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Committee and Members' Services Section
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Belfast BT2 8GD



22nd February, 2008

ADJOURNED MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Councillor

The above-named Committee will meet in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, Adelaide Exchange on Tuesday, 26th February, 2008 at 12.00 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

PETER McNANEY

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters
 - (a) Apologies
2. Finance
 - (a) Request for Funding - Belfast Common Purpose (Pages 1 - 4)
 - (b) Brighter Belfast Initiative - Proposed Projects 2008/2009 (Pages 5 - 10)
3. Human Resources
 - (a) Standing Order 55 - Employment of Relatives (Pages 11 - 12)
 - (b) Attendance Policy (Pages 13 - 32)
 - (c) Pre-employment Training Programme for the Unemployed (Pages 33 - 36)
4. Asset Management
 - (a) City Hall Major Works - Project Update (Pages 37 - 41)

- (b) Duncrue Complex: Fuel Storage Facilities and Associated Infrastructure Works (Pages 42 - 43)
 - (c) Sports Surfaces - Grosvenor Recreation Centre and Ballysillan Leisure Centre (Pages 44 - 45)
 - (d) Duncrue Industrial Estate: In-Ground Gas Extraction System (Pages 46 - 47)
5. Good Relations and Equality
- (a) Minutes of Good Relations Steering Panel (Pages 48 - 55)
 - (b) Peace III Plan (Pages 56 - 157)
6. Cross-Cutting Issues
- (a) Review of Priorities for Youth (Pages 158 - 159)
 - (b) Consultation "Every School a Good School: A Policy for School Improvement" (Pages 160 - 161)
 - (c) Northern Ireland Sex Offender Strategic Committee - Request to make a Presentation (Pages 162 - 163)



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Adjourned Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Request for Funding - Common Purpose Belfast (Bursaries)
Date:	26 February 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	David Cartmill, Acting Head of Corporate Services Directorate

Relevant Background Information

This paper presents for consideration a request for financial assistance for a sum of £8,450 to Common Purpose Belfast in connection with its 2008 Navigator programme.

Common Purpose programmes are designed to draw together leaders, emerging leaders and senior managers from all walks of life who could potentially play a role in shaping the future of Belfast. The Council has supported Common Purpose Belfast since its inception in 1996 through hosting elements of the programme; funding participation every year by one member and one officer and providing two bursaries annually for local community/voluntary sector applicants.

This request concerns bursaries for course applicants who are unable to meet participation costs.

Key Issues

The Council has traditionally funded two bursaries for voluntary/community sector participants in Common Purpose programmes. Last year, the Council provided £8,400 by way of bursary support. Some members did however express concern at the increasing cost of support to Common Purpose. When agreeing to fund bursaries for 2007 the Committee requested that an assessment of the benefits to Council from assisting Common Purpose be completed before future support was considered.

As directed, an assessment of Common Purpose, based on a survey of members and staff who have participated in programmes has been completed. Discussion has also been held with Common Purpose staff who have furnished results of their own survey of graduates which was conducted in 2007.

The results of both exercises provide positive endorsement of its benefits to the Council.

Responses to Key questions in the BCC survey indicated:
(Based on 19 Returns from 28 participants who remain elected to or employed by BCC).

(1) How useful was the Common Purpose Course in relation to your job?

Not at all Useful 0%	Not Useful 11%	Not Sure 5%	Useful 47%	Extremely Useful 37%
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(2) Do you consider time spent on the course as a good investment by BCC?

Strongly Disagree 0%	Disagree 5%	Not Sure 5%	Agree 47%	Strongly Agree 42%
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(3) How would you rate Common Purpose with other development courses attended?

Worse than most others 5%	Similar to most others 21%	Better than most others 74%
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Key findings from the Common Purpose research amongst graduates throughout the UK indicated:

- 80% of graduates said that they have improved their overall effectiveness as a leader
- 91% have improved their ability to see the wider context and their role in it
- 85% have increased their willingness to engage with a diverse group/different approaches
- 80% now look for innovation in different places
- 78% have improved their ability to think more strategically.

Discussion

The programme evaluation results confirm that Common Purpose courses are generally highly regarded by those who have participated and would be deemed beneficial to the Council. Given the anticipated leadership/co-ordination role expected by Local Authorities post RPA it would seem desirable that the Council remains supportive of a programme which seeks to connect decision makers in the city.

Against this, the Committee will be aware of pressures on Council resources and the need to demonstrate efficiency. The Council has already committed, separately, to fund Members/staff on Common Purpose 2008 programmes at a cost of £12,675.

In light of the above it is suggested the Committee consider the following options regarding support for Common Purpose bursaries:

- (i) Accede to the request for **£8,450***.
(Which would fund 2 full-fee places and one part-fee place on the Navigator programme (£3,500 per person) which targets emerging and high potential leaders)
- (ii) Agree to continue to fund 2 Bursaries - for the Navigator programme at a cost to the Council of **£7,000**.
- (iii) Agree to reduce funding level to one bursary only for the Navigator programme at a cost to the Council of **£3,500**.

Resource Implications

Financial

Resources are available to cover the maximum funding option of £8,450

Human Resources

None

Asset and Other Implications

None

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to continue to support bursaries to the Belfast Common Purpose programme via one of the 3 options listed above and passes the undernoted resolution.

That the expenditure in respect of the aforementioned be approved under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, it being the opinion of the Committee that the expenditure would be in the interest of, and would bring direct benefit to the District, and inhabitants of the District, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefits so accruing would be commensurate with the payments to be made.

* This represents the amount for participation by 2 people in the Senior/Experienced leaders programme normally funded by BCC.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Adjourned Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Brighter Belfast Initiative 2008/2009
Date:	26 th February, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Mr Marcus Campbell (extension 3680)

Relevant Background Information

The Council, at its meeting on 4th February, approved the Revenue Estimates 2008/2009.

This includes an amount of £1.5 million in the Waste Disposal Fund, which is to be allocated next year to finance the Brighter Belfast Initiative, Disability Access and the closure of Dargan Road.

The Health and Environmental Service Committee, at its meeting on 9th January, agreed the projects which would be included in the Belfast Initiative for 2008/2009 and recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the undernoted levels of funding from within the Waste Disposal Fund (a copy of the minute in this regard is appended to the report):

Making Belfast Bloom	£ 50,000
The Community in the City: A Public Art Project	£ 50,000
Evening Economy	£ 90,000
Greencare III	£150,000
Pride of Place Competition	<u>£ 7,000</u>
TOTAL:	£347,000

Key Issues

The Brighter Belfast Initiative is the Council's campaign to create a cleaner and more attractive City. This has been a key objective in the Corporate Plan since 2003.

The Waste Disposal Fund is managed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and its approval is required for the allocation of the budget.

Resource Implications

Human Resources

There are no Human Resources implications associated with this report.

Financial

Funding of up to £347,000 will be required to undertake the Brighter Belfast Initiatives 2008/2009.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to approve the associated levels of funding for the Brighter Belfast Initiative 2008/2009

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Extract from minutes of meeting of Health and Environmental Services Committee of 9th January, 2008

Extract from minutes of –

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

9th JANUARY, 2008

**“Brighter Belfast Initiative –
Proposed Projects 2008/2009**

The Committee was reminded that the Brighter Belfast Initiative was the Council's campaign to create a cleaner and more attractive City and that it had since 2003 been included as a key priority within the Corporate Plan. The Director of Health and Environmental Services reviewed the arrangements for the funding of the Initiative and indicated that, in light of information which had been received from the Director of Corporate Services, it would appear likely that approximately £350,000 could be made available to undertake projects in 2008/2009. He explained that the Inter-departmental Officers' Steering Group had been requested to identify projects which might benefit from funding through the Brighter Belfast Initiative and to indicate both the ideal level of funding required for each scheme, together with the minimum amount necessary to ensure its viability. He reported that the Brighter Belfast All-Party Working Group, at its meeting on 11th December, had reviewed five projects and had recommended that they be approved by the Health and Environmental Services Committee, with funding being made available at the minimum estimated levels required for implementation. Accordingly, the Committee considered the undernoted schemes:

- **Making Belfast Bloom**

The Members were advised that the purpose of the Belfast in Bloom Project was to enhance the attractiveness of the City Centre and main arterial routes through the provision of various types of floral displays. During 2007, in excess of 1,000 displays had been located throughout the City and this had led to Belfast being invited to participate in 2008 for the first time in the prestigious Britain in Bloom competition. The minimum level of funding which would be required to undertake the scheme would be £50,000 and this would be used to deliver an extensive marketing programme in order to promote both the Belfast in Bloom campaign and the City's participation in the Britain in Bloom competition. It would be used also to provide additional displays in key locations throughout the City and to encourage a greater participation from both the commercial and community sectors.

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- **The Community in the City: A Public Art Project**

This project sought to consolidate the role of public art in the wider regeneration of the City through the creation of pieces of art to be sited within the City Centre. The scheme, which would be facilitated by a newly-appointed Artist in Residence, would enable communities to enhance their skills and to engage in the development of the City in a direct, inclusive and sustainable way. The project would reach a wide-ranging audience and would have a significant impact in terms of skills development and visibility of public art. It was pointed out that the minimum level of funding required to complete the project would be £50,000 and that the Development Department's Culture and Arts Unit intended to raise up to £25,000 in sponsorship from private and business sector organisations.

- **Evening Economy**

The Committee was advised that the purpose of the Evening Economy project was to enhance the attractiveness of the City Centre and to promote Belfast as a vibrant, dynamic European City by encouraging a higher number of visitors and associated spending after 5.00 p.m. It was pointed out that the Evening Economy project had significant economic, social, tourism and cultural benefits for the City and that research had indicated that £31 million was being spent annually as a result. The opening, in March, of the Victoria Square Development, together with plans to extend late night shopping hours, would provide an opportunity to continue to develop and enhance the evening economy initiative. There was a need also to develop projects with the City's infrastructure sector, including transport and parking, in order to promote access to the City in the evening time. Accordingly, a minimum amount of £90,000 had been requested from the Brighter Belfast Initiative in order to further the Evening Economy project.

