good Relations strategy. This strategy sets out a vision of a Shared City – a city reimaged, connected and resurgent; delivering inclusive growth that leaves no-one behind. The strategy acknowledges that promoting and achieving Good Relations is ‘everyone’s business’ and contains 5 outcomes which seek to build Good Relations: through civic leadership/governance; shared and connected

spaces; shared services; effective partnerships and through an intercultural city.

- 3.4 The Council's approach to promoting good relations and tackling issues such as racism flows from this strategy, which was signed by all of the Party Group Leaders. It is centred on an approach that contains two key elements:
1. Seeking to maximise all council programmes, policies, funding schemes and facilities to better promote good relations between people from different political, religious and racial groups and;
 2. Targeted work that is grounded in acknowledgement, engagement and relationship building. Key to this is promoting participation and inclusion through specific activities which also addresses inequalities.
- 3.5 Over the past number of years, the Council has been committed to promoting the integration and inclusion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities and has developed strong links with these communities. This report highlights some of this engagement as well as outlining actions that the Council can implement to address racism and promote the inclusion of all communities.
- 3.6 Furthermore, in response to an issue, previously raised at the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee by Councillor Nicholl about ensuring that Council policies and practices were informed by the BAME community, Council had agreed to explore the enhancement of its current arrangements with the purpose of promoting the equality and inclusion of BAME communities, their access to Council services and participation in civic life. It would also take into consideration the review of the Council's wider approach to championing diversity. While a separate report will be brought to Council in relation to these arrangements and structures, the proposed actions detailed at the end of this report will address both requests by Members.
- 3.7 Wider Context in Northern Ireland

Hate Crime Statistics

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) publishes figures on the levels and trends in police recorded incidents and crimes with a hate motivation. As these figures only relate to those hate motivated incidents reported to the police, they only provide an indication of the true extent of hate motivation. Many members of the Council led Belfast Migrant Forum working with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities often highlight that there is a significant underreporting of hate crime among minority communities and that Police statistics are not a true reflection of the current reality.

- 3.8 According to Police Statistics, between 2005/06 and 2015/16 sectarian incidents accounted for the largest number of incidents recorded in any of the hate motivation strands. In 2016/17 the number of sectarian incidents was exceeded by the number of racist incidents for the first time.
- 3.9 Following a decline in levels of racist incidents and crimes between 2009/10 and 2011/12 they increased each year between 2011/12 and 2014/15 (the highest recorded in the series). With the exception of 2018/19 levels have fallen in each of the years since then.

In 12 months from 1st October 2019 to 30th September 2020:

There were 194 fewer racist incidents and 112 fewer racist crimes recorded when compared with the previous 12 months.

There were 881 racist incidents recorded by the police in Northern Ireland, 194 fewer than for the previous 12 months.

The number of racist crimes recorded by the police was 583, a decrease of 112 on the previous 12 months.

There were 5 racist incidents and 3 racist crimes per 10,000 population, compared with 6 racist incidents and 4 racist crimes per 10,000 population during the previous 12 months

Racist crimes represented 0.6% of all police recorded crime

- 3.11 In the twelve months to 30 September 2020 there were 881 incidents recorded by the police where there was a racist motivation. Of these, there were 368 incidents, which did not involve a crime (i.e. incidents where the circumstances did not amount to an offence being committed). The remaining 513 incidents involved one or more crimes (amounting to 583 racist crimes in total). Around two in five incidents recorded in this period did not result in a crime being recorded.
- 3.12 When comparing the current and previous 12 months, Belfast City policing district, which accounts for around two out of five racist incidents and crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, showed a decrease in both incidents (61) and crimes (14).

(The above data has been taken from the PSNI annual bulletin 'Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2019/20', published on 26 Nov 2020, with figures up to the end of Sept 2020.)

3.13 **Review of Hate Crime Legislation**

Members will be aware that the Department of Justice has commissioned an independent review of hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland.

3.14 The review of the outcome is expected imminently and will examine the following issues:

- a workable and agreed definition of a hate crime;
- whether the current enhanced sentence approach is appropriate for Northern Ireland;
- whether new categories of hate crime should be created for characteristics such as gender and any other characteristics (which are not currently covered);
- the implementation and operation of the current legislative framework for incitement offences, in particular Part III of the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 and make recommendations for improvements;
- how any identified gaps, anomalies and inconsistencies can be addressed in any new legislative framework ensuring this interacts effectively with other legislation guaranteeing human rights and equality; and
- whether there is potential for alternative or mutually supportive restorative approaches for dealing with hate motivated offending.

3.15 Racial Equality Strategy

The Racial Equality Strategy 2015 - 2025 establishes 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 it is the main strategy for promoting good race relations and social cohesion.

3.16 During Private Members' Business on 14 September the NI Assembly debated the Racial Equality Strategy and resolved that:

‘this Assembly recognises that the racial equality strategy 2015-2025 was not fully implemented and is now significantly outdated; acknowledges the commitment contained in New Decade, New Approach to the publication of a new and updated racial equality strategy within 100 days of the restoration of the Assembly; further recognises the positive contribution made to society by those from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds; deplores the discrimination black, Asian and minority ethnic communities face regularly; condemns racism in all its forms; commits to act urgently on the forthcoming report on the review of hate crime legislation; calls for the promotion of an anti-racism ethos in our schools; and further calls on the First Minister and deputy First Minister to set up a working group with members of the black, Asian and minority ethnic communities to co-design and co-produce an updated racial equality strategy and to publish a timetable for the implementation of the strategy.’

3.17 Council Programmes and initiatives to promote the integration and inclusion of new communities and address racism.

As highlighted in 3.3 and 3.4 above, Members will be aware of the Council's Good Relations Strategy.

3.18 The participation and inclusion of new communities is central to this new strategy and indeed, it has been a strong focus of the Council's Good Relations programme and work since 2007. To support this work, the Council established a Migrant Forum that provides a regular consultative forum for debate and discussion on issues related to new communities and a means for connecting and consulting with these communities.

3.19 More than ten years on, the Good Relations Unit continues to run this forum. The forum has an active membership of over 40 organisations; partners include the Health Trust, NIHE, Law Centre, Migrant Help, Red Cross, TEO as well as numerous organisations from the minority ethnic, community and voluntary sectors. The Forum has provided a means of disseminating information to new communities and connecting them to the Council as well as promoting partnership work. It is worth noting that the Migrant Forum has a nominated representative who sits on the Shared City Partnership.

3.20 Over the past number of years, the Council has developed and supported many projects aimed at promoting the integration and inclusion of new communities and addressing racism with a number of partners. This work has been undertaken through our Good Relations Action Plan and through the current PEACE IV Programme.

Details of a number of examples of this work which had been included with the agenda for Members' information.

3.21 Proposed Council Actions to Address the Issues Raised in the Notice of Motion

The Good Relations Strategy outlines that promoting Good Relations is everyone's business. Officers have suggested key areas below, where the Council is best placed to influence change and address racism and inequality, both in its role as a major employer and as the democratically accountable, civic leadership body for the city – two pillars of our Good Relations Strategy.

3.22

1. A representative workforce

The Council will lead by example as an employer. Our goal is to ensure that our workforce properly reflects the communities we serve. While it will take time for us to attain this, we will improve pathways for underrepresented groups in Belfast City Council by delivering a programme of employability outreach to BAME

communities and ensuring that job and other opportunities are communicated to BAME communities through the migrant forum and other city networks.

2.23

2. Tackling unconscious bias

We will ensure every member of staff is required to participate in mandatory equalities training that challenges unconscious bias.