- **Greencare III**

It was reported that the Greencare III programme, which was a collaborative partnership between the Council, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Groundwork Northern Ireland, sought to deliver environmental improvement projects in selected deprived communities throughout the City. Areas were prioritised according to need and participating communities were selected by

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the Greencare Committee on the basis of cultural make-up and broad geographical areas. The scheme increased social and community cohesion and improved the quality of life of people in disadvantaged areas through an inclusive and participative process of community environmental regeneration. £150,000 had been sought from the Brighter Belfast Initiative to fund the project in 2008/2009 and this funding would be utilised for programme costs and capital projects. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive would contribute also £75,000 of capital funding, as it had in 2007/2008.

- **Pride of Place Competition 2008**

The Committee was advised that the Pride of Place Competition, which was held throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, sought to recognise and celebrate the vital contributions made to society by community groups. The Competition provided groups with an opportunity to showcase initiatives which would have a long-lasting and positive impact upon their communities. It was reported that the awards ceremony was now a high-profile and prestigious event and that community groups gained encouragement by being selected for and in attending the event. Accordingly, the Brighter Belfast All-Party Working Group had recommended that funding of £7,000 be made available for participation in the Pride of Place Competition on the basis that travel time to and from the awards ceremony and attendance at other events thereat justified a two-night stay. Otherwise, the Group had agreed that funding in the sum of £6,000 be made available.

After discussion, the Committee agreed the foregoing projects and recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the associated levels of funding from within the Waste Disposal Fund.”



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Adjourned Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Standing Order 55 – Employment of Relatives
Date:	26 February 2008
Reporting Officer:	Jill Minne, Principal HR Advisor (Acting Head of Human Resources), ext 3220
Contact Officer:	Jill Minne, Principal HR Advisor (Acting Head of Human Resources), ext 3220

Relevant Background Information

To inform the Committee of delegated authority exercised by the Director of Corporate Services to the employment of individuals who are related to existing officers of the Council.

The Director of Corporate Services has authorised the appointment of the following individual/s who is/are related to existing officer/s of the Council in accordance with the authority delegated to him by the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee on 27 June, 2005. The Committee is asked to note the appointment/s authorised by the Director under Standing Order 55.

NAME OF NEW EMPLOYEE	POST APPOINTED TO	RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING OFFICER	NAME OF EXISTING OFFICER	DEPARTMENT
Patrick Nolan	Park Ranger	Nephew	Paul Magee	Park & Leisure

Resource Implications

Financial

Provision for this/these post/s exist within the revenue budgets of the relevant departments.

Human Resources

There are no Human Resource considerations. All appointments have been made on the basis of merit in accordance with the Council's Recruitment Policies.

Asset and Other Implications

There are no other implications.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to note the appointment/s authorised by the Director of Corporate Services in accordance with Standing Order 55.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Adjourned Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Attendance Policy
Date:	26 February 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Jill Minne, Principal HR Advisor (Acting Head of HR) ext 3220

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend the new Attendance Policy for adoption by members of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee based on the outcome of consultations with the trade unions on the draft policy; and to advise Committee on the next steps with regard to its implementation.

Relevant Background Information

A draft Attendance Policy was developed following the engagement of legal consultants to review the council's existing policy for managing absence. We were advised by the legal consultants that the current policy is essentially no longer fit for purpose; it is too informal; and leaves too much to the discretion of managers, which is inconsistent with the policy having contractual effect. In March 2007 Personnel Sub-Committee agreed a new draft Attendance Policy for consultation with the council's trade unions. In September 2007 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed that consultation with the trade unions should be extended with a view to seeking agreement on the policy as trade union side had not been in a position to give the matter due consideration because of the substantial Single Status agenda at that time.

Consultations since then have been intense, detailed, ongoing and at times considerably challenging.

Management side recognises that introducing a policy of this significance without trade union agreement may lead to increased employee relations problems. However, particularly in the light of the public concern arising from the recently published NI Audit Office report on absenteeism in NI councils, further delay in moving forward on this issue cannot be justified.

On 4th February 2008 therefore chief officers agreed that the consistent, robust implementation of a new BCC Attendance Policy was a key step to the council reducing absence to the kind of level which members, senior management and the public expect. Accordingly they directed the matter to be concluded and subsequently agreed the text of the new policy to be recommended to members to reflect the result of these consultations with the trade unions.

Key Issues

The proposed new Attendance Policy is attached at Appendix 1. In summary the main amendments are:

1. The policy has changed from 3 to 4 formal stages preceded by an informal meeting between staff and management where absence exceeds 5 days.¹
2. The definition of long term absence has been amended to make it clearer as follows: *“Any period of absence longer than four weeks would normally be regarded as 'long term' if the employee has an underlying condition which is likely to result in continuing or further absence”*.
3. In an effort to achieve an agreed policy, management side compromised on the triggers for action under the standards of attendance and moved to 6 occasions or 12 days at Stage One and 3 occasions or 12 days at Stages Two to Four (totalling 15 occasions or 48 days). **This compromise was put to the trade unions on the basis that they will agree to these triggers, otherwise the previous position of 12 occasions/44 days position stands.**
4. The following paragraph regarding monitoring and review has been added: *“The Employee Relations Unit of Human Resources will review the policy on an annual basis, in consultation with the trade unions. The implementation of the policy will be monitored at corporate, departmental, service, unit and individual level as outlined in the Framework for Reporting, Monitoring and Managing Absence”*.
5. The first draft by management side in relation to the Stage 3 meeting was *“If the required level of attendance is achieved during the review period following the Stage Three meeting, the employee will be put back to Stage Two (i.e. the Stage Three warning will no longer apply and the employee will have another opportunity to meet the standards of attendance specified in the Second Stage warning previously issued to him or her.”* The trade unions wanted to amend this by replacing the provision in italic with: ‘there will be no further action under the formal stages of this procedure.’ Management side believes that an employee who has reached Stage 3 (potentially 10 occasions/33 days absence) cannot be allowed to drop back completely from the formal stages and thus a compromise position of the employee reverting to stage one in the above circumstances has been agreed.

The trade union side has not finally agreed the Attendance Policy in full, however it has stated :

“Whilst the Trade Union Group does not agree in totality with the Final Management Draft Attendance Policy we believe it is the best that can be achieved through negotiation’. Each sovereign Trade Union is committed to convening emergency Branch meetings in order to validate the above statement and also to get a mandate to enter into a time bound process of consulting their members in a proactive and positive manner, informing them of all alternatives.”

The trade unions indicated that branch committees have accepted the Attendance Policy as the best that can be achieved through negotiation. They have stated they need time to consult with their members to ensure they are absolutely clear about the policy and its implications. The trade union side has indicated that it feels there will be a

¹ Where periods or days are referred to, the policy contextualises these as being “within a rolling 12 month period”, though management may, where appropriate, review attendance over a longer service period.

positive outcome to this consultation and has committed to completion of this consultation process by 31st March 2008. .

It is proposed that the Committee adopts the new Attendance Policy for the council for implementation. Should the outcome of the consultation by the trade unions result in a failure to agree the approved policy the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee will be advised of this at its April meeting with a recommendation regarding implementation.

Next steps

The trade unions have also undertaken to engage with Corporate HR and Management Side JCC to seek agreement on detailed guidance for the application of the policy, while the consultation with their members on the policy is ongoing. A draft of this ‘Attendance Booklet’ has been developed and forwarded to TU Side. If agreement on the policy is not achieved, agreement on the guidance is obviously going to be difficult. Members are asked to agree that consultation on the guidance booklet is time bound to three months from the approval of policy by Council.

Following approval by the council and trade unions’ members, Corporate HR will work with departments to help to implement new policy arrangements and address issues such as transitioning current employees with poor attendance records into the appropriate stage of the new policy.

Training for managers on the new policy will only be possible when the guidance is in place, but in most departments this training will only be on the new aspects of the policy as extensive training on the general principles of managing absences has already taken place.

It is estimated therefore that full introduction of the policy will take approximately 6 months from Council approval, provided central and departmental resources are available.

Resource Implications

Resource commitment from Corporate HR and departments will be intensive during the pre-implementation period. For Corporate HR (Employee Relations) and business support staff in the departments the ‘bedding-in’ period will be particularly resource intensive, as operational line management will need additional support to gain confidence in the application of the new policy and to ensure consistency of approach. Members however, are well aware that the consistent, robust implementation of a new BCC Attendance policy is key to the council reducing absence and its associated costs. Increasing management resources have been applied to this issue within HR and departments and it is now recognised that without the new standards, little more can be done to reduce sickness to the kind of level which Members; senior management and the public expect. Although the new policy will not simply by its existence solve the issues, it will provide for each employee and manager a single consistent foundation for management actions and provide a means to hold officers accountable.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Attendance Policy for implementation subject to trade unions’ members’ agreement as outlined above
- Note the next steps and significant resource commitments required.

**BELFAST CITY COUNCIL
DRAFT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

1. Introduction

As an employer, the Council is concerned about the health, safety and well-being of **all** its employees, and commits itself to promoting good health throughout the organisation. The Council recognises that it is inevitable that employees will experience periods of ill health which prevent them from attending work. It will ensure that all such sickness absences are treated fairly and sympathetically, and is committed to providing appropriate support and encouragement to employees who are absent. The Council will take all reasonable steps to assist employees to return to work.

High levels of employee absence increase the workload for other members of staff who may be required to provide cover for absent colleagues. This is disruptive and can reduce the quality of service provided to customers. Employee absence is also financially expensive for the council. Satisfactory levels of employee attendance are therefore a priority for Belfast City Council. The effective implementation of this policy is an essential part of good people management. We have put in place an 'Absence Management Framework' enclosed at Appendix A, which sets out the organisational arrangements for the reporting, monitoring, management of and accountability for attendance.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support a culture in Belfast City Council in which everyone works together to maximise productive attendance. It is designed to balance the requirements of the service with the interests of individual employees, and encourage all employees to meet the high standards of attendance normally achieved by the vast majority of Belfast City Council staff.

3. Application

This policy:

- applies to all Council employees and all absences from work other than scheduled leave such as holiday, maternity and paternity leave;
- outlines the reporting requirements for employees who are absent;
- includes an Attendance Procedure consisting of a series of stages at which employees who do not meet the minimum standards of attendance will be encouraged, through advice and guidance, to

improve their attendance to an acceptable standard and to avoid any formal action which may lead to dismissal;

- may be amended from time to time, in consultation with trade unions.
- will be applied fairly and consistently by managers/relevant officers. They will be supported and trained by Business Support and Human Resources, who will monitor the application of the policy. The Occupational Health Unit will provide medical and counselling advice to assist in decision making.
- will be applied using the Attendance Booklet which sets out roles and responsibilities.

4. Reporting absence

Employees must comply with the notification requirements in Appendix B when reporting absence.

5. Returning to work

When an employee returns to work from absence, the manager/relevant officer must meet with him or her as soon as possible for a return to work discussion. The purpose of the discussion is to:

- Acknowledge the employee's return and show their presence is valued;
- Enable the employee to air any concerns;
- Identify the causes of the absence and explore whether any help can be offered to prevent the employee's absence in the future; and
- Ensure the absence has been properly certified and recorded.

A "return to work" form should be completed by the manager/relevant officer at that meeting and given to the relevant business support representative. Employees returning to work must also complete Form C immediately on their return.

6. Review Meeting

A review meeting will normally be held by the manager/relevant officer where an employee has 5 working days' absence in a rolling 12 month period. The purpose of the review meeting is to:

- Review the employee's attendance history and possible underlying reasons
- Make the employee aware of the impact of their absence
- Explain the consequences of further absence, ie action being taken under the Attendance Procedure

- Offer assistance and support to the employee

The review meeting will normally be held separately to the return to work interview. However, where the employee is in agreement, the review meeting may be held concurrently with the return to work interview where an employee has reached the trigger for a review meeting on his/her return to work.

7. Standards of attendance

Attendance will normally be regarded as warranting action under the Attendance Procedure if an employee has:

- Stage One: Over the preceding 12 months, the employee has either 6 separate periods or a total of 12 working days
- Stage Two: Over the next 12 months, after a stage one warning, the employee has either a further 3 separate periods or a further 12 working days
- Stage Three: Over the next 12 months, after a stage two warning, the employee has either a further 3 separate periods or a further 12 working days
- Stage Four: Over the next 12 months, after a stage three warning, the employee has either a further 3 separate periods or a further 12 working days

Although these are the normal attendance standards, the exact standards and review periods applied to employees under the Attendance Procedure may be tailored to an employee's special circumstances (for example, a longer review period may be set where the manager is exercising his/her discretion to reflect that the employee has a disability or where the Council and a disabled employee are testing out adjustments to the workplace intended to enable the employee to meet the attendance requirements).

A warning may be issued before the employee reaches the above triggers points in exceptional circumstances where a pattern of absence has been identified. The manager/relevant officer must consult with the relevant business support representative before taking such action. Guidance on what constitutes a pattern is detailed in the Attendance Booklet.

8. Failure to meet the standards of attendance

Where an employee fails to meet the standards of attendance set out in section 7 above or notified to them under the Attendance Procedure, this will be explained to the employee under the appropriate stage of the Attendance Procedure (the stages are described in section 9 below).

9. The attendance procedure

In addition to the informal review meeting, the Attendance Procedure consists of four formal stages to which standards of attendance apply. The normal standards are set out in section 7 above. The stages are progressive and are designed to ensure that improvement in attendance is recognised and that continued failure to meet the minimum standards of attendance is addressed.

9.1 Right to be accompanied

At all formal stages of the Attendance Procedure the employee is entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague or represented by a trade union representative.

9.2 Stages of the Attendance Procedure

Employees will be asked to attend meetings held under the Attendance Procedure and must take all reasonable steps to attend. If attendance is not possible, the employee will be given the opportunity to put forward his/her case in writing, and is encouraged to enlist support from a union representative or colleague in drafting his/her case for submission.

9.2.1. Stage One Meeting

When an employee first falls below the minimum standards of attendance, the manager/relevant officer, in consultation with a business support representative, will arrange to meet with the employee. The business support representative will take notes and provide any other business support function. The manager will discuss the employee's attendance record with him or her and the reasons why he or she is not meeting the attendance requirements. The manager will also consider the employee's entitlement to contractual sick pay (see section 12 below).

If appropriate, the manager/relevant officer will issue to the employee a First Stage Warning

- that his/her attendance is unsatisfactory;
- that he or she is expected to meet the minimum standards of attendance, and his or her attendance will be monitored closely over the review period;
- specifying the length of the review period and the level of attendance that he or she is expected to reach during that time (normally the review period and level of attendance specified will be that set out for Stage Two, i.e. a further 3 separate periods or a further 12 working days).

In most cases where an employee has fallen below the minimum standards of attendance it will be appropriate to issue a First Stage Warning and Stage Two improvement standards based on those set out in section 7 above. However, in exceptional circumstances, such as where absence is related to a disability or the employee's pregnancy (see section 10 below), or where the employee is still sick or injured and cannot for the moment meet improvement targets (see section 11 below), it either may not be appropriate to give a First Stage Warning, or the First Stage Warning issued should set lower standards of improvement or attendance than those normally used for Stage Two. If the absence becomes long term, it may be appropriate to deal with it in accordance with the principles outlined in section 11 below.

Any First Stage Warning issued to an employee will subsequently be confirmed to the employee in writing.

The manager/relevant officer will also encourage the employee to take advantage of the healthcare services available, such as the Council's Occupational Health Service and the employee's own GP, and will discuss any assistance that the Council can give to improve the employee's attendance.

Employees may be asked to produce medical certificates for all absences when a decision has been taken to issue a warning under the Attendance Procedure.

If the required level of attendance is achieved during the review period, there will be no further action under the formal stages of this procedure but normal monitoring will continue.

9.2.2. Stage Two Meeting

If an employee who has been given a First Stage Warning fails to meet the requisite standards of attendance during the next twelve months (or the set review period, if different), the manager/relevant officer, in consultation with a business support representative, will arrange to meet with the employee. The business support representative will take notes and provide any other business support function. The manager/relevant officer will discuss the employee's attendance record with him or her and the reasons why he or she is still not meeting the attendance requirements. The manager/relevant officer will also consider the employee's entitlement to contractual sick pay (see section 12 below).

If appropriate, the manager/relevant officer will issue to the employee a Second Stage Warning

- that his/her attendance is unsatisfactory;
- that he or she is expected to meet the minimum standards of attendance, and attendance will be monitored closely over a new review period;
- specifying the length of the new review period and the level of attendance that he or she is expected to reach during that time (normally the review period and *i.e.* a further 3 separate periods or a further 12 working days)

In most cases where an employee has not reached the minimum standards of attendance set for the review period it will be appropriate to issue a Second Stage Warning and improvement standards based on those set out in section 7 above. However, in exceptional circumstances, such as where absence is related to a disability or the employee's pregnancy (see section 10 below), or where the employee is still sick or injured and cannot for the moment meet improvement targets (see section 11 below), it either may not be appropriate to give a Second Stage Warning, or the Second Stage Warning issued should set lower standards of improvement or attendance than those normally used for Stage Three. If the absence becomes long term, it may be appropriate to deal with it in accordance with the principles outlined in section 11 below.

Any Second Stage Warning issued to an employee will subsequently be confirmed to the employee in writing.

The manager/relevant officer will also encourage the employee to take advantage of the healthcare services available, such as the Council's Occupational Health Service and the employee's own GP, and will discuss any assistance that the Council can give to improve the employee's attendance.

Employees may be asked to produce medical certificates for all absences when a decision has been taken to issue a warning under the Attendance Procedure.

If the required level of attendance is achieved during the review period, there will be no further action under the formal stages of this procedure but normal monitoring will continue.

9.2.3. Stage Three Meeting

If an employee who has been given a Second Stage Warning fails to meet the requisite standards of attendance during the next twelve months (or the set review period, if different), the manager/relevant officer, in consultation with a business support representative, will arrange to meet with the employee. The business support representative will take notes and provide any other business support function. The manager/relevant officer will discuss the employee's attendance record with him or her and the reasons why he or she is still not meeting the attendance requirements. The manager/relevant officer will also consider the employee's entitlement to contractual sick pay (see section 12 below).

If appropriate, the manager/relevant officer will issue to the employee a Third Stage Warning

- that his/her attendance is unsatisfactory;
- that he or she is expected to meet the minimum standards of attendance, and attendance will be monitored closely over a new review period;
- specifying the length of the new review period and the level of attendance that he or she is expected to reach during that time (normally the review period and *i.e.* a further 3 separate periods or a further 12 working days)
- that if there is not sufficient improvement in the employee's attendance, he or she may be dismissed.

In most cases where an employee has not reached the minimum standards of attendance set for the review period it will be appropriate to issue a Third Stage Warning and improvement standards based on those set out in section 7 above. However, in exceptional circumstances, such as where absence is related to a disability or the employee's pregnancy (see section 10 below), or where the employee is still sick or injured and cannot for the moment meet improvement targets (see section 11 below), it either may not be appropriate to give a Third Stage Warning, or the Third Stage Warning issued should set lower standards of improvement or attendance than those normally used for Stage Four. If the absence becomes long term, it may be appropriate to deal with it in accordance with the principles outlined in section 11 below.

Any Third Stage Warning issued to an employee will subsequently be confirmed to the employee in writing.

The manager/relevant officer will also encourage the employee to take advantage of the healthcare services available, such as the Council's Occupational Health Service and the employee's own GP, and will discuss any assistance that the Council can give to improve the employee's attendance.

Employees may be asked to produce medical certificates for all absences when a decision has been taken to issue a warning under the Attendance Procedure.

If the required level of attendance is achieved during the review period following the Stage Three meeting, the employee will be put back to Stage One (i.e. the Stage Three warning will no longer apply and the employee will have another opportunity to meet the standards of attendance specified in the First Stage warning previously issued to him or her).

9.2.4. Stage Four Meeting

If an employee who has been given a Third Stage Warning fails to meet the requisite standards of attendance during the next twelve months (or the set review period, if different), dismissal may be appropriate. The employee will be informed in writing of the circumstances leading the Council to contemplate dismissing him or her, that a meeting will take place to discuss the matter, and that he or she has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or represented by a trade union representative. The matter will be heard by a panel comprising the relevant Head of Service/nominee and a senior representative from HR. The manager/relevant officer and a business support representative will attend the hearing to present management's case for recommending that the matter be progressed to Stage Four. A member of the business support staff will be present at the meeting to take notes and provide any other business support function. At the meeting, the manager/relevant officer and the relevant business support representative will outline the attendance history, any issues regarding entitlement to contractual sick pay, action taken to date including any referrals to Occupational Health, previous warnings and adjustments made. The employee will be given an opportunity to state their case. The panel will then make a decision based on all the information presented by both parties.