3.24

3. Highlighting and tackling racial inequalities

Covid 19 has further exposed the inequalities affecting BAME communities. We will commission an audit of racial inequalities and how these affect the lives of BAME communities living in Belfast. Subsequently, we will decide the immediate and longer-term measures together which we need to take to tackle inequality in all its forms.

3.25

4. Encouraging change in others

We will use procurement practices to encourage our delivery partners / contractors to have in place evidence demonstrating their organisation's commitment to equality and diversity in the workplace.

3.26

5. Council staff capability

We will improve accessibility to Council services by ensuring that the new Customer Hub is inclusive by design and that staff are skilled in facilitating a response to all communities.

3.27

6. Consulting those unheard voices in all our work

Our engagement and consultation framework seeks to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to get involved. This means looking at how our diverse communities can be supported to respond to consultations and that those who struggle to get their voices heard are part of policy planning can participate and be more involved.

3.28

7. Engagement leads

We will develop engagement leads in each department, developing our capacity to engage in more meaningful and inclusive ways, including with BAME communities so we have the in-house expertise and leadership to tackle inequality and promote good relations across the city.

3.29

8. Practically supporting participation and inclusion

Continue to open up access to economic opportunities and promote and encourage uptake from BAME communities by removing barriers that inhibit access such as addressing childcare solutions, having interpreters at engagement roadshows, producing key information about opportunities in minority languages, providing counselling for people experiencing trauma or ill health.'

3.30

9. Leading by example

We will engage with other public sector partners and anchor organisations in the city to join us in drawing up an Inclusive Growth Charter for the city.

3.31

We will deepen our partnership work with the voluntary, community and faith sectors that served the City so well during the Covid 19 crisis and ensure that funding and development opportunities are open to these sectors. We will work through the Migrant Forum to ensure that organisations representing diverse communities can be properly heard and are aware of funding and other opportunities.

3.32

10. Building future leaders

We will explore the development of a programme to grow young Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic leaders in the City.

3.3

11. Promoting an intercultural city

We will celebrate and share our city stories of diversity and work to ensure that the stories of all our communities are shared, explored and commemorated appropriately. We will use the DiverseCity programme to continue to provide opportunities to promote diversity and community conversations around inclusion. We will work with our diverse communities to encourage the shared celebration of festivals in the city.

3.34

12. Build Capacity

We will deliver training to encourage by-stander interruption of hate crime and to address anti-migrant, anti-muslim, anti-refugee and anti-asylum narratives.

3.35

13. Education

We will work with 4 Shared School Partnerships through the Good Relations Plan to develop the capacity, skills and strategies of young people and school staff to understand diversity, the impact of sectarianism and racism and to challenge racist and sectarian behaviour.

3.36

14. Post Brexit commitments

We will promote a narrative around the city as welcoming by sending out a message of support to EU nationals that the Council wants them to stay in this city and to encourage them to apply to the EU settlement scheme. We will support the settlement and inclusion of our refugee community by reviewing and reprinting the Refugee Transition Guide, to ensure that refugees living in Belfast are aware of their rights and entitlements and to support their integration into the city.

3.37

15. Building relationships in the community

We will encourage opportunities for the development of good relations projects across the city that promote contact and good relations between new and host communities through our Good Relations Fund and Peace IV programme.

3.38

To ensure these proposals are progressed, we will organise a staff workforce team to develop an action plan which will be brought back to the Partnership in due course. The team will the action plan as well as researching further best practice. It is anticipated that the external engagement will also be grounded within the area teams' programme of work.

Financial & Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications in terms of staff time or additional costs associated with this request at present. Further resource implications will be brought to the partnership in due course.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

The proposed actions within this report will complement our good relations commitments and support the integration and inclusion of all communities in Belfast.”

Appendix 1

Examples of Council projects supporting the integration and inclusion of BAME communities.

Introduction

To support the integration and inclusion of new communities, Council has delivered various projects which have been specifically commissioned and developed as well as projects that have funded through our Good Relations Grant-Aid and Peace IV Local Action Plan.