The employee will be notified of the outcome of the meeting in writing. Where the Council chooses not to dismiss, it may decide on alternative options as appropriate, such as (but not limited to) re-deployment, and the employee will remain at Stage Three (i.e. the employee will have another opportunity to meet the standards of attendance specified in the Third Stage Warning issued to him or her). The individual will be informed of the right to appeal against the decision taken at stage four. (Redeployment due to attendance reasons may mean that the employee has to be demoted).

Appeal against the outcome of the Stage Four Meeting

An employee who wishes to appeal against a decision made as a result of a Stage Four meeting may do so in writing to the Head of Human Resources within 10 working days of receiving written notice of the decision, setting out the

basis on which s/he is appealing the decision. The appeal will be heard in accordance with the Council's appeals mechanisms.

10. Sickness due to disability or pregnancy

Disabled people are generally as capable as non-disabled people of meeting the demands of their jobs and the requisite standards of attendance at the workplace. However, certain disabilities may affect an employee's ability to meet the minimum attendance standards. The Council will explore with the employee what reasonable adjustments, if any, can be made to enable the employee to meet the attendance standards. In a few cases, such as where adjustments are being tested out, it may also be appropriate to make certain adjustments to the attendance procedure, such as adjusting the levels of attendance required when considering issuing warnings for absences that are disability or maternity related, or setting longer standards of attendance as part of a First, Second or Third Stage Warning. Where necessary, the business support representative will consult HR on appropriate adjustments and assistance in these circumstances. Similarly, the business support representative will consult HR where an employee is failing to meet the attendance standards due to pregnancy-related sickness. In cases of both disability and pregnancy it may be appropriate to refer the employee to Occupational Health for advice on steps that may be taken to assist the employee to meet the attendance standards.

11. Long term absence

Any period of absence longer than four weeks would normally be regarded as 'long term' if the employee has an underlying condition which is likely to result in continuing or further absence, In such cases, the Council will seek to support the employee and evolve a strategy to enable them to return to the workplace as quickly as possible. The manager/relevant officer in consultation with Business Support will consider the specific circumstances of the employee and his/her absence record in deciding whether, and the extent to which, the long-term absence will be dealt with under the Attendance Procedure or counted for the purposes of the minimum standards of attendance. A referral will be made to Occupational Health to assist in making this decision.

The Council will work with each employee on a case by case basis, to establish the most appropriate support for that individual, but the general principles are as follows:

- The Council will contact the employee (the exact frequency will depend on the circumstances of the employee's illness) to discuss their health and ways in which the Council can assist them to return to work as quickly as possible.
- Employees must take all reasonable steps to attend meetings regarding long-term sickness absence, and assistance (such as holding meetings at the employee's home) will be given where reasonable to do so. If attendance is not possible the employee will be given the opportunity to put forward his/her case in writing, and is encouraged to enlist support from a union representative or colleague in drafting his/her case for submission.

- Where appropriate the Council will refer the employee to Occupational Health, which will advise the Council on the steps it may be appropriate to take to assist the employee back to work. A first referral to Occupational Health will normally take place after four weeks of absence.
- Where the Council contemplates dismissal, the Council will write to the employee, explaining the circumstances that lead it to contemplate dismissal, and inviting the employee to attend a hearing with the Head of Service/nominee and a senior representative of HR. A member of Business Support will be present to take notes and provide any other secretarial support. At the hearing the manager/relevant officer and the appropriate business support representative will outline the history of the absence and the action taken by management to date. The employee will be given an opportunity to present any relevant information they have to support their case. The HOS and the senior representative from HR will decide on the appropriate action to take based on the circumstances of the case, which may include a warning, reasonable adjustments in relation to the employee's current post, redeployment/demotion, ill health retirement and dismissal (dismissal may be appropriate irrespective of whether the employee is still entitled to contractual sick pay). The employee may appeal against this decision. The appeal will be heard in accordance with the Council's appeals mechanisms.
- The Council will regularly reassess the extent to which an employee's post can be kept open for them until they are able to return to work, and will consult with the employee on all the options available before taking any decision to dismiss.

12. Entitlement to Sick Pay

The National Joint Council Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service states:

'If an employee abuses the sickness scheme or is absent on account of sickness due or attributable to deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery or the employee's own misconduct or neglect or active participation in professional sport or injury while working in the employee's own time or their account for private gain or for another employee, sick pay may be suspended. The authority shall advise the employee of the grounds for suspension and the employee shall have a right of appeal to the appropriate committee of the authority. If the authority decide that the grounds were justified then the employee shall forfeit the right to any further payment in respect of that period of absence. Repeated abuse of the sickness scheme should be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure'.

(National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service, Part 2, Para 10.10)

Entitlement to sick pay will be considered at any meetings held under the Attendance Procedure or in relation to long-term absence.

There is a right of appeal to the Head of Service or his/her nominee against the non-payment of sick pay.

13. Monitoring and Review

The Employee Relations Unit of Human Resources will review the policy on an annual basis in consultation with the trade unions.

The implementation of the policy will be monitored at corporate, departmental, service, unit and individual level as outlined in the Framework for Reporting, Monitoring and Managing Absence.

Appendix A

Framework for reporting, monitoring and managing absence

1. The need to manage and reduce absence

High levels of employee absence increase the workload for other members of staff who may be required to provide cover for absent colleagues. This is disruptive and can reduce the quality of service provided to customers. Employee absence is also financially expensive for the council in terms of sick pay, payment for deputising, the employment of agency/casual staff and lost productivity. Consequently, the council wants to promote good attendance and ensure that absence is minimised. To this end, the council will adopt a consistent, fair, flexible and sympathetic approach to the management of attendance as set out in its Attendance Policy

Effective attendance management requires a continuous and co-ordinated effort by all managers and supervisors together with organisational support from senior management, Human Resources, and Occupational Health.

2. Measuring absence

There is clearly a need to reduce absence levels for the reasons outlined above. But in order for the council to know if and how it is performing in relation to reducing absence levels it has to effectively measure its absence rates at a corporate, departmental, sectional and individual level.

The key corporate indicators for measuring absence in the council are:

- Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE.
- Overall % of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE.

3. Absence information

In order for the council to measure its absence rates it must have accurate and timely information on absence within the council.

Absence information is reported to COMT and CIB/Policy and Resources Committee on a quarterly basis. This report is prepared by HR using information obtained from the council's computerised absence management system (AMS).

The information relating to employee absence is currently keyed in by each of the council departments. Each month the Employee Services Manager/Project

Officer (HR), Payroll Section advises the appropriate business support staff information is ready for checking.

Departments must then check this information (through officers designated by them to do so) to ensure that all information relating to employees' absence is accurate. One person within the department should be appointed to sign off that this check has taken place.

In some cases adjustments need to be made in relation to relevant employees' work patterns. Sections that are required to make these adjustments must designate a person to do so in time for monthly absence reports to be compiled. Once adjustments have been made this designated officer must inform the departmental business support manager and the Employee Services Manager/Project Officer (HR) that this work has been completed.

In addition to the above corporate reports each council department must have the appropriate mechanisms in place for the departmental measuring of absence.

In producing the corporate quarterly trend and analysis reports the performance information contained in the secondary level absence PIs as identified below will be used to assist with the analysis and for departmental management.

Secondary level PIs

- % of staff with no absence.
- % of BCC staff with recorded sickness absence.
- Types of absence e.g. long-term (20 days +), medium-term (6-19days) short-term (1-5days) expressed as a percentage of total absence.
- Types of absence e.g. long-term (20 days +), medium-term (6-19days) short-term (1-5days) expressed as a number of days
- % of working days lost due to absence FTE.
- Total number of working days lost.
- Average absence duration per occurrence.
- % of staff with long term absence.
- Long term absence average duration.
- % and types of sickness measured against 12 sickness categories and industrial injury.
- Number of days and types of sickness measured against 12 sickness categories and industrial injury.
- % of management compliance against trigger points identified in the new Absence Management Policy. (*To be introduced when policy adopted*).

Departmental absence reports on the secondary PIs can be accessed by departments for management purposes and will be accessed by HR for analysis purposes.

This report should be a standing agenda item on departmental management teams and examined at each meeting.

Reports on section, unit basis and individual basis should also be produced by section business support staff and reported to and examined at section and unit meetings.

An individual employee's absence record should be discussed by managers and employees in one to one meetings.

These reports will include improvement actions where applicable.

Absence information is also produced by the HR section using information obtained from the council's computerised absence management system (AMS). This report categorises absence by department, age, gender, duration and spinal column point and informs policy and organisational support.

4. Targets for reduction

At its highest level corporate targets for reduction in absence are set by Policy & Resources Committee.

Departments in conjunction with HR will set section targets for improvement in relation to the target reduction needed to meet council targets.

Individuals will have improvement and management measures relating to their attendance (as applicable) discussed in one to one meetings with their manager/relevant officers and absence procedure interviews.

The HR section will conduct monthly compliance checks.

Sections in conjunction with the HR section will develop improvement plans where underperformance is identified. HR will monitor these plans.

Business Support in conjunction with HR will set up case review meetings with the relevant managers and Occupational Health.

Individual performance management arrangements should include the management of attendance.

5. Managing absence

The council's Attendance Policy sets out the principles and steps by which absence should be managed within the council. Departments and sections should, however, develop their improvement plan which details resources and actions required by the department and section to meet departmental and service targets.

Managers across the council have responsibility for managing absence and individual performance management arrangements and SMART targets should include the management of absence.

6. Monitoring absence management and accountability

In order to assess the effectiveness of absence management in the council it must be monitored at a corporate, departmental, service, unit and individual level.

The council's chief officers have over-all responsibility for performance management of the council and examine absence levels on a quarterly basis.

Each month departmental/sectional business support will send a report to managers setting out those employees who have been absent in that month. The manager/relevant officer (which will depend on the section) will complete the template section of this report detailing what action has been taken to manage this absence (see appendix 1).

These reports will be returned to and reviewed by the relevant sectional business support staff in the first instance who will advise on any areas of non-compliance and/or any further action that needs to be taken.

The information in these template reports relating to long-term sick employees and/or hot spots will also be reported to the Employee Relations Unit of the HR section in order that it is aware of the action being taken across the section. This will also aid learning and ensure consistency of approach and highlight issues to be dealt with in case review meetings.