1. Grant Aid Programme Support

The Good Relations Unit has a Good Relations Grant Aid Programme that provides an opportunity twice a year for organisations across Belfast to submit project proposals focused on promoting good relations between communities.

The fund provides grant-aid up to £10,000 for short-term projects that aim to promote good relations within the City. Significant work has been undertaken through the Migrant Forum to ensure that organisations supporting new communities are competent in accessing the fund as well as encouraging host communities to utilise this fund to develop projects aimed at promoting relations between new and host communities.

This fund has been a popular initiative that has enabled many interventions and innovative projects aimed at connecting communities and supporting the integration and inclusion of all.

Examples of projects that have been supported include:

- Orientation opportunities for new communities

This included orientation sessions for new communities aimed at providing them with advice and information on issues that help support their long-term settlement in Belfast and in their local neighbourhoods. It included a six month project to support the localised integration and orientation of people from Syria living in West Belfast, delivered by Falls Women's Centre in partnership with the Shankill Women's Centre.

- Supporting contact and familiarity between Communities

The Good Relations Fund has also been used to support numerous projects that have included story telling between new and host communities, drama and community arts based programmes that focus on developing understanding between communities and exploring aspects of identity, migration and re-settlement in a new country.

2. Supporting integration and inclusion through the celebration of festivals and cultural events

We have worked with many of the minority ethnic communities across the City, supporting them to celebrate their festivals and to open them to other communities as an opportunity to build relations. The City Hall and Botanic Gardens, for example, have been used to host Eid, Chinese New Year and other cultural celebrations. We also work to ensure that festivals and cultural events organised by the Council are also inclusive of all communities living in Belfast, such as St. Patrick's Day.

3. Supporting the integration and inclusion of Asylum Seekers and Refugees

The Good Relations Unit has supported several initiatives to promote the integration and inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers including advice and information services as well as cultural events. We support the annual Refugee Awareness Week, through hosting the launch and organising awareness raising events and providing funding to enable others to mark the week. We have organised numerous Refugee and Asylum awareness training events across Belfast, enabling communities and staff to understand asylum issues and the impact of our services on these communities.

A number of years ago we developed a Refugee Transition Guide that was recognised by the Department for Work and Pensions as a model of good practice. The guide was developed on the back of an information gap relating to the provision of advice for people who claim asylum and are granted permission to stay. The guide contains information on finding a home, looking for work, applying for benefits, education, healthcare, family reunion, long term immigration status and more. It is available in several languages. We are currently looking at updating and re-printing this guide.

4. Peace IV programme and longer term interventions

Currently we are funding a three year project, through the Peace IV Local Action Plan which is funded by SEUPB. The LINCS Programme is being delivered by Alternatives, NIACRO and Community Restorative Justice Ireland. This programme aims to build contact and familiarity between new and host communities in 4 areas within Belfast. It aims to use normal everyday encounters to promote understanding between new and host communities and to develop meaningful relationships. Covid 19 has presented challenges to the delivery of this project with its high focus on community contact and community familiarisation, however the project has adapted to meet the challenges and to encourage an online level of engagement.

5. Supporting improved relations in East Belfast

For the past four years the Good Relations Unit has funded East Belfast Community Development Association to provide a Race Relations Co-ordinator in East Belfast. This post has been critical in developing improved relations

between new and host communities in East Belfast and developing networks among community, voluntary and statutory partners and linking new communities in local services.

6. Roma Information Hub

Through our Peace IV plan we are in the process of contracting a delivery agent to develop and deliver a two year Roma information Hub.

The purpose of this project is to provide a support hub as a point of contact for the Roma Community to encourage and enhance access to statutory and voluntary support services and promote the integration and inclusion of this community.

7. Building capacity within schools

We have also been partnering with the Education Authority to create 4 Shared School Partnerships. As well as promoting shared education between the partnering schools the schools will also partner in projects to develop the capacity, skills and strategies of young people and school staff to understand diversity, the impact of sectarianism and racism and to challenge racist and sectarian behaviour.

8. DiverseCity Programme

For the past four years, we have been running a very popular Diversecity programme that provides monthly diversity initiatives for the public. The purpose of these initiatives is to encourage an increased awareness of issues around diversity and to provide participants with an opportunity to meet and engage with representatives from other faith, ethnic and political backgrounds. It also gives participants the opportunity to visit places and spaces that they would not traditionally go to. Initiatives within this programme include facilitated workshops at the Belfast Islamic Centre, the Jewish Synagogue, the Hindu Temple, the Chinese Resource Centre as well as training on Refugee Issues, Arabic Awareness, Roma and Traveller issues, opportunities to listen to the stories of Refugee and Asylum Seekers. The programme has been very well received and is always oversubscribed.

Covid19 has resulted in some aspects of the programme being suspended and attempts are being made to move it to a more virtual platform.

9. Supporting integration through economic inclusion

The Good Relations Unit with the Council's Economic Development have been engaging with new communities to ensure that access to economic development programmes and academies are also accessible to new communities. To support this, Economic Development staff have become permanent members and a constant agenda item at the Council's Migrant Forum meetings. This has been critical in enhancing communication between

this department and new communities and has resulted in a greater uptake of opportunities from people from new communities. It has also helped inform those developing economic initiatives of the barriers facing inhibit new communities from accessing economic initiatives.

Targeted engagement with new communities resulted in a 13% uptake of academy opportunities from residents that were born outside the UK and Ireland.

The Economic Development Unit linked with the Migrant Forum to ensure that individual barriers to accessing employment academies were removed by:

- Having interpreters at engagement roadshows
- Producing key information in the top five languages
- Providing childcare while attending academies
- Developing flexible hours around delivery
- Working through the Migrant Forum and other partnerships to ensure that opportunities were communicated to new communities.

10. Programmes aimed at preventing hate

We are currently working with partners across the City on initiatives to prevent hate crime, through the City-Wide Hate Crime Steering Group which is convened by the Safer City Coordinator. Recently we commissioned a report on the experiences of people from the Muslim faith within Belfast. Following on from this report, we commissioned Faith Matters and Tell Mama to deliver a four day training looking specifically at anti-muslim hate and how to address and prevent. We have also partnered with other relevant agencies to develop a specific structure to monitor tensions experienced by people within the Muslim community.

11. Targeted Support for communities through the Covid19 Pandemic

At the early stages of the pandemic, members will be aware that Council developed several targeted interventions to support vulnerable communities during the pandemic and to ensure that messaging and support services were accessible to these communities. Although minority communities were encouraged to access the wider Council Covid19 Help-line, two specific interventions were also developed for minority communities in recognition of language barriers and communities that might be more isolated and digitally and socially excluded. These included the Roma Helpline and the support provided to run a bilingual help-line for refugees and asylum seekers, details of which are outlined below:

- Covid19 Response – Recovery support for Refugee and Asylum Community (CRRAC)

The Council continues to support the CRRAC initiative by providing funding to deliver a bi-lingual help-line to check-in on vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers and link them to support services that are available in their local neighbourhoods or in Belfast. The purpose of the service is to attempt to

reduce the sense of isolation and exclusion that many within the refugee and asylum community encounter in the absence of having family ties and wider social networks.

- Roma Helpline

At the early stages of the pandemic the Roma community in Belfast were identified as quite a vulnerable group who have very specific language and cultural needs that makes it difficult for them to access accurate public health advice and information about keeping themselves safe.

The Council recognised that there was a need to support an advice and advocacy resource to disseminate trusted messages and support to this community.

Recognising this vulnerability the Council funded Forward South Partnership to provide a culturally appropriate telephone helpline to support the Romanian speaking Roma community across Belfast.