Arrangements can be made within sections for these reports to be submitted to and reviewed by the departmental business support manager and section management team meetings who can discuss, if necessary, any areas of non-compliance and/or any further action that needs to be taken

The council's Audit section will conduct an audit of compliance across the council on an annual basis and report to Policy & Resources Committee on the action being taken from a corporate approach to meet council targets; and will meet with HR, HR, Occupational Health and Employee Counselling with regard to performance management issues relating to absence.

7. Support for poor absence management performance

The Employee Relations Unit of the HR Section will advise departments on any areas of non-compliance and/or any further action that needs to be taken through the development of improvement plans.

Departmental business support managers can seek advice in relation to the management of individual cases from the Employee Relations and Workplace Health units of the Human Resources section through case review mechanisms.

Managers should seek advice in relation to the management of individual cases from their section business support unit who may in turn seek advice if necessary from the departmental business support manager.

The HR section will provide the necessary training to support the implementation of the Attendance Policy and the necessary skills and competence to manage attendance.

APPENDIX B

Reporting Procedure

The following Council procedures must be followed when reporting absence.

When an employee has failed to follow the reporting procedures, the manager/relevant officer will write to the employee stating that contact must be made by a specified date (5 days from the date of the letter) and pay will be suspended until a valid reason for the non-compliance has been given. The manager/relevant officer, in consultation with the appropriate business support staff, will ensure that sick pay is stopped by informing Payroll. If no response is forthcoming, the manager/relevant officer will also make a further attempt to contact the employee. If such attempts fail, the manager/relevant officer will consider instigating the disciplinary procedure.

Appeals for non payment of sick pay should be made in writing by the employee to the Head of Service or his/her nominee. The Head of Service/nominee will respond in writing to the employee and copy the response to Payroll who will process the payment if appropriate.

The employee must personally contact his immediate line manager/nominee, unless exceptional circumstances prevent this.

An employee who falls sick during a period of annual leave shall be regarded as being on sick leave from the date of a doctor's statement.

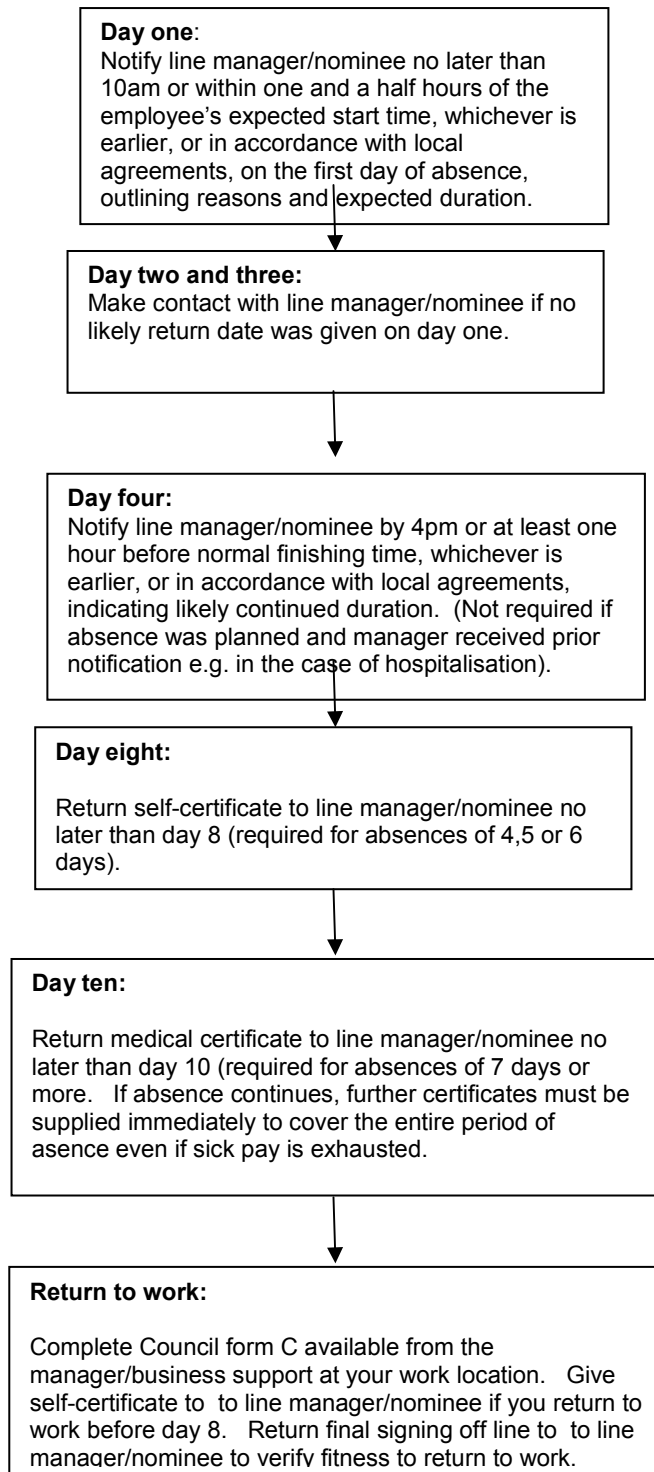
A self certificate must be completed for sickness absence immediately preceding or following annual leave, public/statutory holiday.

If an employee wants to go on holiday during a period of sickness absence, they must submit to their manager a letter from their doctor stating that the holiday is beneficial to their recovery, giving adequate notice for an appointment to be made with Occupational Health. Approval must be given by the manager for the taking of the holiday. An employee taking an unauthorised holiday during a period of sickness will lose pay and could be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

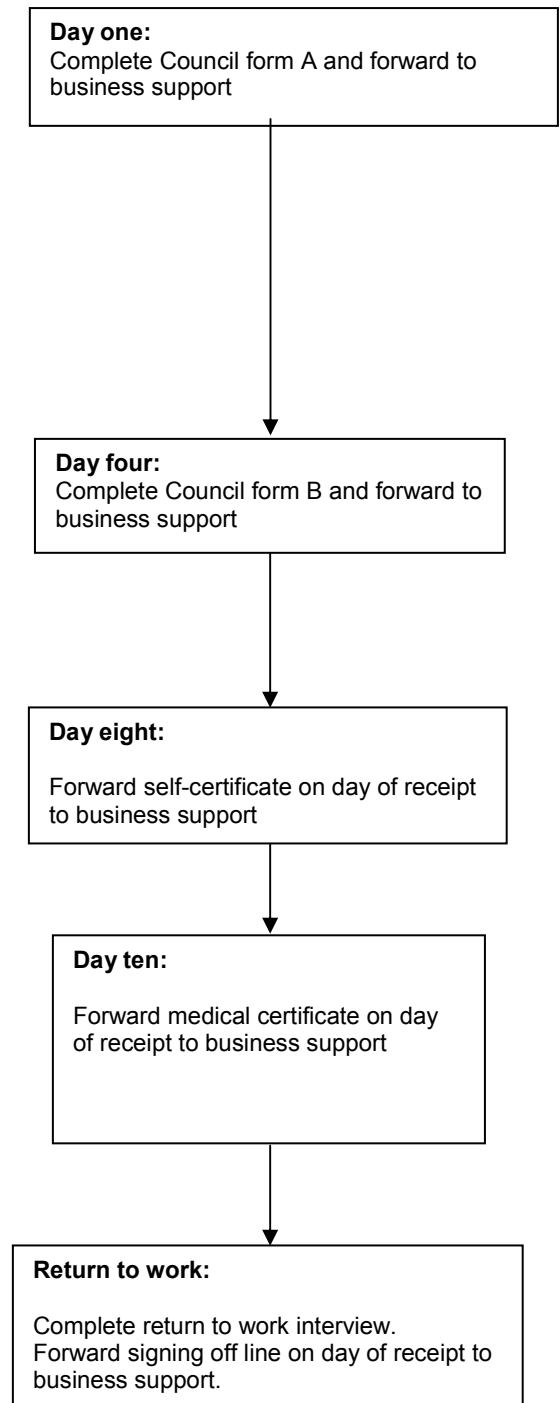
Each section has the discretion to put in place local arrangements for the reporting of absence. Where this is the case, employees will be notified in writing of the alternative arrangements. Arrangements for when employees are unable to contact the line manager should be clearly communicated to employees.

ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURE

EMPLOYEE



MANAGER



Note: Days are counted in calendar days not working days and include days off and public holidays. Sundays are excluded unless it is a normal working day.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Adjourned Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Pre-employment training programmes for the long-term unemployed
Date:	26 February 2008
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services, extension 6083
Contact Officer:	Jill Minne, Principal HR Advisor (Acting Head of Human Resources), extension 3220

Purpose of report:

To seek approval to widen the scope of the council's community outreach programme by engaging with the Citywide Employability Consortium (CEC) to:

- (1) develop pre-employment training programmes for the ¹long term unemployed which would lead to successful trainees being guaranteed job interviews for relevant publicly advertised council posts; and
- (2) participate in a Workforce Buddies Project, which is an employee mentoring scheme, to support the retention of former long term unemployed appointees.

Relevant background information:

The CEC is part funded and managed by Belfast City Council's Economic Development Section and is made up of representatives from the 4 areas of the city – LEAP (North), Stepping Stones (East), Gems NI (South), Employment Services Board and Employers Forum (West & Greater Shankill).

The CEC has developed an operational plan for a city-wide employer interface service and has asked BCC to assist the long term unemployed in these areas to gain the necessary skills and experience to support them in gaining employment.

Key Issues

(1) Developing pre-employment training programmes for the long term unemployed:

BCC has facilitated some short term work experience placements for the long term unemployed through its current community outreach programme and the CEC has requested further council engagement in providing pre-employment training programmes that are specifically designed to link the unemployed and economically

¹ Long-term unemployed is defined as those being without work for over 1 year (International Labour Organisation)

inactive to specific job vacancies within the council and the wider public sector.

Such training programmes, which can be delivered on-site or off-site, will be designed by the council, other participating public sector organisations, the CEC and a recognised training organisation e.g. Belfast Metropolitan College. This training will reflect the skills, qualities and values required for basic entry level posts within the public sector e.g. a cleansing operative, and modules may include an awareness of health and safety, an introduction to IT, customer service skills, communication skills, team skills, learning to work as a team, dealing with conflict, decision making techniques, interview techniques and mock interview sessions.

The programme duration can range from three to 7 weeks and the maximum number of participants per programme is 15. As part of the programme, the council would be required to provide work experience placements, site visits to BCC locations for those involved and guarantee a job interview for relevant publicly advertised council posts to those who have successfully completed the course.

Other large public sector organisations such as the N.I. Housing Executive are also considering participation in this initiative and, as such, would be a partner organisation for the council in this regard. The Mater Hospital, the North & West Belfast Trust and the Royal Group of Hospitals have already successfully completed eight pre-employment training programmes and therefore provide useful case studies.

In terms of the legal implications of guaranteeing interviews to the long term unemployed, the Equality Commission for N.I. has advised that employers are permitted to treat long-term unemployed persons more favourably than other persons providing this condition or requirement is applied to all unemployed persons. The CEC will have responsibility for ensuring fair selection of the trainees on a city-wide and equality basis and for liaising with other organisations in terms of similar employability programmes. Regardless of such a guaranteed interview scheme, all council appointments would of course continue to be based on the merit principle in line with the Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Procedure on Recruitment and Selection.

(2) Workforce Buddies Programme:

The council has also been asked to consider engaging in the Workforce Buddies Project to support the retention of a former long-term unemployed appointee and to help him/her settle effectively into his/her new role. This project is an employee mentoring scheme where council workers who by attending formal training (with the option of gaining an OCR Certificate in Coaching which could also go towards an NVQ qualification) can act as a 'buddy' for the new start by providing coaching, mentoring and support for up to 6 months. The 'buddies' would be required to undertake the role voluntarily without additional remuneration but the role is a personal development opportunity. This approach has been evaluated as very successful in both the Mater Hospital and the Royal Group of Hospitals.

Resource Implications

Financial

(1) Pre-employment training programme for the long-term unemployed:

The CEC has advised that the cost of running a 3 year training programme, with 120 participants, is £406,444 across all the engaging organisations (a cost of £3,387 per participant). However, the North Belfast Partnership Board (NBPB) which works in partnership with the CEC and who will have project management responsibility has recently secured European funding to administer such pre-employment programmes

across the city for public sector employers. This leaves a match funding requirement of £142,256. Of this amount, it is anticipated that £55,500 will be obtained through a Government Training Programme leaving an outstanding amount of £86,756 to be sourced. Whilst other funding sources are being investigated by the NBPB e.g. BRO, the council has been asked to make a contribution to this amount. This contribution is not essential to participation in the scheme but it does present an opportunity for the council to enhance its corporate social responsibilities and take a leading role in this initiative. Given that the sum of £86,756 is for a three year period (equating to £28,918 per annum), should Members agree to engage with this initiative it is proposed that the council contribute a third of the costs i.e. £10,000 per annum from the Human Resource corporate workforce development budget. This equates to the council contributing £250 per participant per annum (based on 40 participants) which is in line with the national average currently being spent per employee per annum on training and development within the public sector. The NBPB would prefer this funding as a lump sum for the three years. It is recommended however that funding should be given by BCC for year one only (i.e. £10,000 contribution for 2008/09) with funding for years two and three being dependant on successful evaluation of the first year of the programme and agreement from committee in this regard.

(2) Workforce Buddies Project:

The cost of mentor training per council employee would be £500 with formal accreditation costing an additional £200. Time off for training would also need to be factored into operational considerations.

Human Resources

Given the scope and scale of this long-term project, initial communication and consultation has taken place with COMT, relevant council sections, the management side of the JCC and the trade unions. If engagement in the programme is agreed, this will continue in order to ensure its effective planning, project management and communication. Specifically, detailed discussions regarding resource implications will take place with the individual council sections most affected.

The CEC is not in a position to sign the council's indemnity form or provide any indemnity cover and the council would be required to self-insure these long-term unemployed trainees whilst on a work experience placement or site visit to the council. This situation is acceptable to Legal Services and the council's Insurance Officer provided that the relevant health and safety processes are put in place.

Finally, in accordance with Section 75 duties of the N.I. Act 1998, a consultation and screening process will ensue to assess if there is any adverse impact in relation to one or more of the Section 75 categories.

Asset and Other Implications

There are no assets or other implications contained within this report.

Recommendations

Members are asked to agree to widen the scope of the council's community outreach

programme by engaging with the Citywide Employability Consortium (CEC) to:

- (1) develop pre-employment training programmes for the ²long term unemployed which would lead to successful trainees being guaranteed job interviews for relevant publicly advertised council posts; and
- (2) to participate in a Workforce Buddies Project, which is an employee mentoring scheme, to support the retention of former long term unemployed appointees.

Members are also asked to agree that the council funds these initiatives as detailed above.

Key to Abbreviations

CEC- Citywide Employability Consortium
NBPB- North Belfast Partnership Board
BRO – Belfast Regeneration Office
JCC – Joint Consultative Committee

² Long-term unemployed is defined as those being without work for over 1 year (International Labour Organisation)



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Adjourned Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	City Hall Major Works: Project Update
Date:	26 February 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement
Contact Officer:	Michael Stanley, CIT Project Management Unit

Relevant Background Information

A previous update was presented to the Committee on 16 November 2007, when it was agreed that subsequent update reports be presented on a quarterly basis, with additional exception reports as necessary.

The decant to Adelaide Exchange has been completed and the City Hall was cleared to enable the contractor to commence work on 19 November with a 90 week overall contract period, to be undertaken in two phases.

The formal challenge received from one of the contractors who were unsuccessful in their tender for the specialist Records Removal/Off-Site Storage contract proceeded to court and judgement was recently made in favour of the Council and the contractor who issued the challenge has stated that he will not appeal. Consequently, the contract will be awarded and implemented shortly.

Key Issues

Programme

An outline programme is attached for information.

Progress to date (week commencing 11 February) is as follows:

- Protection of marble areas in progress;
- Asbestos removal from the main roof is complete;
- Re-roofing of the West and South roofs has commenced and is 10% complete;
- All non-notifiable asbestos in the remainder of the building has been removed. An application has been made to the Health and Safety Executive for approval to remove notifiable asbestos. Encapsulation work has also commenced in the roof area of the Rotunda;
- Basement shelving has been removed;
- Removal of chandeliers & pendants for refurbishment is complete;
- Survey work of existing services installations is complete;
- Stripping out of radiators, pipework and electrical cable has commenced;
- Sprinkler system has been drained down and is being removed.

Progress is currently adhering generally to the programme.

Variations

The incorporation of a memorial to BCC employees to be situated in the courtyard at a cost of £22,800 was approved at SP&R December 2007;

Other potential variations being considered for incorporation into the project are:

- Emergency Room relocation – estimated cost £450,000;
- Control Room relocation to 2nd floor – cost will be dependent on brief which is currently being developed;
- PABX room upgrade –cost will be dependent on brief which is currently being developed;

The variations regarding the Emergency Room, Control Room and PABX Room are dependant upon proposals being finalised, together with costs, by Health & Environmental Services and Corporate Services respectively and presented to Committee for further consideration.

Depending on the nature of the works there could be a substantial impact on the overall cost and programme which will be alleviated by reaching early decisions on these matters. Final proposals on these variations really need to be signed off or rejected by committee by March 2008.

City Hall: Future Use

The future use of City Hall is a much more fundamental question which directly involves Members. To minimise any potential additional costs, variations and/or delay, Members are asked to engage with this further via the Cross Party accommodation groups as soon as possible.

In broad terms the issue may be stated as follows; *“What balance do members wish to strike between the various competing potential uses of the City Hall building?”* The main uses are:

1. as a **political base**, which would involve some/all of the following:-

- a) hosting monthly Council and Committee meetings;
- b) hosting political parties in conducting their internal business;
- c) hosting individual members in dealing with constituency matters; *and*
- d) facilitating attendance at meetings with other parties and/or council officers.

The recent members' survey produced a very clear finding that, in addition to hosting the main political meetings (Council, Committees, DPP etc) members feel that the City Hall is also the best place from which to conduct day-to-day party and constituency work. This has obvious implications for the future use of the City Hall in that it requires a fairly large footprint within the building, whether the parties move back into the areas previously used as party rooms or to a new area within the building specifically designed to reflect party size. (This decision will also presumably be affected by the outcome of the Review of Public Administration, which may increase the number of members who require accommodation).

2. as a **civic building**, which could involve some/all of the following:-

- a) maximising tourist potential through enhanced tours and increased public access;
- b) enhancing access to the prestige functions rooms and other areas of the building;
- c) celebration of the city by way of exhibitions, displays etc;
- d) providing an historical perspective on the development of the city, including public archives, art, artefacts and other library material;
- e) incorporating the Visitor & Convention Bureau following the expiry of its existing lease in 2010, which would significantly increase footfall in the building and, in turn, increase the viability of other potential activities including for example a catering franchise; *and*
- f) incorporating the Consumer Advice centre.

3. as an **administrative building**, which would involve:-

- a) providing office accommodation for essential BCC officers and support staff;
- b) providing an operational base for a range of citizen-facing services, most notably Births, Deaths, Marriages & Civil Ceremonies, the Cemeteries office, Building Control, Consumer Advice etc.

4. as a **source of revenue**, which would involve:-

- a) seeking appropriate external partners to lease areas of the building on a commercial basis, with a view to introducing retail, food & beverage and other private sector facilities.

It will therefore be necessary to engage with members in order to seek a cross-party consensus on the most appropriate split between the political, civic, administrative and economic uses of the building, following which officers can develop detailed alternative layouts and approaches for members' consideration.

As refurbishment work has commenced in the City Hall, it is important that decisions in respect of the future use of the building are taken promptly, in order that the layout of the building can be appropriately configured and incorporated into the programme for the works, minimise any additional costs and/or delays and to factor in any overall accommodation use which will no longer be catered for in the City Hall.

Site visit

Members may wish to consider visiting the site to view the progression of the works.

Adelaide Exchange

Members are asked to consider whether a Members Common Room to be formed on the third floor, by the amalgamation of two of the existing meeting rooms. Members are asked to note that there has been significant use of the meeting rooms by Members in Adelaide Exchange as shown in the table below.

Month	Working days	Bookings
	October	(13 days) 15
	November	(22 days) 32
	December	(18 days) 14
	January	(22 days) 41
	February	(10 days) 23
	Total	(85 days) 125

Resource Implications

The anticipated project expenditure for the Major Works contract, based on the accepted tender, is £11,875,000.