This bilingual service has provided a trusted and accessible service and enabled many within the Roma community to obtain support for food, housing and benefit advice at a critical time. It has managed to provide significant engagement with the Roma Community and has established a referral system to enable this community to access wider support and advice services.

Evidence and analysis of those that have used the helpline during the covid lock-down illustrates that the funding of this service has prevented many vulnerable people from becoming destitute through signposting people into foodbanks, housing, health and advice services, thus improving connectivity and good relations with this community.

The service will continue to operate until the end of December with continued funding from the Good Relations Unit, The Belfast Health Trust and the Public Health Agency.

12. Supporting the integration and inclusion of new communities by linking and learning from other cities.

Members will be aware that in February the Council was accepted as a member to the Oxford University Inclusive Cities project. This project is a knowledge exchange initiative supporting UK cities and their local partners to achieve a change in their approach towards the inclusion of newcomers in the city.

The project will allow for peer learning and support between the participating cities and from the Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, several learning opportunities are being planned for the coming months which will help inform improved work in supporting new communities.

Several Members commended the Officers who had been involved in the preparation of the report. They noted that every part of the City needed to embrace the various elements contained within the report to ensure that Belfast as a City was inclusive and welcoming to all

and most importantly became a Racism Free Zone and they looked forward to the development of the action plan which would help progress moving the agenda forward.

Members also commented on a number of related issues and it was agreed that these would be followed up by officers:

- The Executive Office be asked its view with regard to issues raised in relation to the Minority Ethnic Development Fund;
- to explore how the Council could use its influence to promote safe working conditions within meat factories in Northern Ireland which employed a significant number of people from the BAME community; and
- given that sectarianism continued to be such a significant issue in the City, that the Partnership should give further consideration as to how it could be addressed to help move towards a inclusive and welcoming City. This would also include work around Interfaces.

The Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the Council develops an action plan to frame delivery around the proposed actions set out in this report. In addition, it was agreed that officers would follow up with the Executive Office regarding the issues raised in relation to the Minority Ethnic Development Fund and an update report on sectarianism in the City would be submitted to a future meeting to enable further discussion and consideration.

Public Attitudes to Peace Wall Survey

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that the Department of Justice (DoJ) had recently commissioned the Ipsos MORI to conduct the third wave of the attitudes survey available [here](#)

The specific aims of the research were to understand current attitudes towards the peace walls among residents living in close proximity to a peace wall and to measure the extent to which public attitudes had shifted, if at all, since the survey was last conducted in 2015 and 2012.

She highlighted the following points contained within the document which it was felt might have a bearing on work within the City:

- Community Safety – detail on confidence in policing at interfaces and increased community concerns regarding potential rise in ASB/interface violence;
- ‘Cultural protectionism’ within some communities living at interfaces;
- Overall drop in residents’ support for interface removal;
- General support for more visible ‘political representation’ in the barrier removal process;
- Evidences reliance on local community representatives to share information (pertinent to barrier removal) with residents;
- Policy context of ‘removal of peace walls’ – no reference to Belfast Agenda within the document but general lack of awareness of Executive/other policies by those surveyed;
- Overall support for a gradual approach to removal of walls; and
- Generally higher levels of ‘trust’ in Councils as opposed to other politicians – but evidence of lack of clarity on Council position regarding peace walls.

The Good Relation Manager advised that, once published, hard copies of the report would be available.

The Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report and that representatives from the International Fund for Ireland Peace walls project had been invited to a future meeting of the Partnership to update on its work.

Verbal Update from the Good Relations Manager

The Good Relations Manager advised that, as discussed throughout the meeting, the tightening of the Covid Restriction was likely to have an impact on the delivery on many of the Good Relations work streams. In particular, the delivery of the Good Relation Action Plan was likely to be affected and there was likely to be an underspend.

She reported that the Chief Executive would be writing to The Executive Office to seek clarification and the Partnership would be updated accordingly.

Noted.

Chairperson