The anticipated final account is projected to be within the approved budget with the exception of the cost of any variations not yet approved.

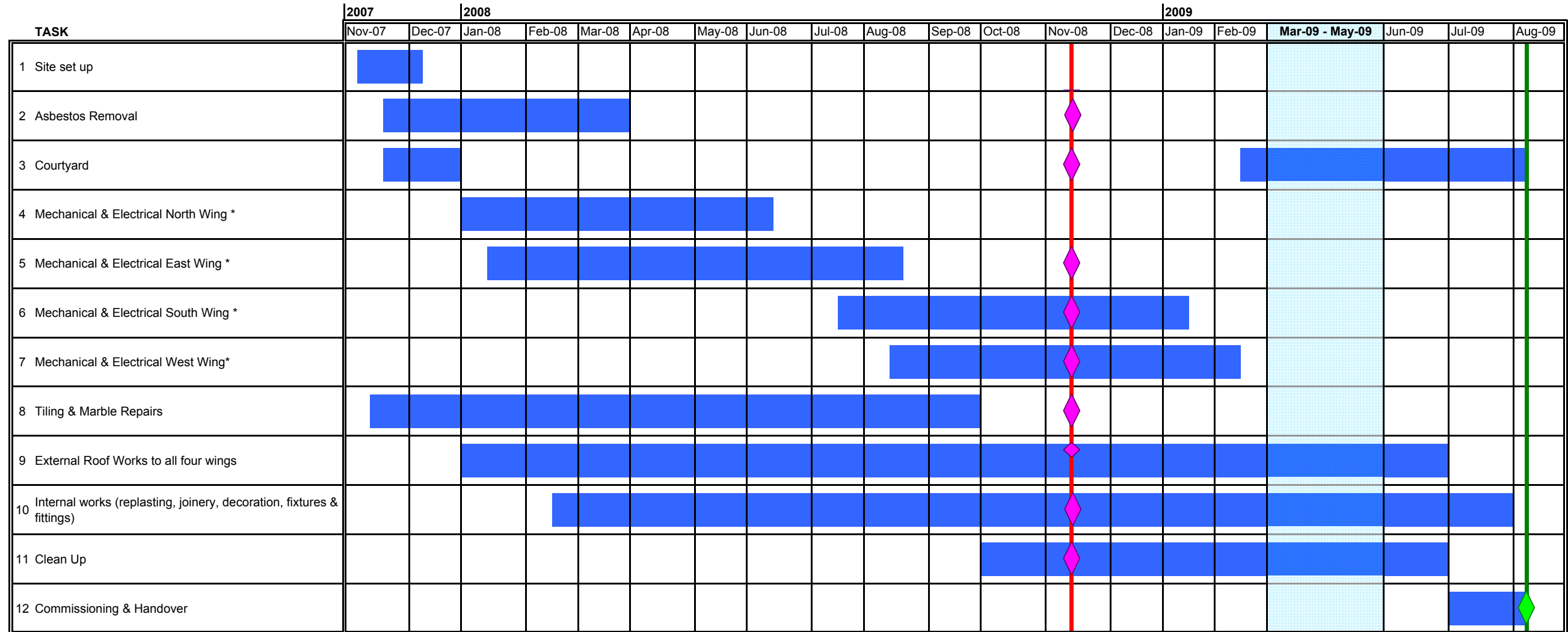
Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee notes this report and determine:

1. whether a site visit to the City Hall should be arranged;
2. whether a Members Common Room should be provided in Adelaide Exchange.
3. whether Members want to consider alternate options as to use of City Hall, and if so, to agree to an options paper to be considered in April.

CITY HALL MAJOR WORKS

OUTLINE PROGRAMME



◆ = Contractor's Completion Civic Areas

◆ = Contractor's

Completion

* (ducts, walkways, electrical rewiring, ventilation, fire compartmentation)



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Adjourned Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Duncrue Complex Fuel Storage Facilities and Associated Infrastructure Works
Date:	26 February 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement
Contact Officer:	Michael Stanley, CIT Project Management Unit

Relevant Background Information

The Council's Capital Programme has yet to be endorsed politically and will have a major impact on the City Investment Strategy.

It is therefore proposed to ask the party groups to consider a draft Capital Programme during March, along with reports on the City Investment Fund and Asset Management.

However, there are a number of urgent projects which should be advanced now for valid reasons.

The existing fuel station at the Duncrue Complex has been in place for about 30 years and has reached the end of its operational life.

A proposal is included in the Capital Programme for the replacement of the fuel station, of which the storage tanks and the infrastructure for the fuel pumps and canopy form part.

Key Issues

The nature of the proposed works (civil engineering) is such that it should ideally be executed during the summer months and is necessary to enable continuing operation of the Council's vehicle fleet.

Applications for inclusion on a Select List of potential contractors have been invited by public advertisement and tender documentation is currently being prepared.

Tenders will be evaluated on the basis of quality and cost in order to ascertain that which offers the most economically advantageous bid for the works.

Resource Implications

An amount of £585,000 is included in the draft 08/09 Capital Programme for the replacement of the fuel station.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee approves:

1. the invitation of tenders; and
2. application being made to the appropriate Government Department for sanction to raise a loan for the cost of the project.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Adjourned Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Natural Turf Sports Surfaces – Standing Select List Polymeric Sports Surfaces – Standing Select List Artificial Turf Sports Surfaces – Standing Select List and Tenders
Date:	26 February 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement
Contact Officer:	Michael Stanley, CIT Project Management Unit

Relevant Background Information

The Council's Capital Programme has yet to be endorsed politically and will have a major impact on the City Investment Strategy.

It is therefore proposed to ask the party groups to consider a draft Capital Programme during March, along with reports on the City Investment Fund and Asset Management.

However, there are a number of urgent projects which should be advanced now for valid reasons.

It is routine for the Council to create standing select lists of contractors from whom tenders for the provision of various types of sports surfaces might be invited as required.

Applications for inclusion on such Select Lists of potential contractors have been invited by public advertisement.

Reports regarding any future tenders are presented to the Committee if and when projects are proposed for development during the terms of the standing select lists.

Two such proposals, for the artificial sports surfaces option, are currently programmed for construction during the summer at Grosvenor RC (in conjunction with St Joseph's PS and part funded the Big Lottery Fund) and Ballysillan LC.

Key Issues

The replacement of the pitch at Grosvenor RC, which is 85% funded by the Big Lottery Fund, was previously postponed as the site was utilised during the Westlink widening scheme, which is nearing completion.

The existing Ballysillan LC pitch has been in operation since 1995 and the surface was removed several months ago as it had reached the end of its operational life and due to safety concerns, leaving a tarmac hard sub-surface which cannot be used operationally.

The nature of the proposed works is such that they should ideally be executed during the summer months.

Tender documentation is currently being prepared for each of these locations.

Tenders will be evaluated on the basis of quality and cost in order to ascertain those which offer the most economically advantageous bids for the works.

The projects may be amalgamated into a single tender/contract if it is considered to be to the Council's advantage.

Resource Implications

The draft 08/09 Capital Programme includes amounts of £975,000 for the proposal at Grosvenor Recreation Centre and £650,000 for the proposal at Ballysillan LC.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee approves:

1. the invitation of tenders for the pitches at Grosvenor RC and Ballysillan LC;and
2. application being made to the appropriate Government Department for sanction to raise loans for the cost of the two projects.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Adjourned Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Duncrue Industrial Estate: In-Ground Gas Extraction System
Date:	26 February 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement
Contact Officer:	Michael Stanley, CIT Project Management Unit

Relevant Background Information

The Council's Capital Programme has yet to be endorsed politically and will have a major impact on the City Investment Strategy.

It is therefore proposed to ask the party groups to consider a draft Capital Programme during March, along with reports on the City Investment Fund and Asset Management.

However, there are a number of urgent projects which should be advanced now for valid reasons.

The Council is required, under legislation, to take steps to mitigate any risks arising from methane which might emanate from the ground at Duncrue Industrial Estate. The existing in-ground gas collection system at Duncrue Industrial Estate is nearing the end of its effective operational life and the Capital Programme includes a proposal for its replacement.

Key Issues

Due to health and safety considerations the works should be executed as a matter of urgency.

Applications for inclusion on a Select List of potential contractors have been invited by public advertisement and tender documentation is currently being prepared.

Tenders will be evaluated on the basis of quality and cost in order to ascertain that which offers the most economically advantageous bid for the works.

Resource Implications

An amount of £230,000 is included in the capital programme for this proposal.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee approves:

1. the invitation of tenders;and
2. application being made to the appropriate Government Department for sanction to raise a loan for the cost of the project.

GOOD RELATIONS STEERING PANEL**MINUTES OF MEETING****FRIDAY, 8th FEBRUARY, 2008**

- Members present: Councillor Long (Chairman); and
Councillors Hanna, C. Maskey and McCausland.
- External Members: Rev. D. Baker, Presbyterian Church;
Canon B. Dodds, Church of Ireland;
Rev. S. Watson, CALEB;
Dr. D. Morrow, Community Relations Council; and
Mrs. H. Smith, Methodist Church.
- In attendance: Mr. D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer;
Miss E. Brough, Good Relations Officer; and
Mr. N. Malcolm, Committee Administrator.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillor Kyle and Messrs. R. Galway and P. Scott.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11th January, were taken as read and signed as correct.

Peace III – Revised Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan

The Steering Panel was reminded that, at its meeting on 11th January, it had agreed to defer consideration of the Peace Plan in order to provide the various political groupings represented on the Council with an opportunity to consider the matter. The Good Relations Officer pointed out that, since that date, a number of briefings had been held for the groupings concerning the Plan.

The Panel then considered the undernoted report, together with the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan, a copy of which is available in the Members' Library or on request from the Good Relations Unit:

“Relevant Background Information

The Steering Panel will be aware that a draft Peace Plan, approved by Council on 1 October, was out for public consultation during October and November 2007. The Consultation Document outlined how we proposed to manage and deliver Peace III funding under the priority 1.1 ‘building positive relations at the local level’.

**Good Relations Steering Panel,
Friday, 8th February, 2008**

Every effort was made to ensure wide public awareness of the Council's proposals and an extensive consultation process was undertaken:

- the full Consultation Document was available on the Council's website
- a press release was issued in the name of the Lord Mayor
- articles were published on the NICVA e-Bulletin and the Community Relations Council's Information Bulletin
- advance notice was sent to the 5 District Partnership Boards, requesting them to issue attached fliers to their own local organisations and inviting them to organise an event in their own area
- fliers were issued to over 650 groups on our Good Relations mailing list
- a letter was issued to the major statutory bodies in Belfast
- an article was included in *City Matters*.

We organised 4 meetings in the north, south, east and west of the city in the last week in October. We ensured that special sessions were held with representatives of S 75 groups, young people, older people and women (all target groups identified by the SEUPB). In addition we responded to 9 additional requests for meetings with various sectoral interests.

Good Relations Unit staff made presentations on the Council's proposals at all these events and we had a pool of 6 independent researchers, chosen from the Community Relations Council's select list, who facilitated the discussion at the consultation meetings. We engaged Gráinne Kelly (who co-devised the principles of peace and reconciliation used by the SEUPB) to collate all the responses made both at the consultation sessions and in written submissions and produce a final report for the Council.

Altogether over 220 participants, representing 125 organisations, took part and we received 15 written submissions. A copy of Gráinne Kelly's full report along with a table summarising the key points raised during consultation and the Council's response to those points are included as Appendices to the revised Peace Plan.

Key Issues

As a result of comments and suggestions made during the consultation, some substantial changes have been made to the document. The principal differences are:

1. There is more detail around the guiding principles, values and vision.
2. The Action Plan is more detailed, with specific proposals and named partners.
3. There are up-dated references to the Programme for Government and the Chicago visit.
4. There is a detailed report on the extensive public consultation exercise undertaken in relation to the Peace Plan.
5. The Good Relations Partnership will be established in shadow form as quickly as possible so that the Partnership members may be fully trained in preparation for their roles and may begin to start firming up the criteria to be used in determining applications for funding. The shadow Partnership will be reviewed in 6 months time, in line with SEUPB advice.
6. There was considerable discussion around the composition of the Partnership and the revised recommendation is:
 - elected Councillors – 6, one from each political party group
 - voluntary sector – 2 nominees
 - community sector – 2 nominees
 - other statutory agencies – 2 nominees from the Belfast Chief Executives' Group
 - trade unions – 2 from ICTU
 - private business sector – 2, one each from CBI and Belfast City Centre Management
 - churches – 2, one each from the Protestant and Catholic churches
 - minority faith groups – 1 nominee from appropriate organisations
 - minority ethnic groups - 1 nominee from appropriate organisations.

Subject to Council approval, letters will be issued in the next couple of weeks to relevant organisations and umbrella bodies, inviting nominations for appropriate representatives for the Good Relations Partnership.

The area where we envisage difficulty in achieving consensus on representation is in the voluntary and community sectors. In consultation it was quite clear that these 2 sectors wished to be treated separately and the proposed membership has been revised accordingly.

The guidance issued by the SEUPB states that: 'Local authorities will be required to work with social partners to develop strategic responses to locally identified needs in a manner that represents the independence of social partners, and in particular respects the right of social partners to identify their own representation. The demonstration of active partnership will be a requirement for funding'.

It is therefore proposed that the organisation NICVA (NI Council for Voluntary Action), the recognised umbrella body for voluntary and community organisations in N Ireland, should act as a nominating agent for both these sectors. The use of an independent organisation lends impartiality to the process and means that the Council can not be accused of political favouritism or partisanship in the selection of Partnership representatives.

The proposed Good Relations Learning & Development Strategy will be withdrawn, as most respondents felt that the principal beneficiaries of this would be Council employees and not those in the wider community. This will be re-submitted in due course under priority 2.2 of the Peace III Programme 'developing key institutional capacities for a shared society', which is more appropriate for this project.

The Council's bid is for an amount of £12 million or €18 million; this figure includes the additional staffing required and our projected management costs of just under 10% of the total.

The Action Plan outlines the proposed methodology for implementation. To retain a strategic outcome focused approach and ensure that the activities under the Plan are delivered in a co-ordinated and coherent manner, we will commission the majority of the work (80%) and distribute 20% of the funding by way of open calls. This is based on advice from SEUPB and other EU funders, who recommend that open calls should be reduced, as the assessment of these is very resource intensive and often results in a low success rate for applicants. The SEUPB have agreed with this 80/20 ratio.

Good Relations Steering Panel,
Friday, 8th February, 2008

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We will also set up a small grants scheme of up to £500,000 per year (assuming a successful bid of £12m).

The proposed timescale for the delivery of the Peace III Programme will have to be postponed as the SEUPB now inform us that they will require a minimum of 13 weeks from the time they receive our final Plan until they are able to make any decision. We hope to be able to submit our Plan in early February so may not receive any response until around May 2008. Although we may begin to draw up procedures and draft up Job Descriptions etc for anticipated staff in a parallel process at this time, we will not be able to advertise or begin a recruitment process until we receive a formal SEUPB notification of offer.

The SEUPB have also informed us that they expect spending targets to be even over the period of the Plan. Our original proposal was that most expenditure would take place in the later years of the Plan so the spend targets have also been revised.

SEUPB have agreed to train our financial staff in EU procedures when we receive their Financial Guidelines, promised in May 2007.

Various minor textual changes have also been made and these are outlined in the Consultation Summary Table.

Recommendations

This Peace Plan will be submitted to the Good Relations Steering Panel at its meeting on Friday 8th February, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on Friday 22 February and, following Council ratification, to the SEUPB in early March.

Decision Required

The Good Relations Steering Panel is requested to consider the content of this Peace Plan and approve it for submission to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on Friday 22nd February.”

A number of editorial amendments to the Plan were suggested by various Members. The Good Relations Officer undertook to ensure that these changes were made before the Plan was submitted.

Following a lengthy discussion, the Panel agreed that the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 22nd February, subject to the following amendments being made:

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**Good Relations Steering Panel,
Friday, 8th February, 2008**

- (i) the community/voluntary sector would be entitled to appoint four representatives to the Good Relations Partnership and the Council would set the criteria for the representatives to be appointed and would undertake the associated recruitment process;
- (ii) the Council would liaise with the Churches to ascertain their views on how they wished to be represented on the Partnership;
- (iii) the business and Trade Union sectors representation would remain unchanged. However, the criteria for their appointment would be devised to ensure that the representatives liaise with their respective sector; and
- (iv) the Plan indicates the work being undertaken currently of the Good Relations Steering Panel would continue to be undertaken by the Good Relations Partnership and that Peace III would neither replace nor duplicate the existing Good Relations work being undertaken by the Council, rather complement it.

Following further discussion, the Panel agreed that the "Community Engagement – Good Relations and Good Practice Guide" prepared by Ms. Grainne Kelly be submitted to the SEUPB and requested to use the Guide as a basis for the other relevant measures of the Peace III Programme, specifically Measures 2.1 and 2.2. The Panel agreed further that the Council should monitor attendance at the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership to ensure that vacancies resulting from the non-attendance of a representative from a sector should be filled in an agreed fashion.

Good Relations Grant-Aid

The Good Relations Officer submitted for the information of the Panel a report detailing a summary of applications to the Good Relations Grant-Aid Fund, together with the associated recommendations. He informed the Panel that, subsequent to the papers being issued, it had been ascertained that the request from Finaghy/Horn Drive Community Centre Committees should be reduced by £400 and that from Botanic Primary School should be reduced by £800. In addition, he informed the Members that CHARTER would be provided with a list of facilitators which the organisation could use in connection with its project.

Accordingly, after discussion, the Steering Panel agreed unanimously that grant-aid be awarded, under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive, to the following organisations:

**Good Relations Steering Panel,
Friday, 8th February, 2008**

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Ref No.	Organisation	Recommendation
		£
670/1122	Finaghy/Horn Drive Community Centre	6,045
668/1120	Botanic Primary School	4,200
254/1129	Irish Football Association	5,605
671/1123	Upper North Belfast Community Empowerment Partnership	4,750
517/1130	Northern Ireland Community Builders Programme	7,500
669/1121	Open Doors Learning Centre	5,800
672/1131	Harlandic Male Voice Choir	700
673/1135	CHARTER	7,500
	Provisional Total this Month	42,100

Finaghy/Horn Drive Community Centre Committees

In answer to a Member's question, the Good Relations Officer undertook to forward to her the dates when the Community Centre Committees would be holding their events.

On-going Issues: Update

The Good Relations Officer reported that the Egyptian Society intended to organise an event on 18th March to explain the work undertaken by the group and that the Steering Panel would be invited to attend.

During discussion, several Members indicated that, given its proximity to St. Patrick's Day, the date was not particularly suitable and therefore suggested that the Society be requested to hold the event on a different date.

In reply, the Good Relations Officer undertook to forward the suggestion to the Egyptian Society.

March Meeting

The Good Relations Officer informed the Steering Panel that, since a Council Committee would be held in the Council Chamber on the morning of 7th March, it would be necessary for the Steering Panel's March meeting to commence at 12.30 p.m.

Noted.

Chairman



Report to:	Adjourned Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Peace III - Revised Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan (Peace Plan)
Date:	26 February 2008
Reporting Officer:	Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager Ext: 6020

Relevant Background Information

The Committee will be aware that a draft Peace Plan, approved by Council on 1 October, was out for public consultation during October and November 2007. The Consultation Document outlined how we proposed to manage and deliver Peace III funding under the priority 1.1 "building positive relations at the local level".

Every effort was made to ensure wide public awareness of the Council's proposals and an extensive consultation process was undertaken:

- the full Consultation Document was available on the Council's website
- a press release was issued in the name of the Lord Mayor
- articles were published on the NICVA e-Bulletin and the Community Relations Council's Information Bulletin
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Altogether over 220 participants, representing 125 organisations, took part and we received 15 written submissions. A copy of Gráinne Kelly's full report along with a table summarising the key points raised during consultation and the Council's response to those points are included as Appendices to the revised Peace Plan.

Key Issues

As a result of comments and suggestions made during the consultation, some substantial changes have been made to the document. The principal differences are:

1. There is more detail around the guiding principles, values and vision.
2. The Action Plan is more detailed, with specific proposals and named partners.
3. There are up-dated references to the Programme for Government and the Chicago visit.
4. There is a detailed report on the extensive public consultation exercise undertaken in relation to the Peace Plan.
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6. There was considerable discussion around the composition of the Partnership and the revised recommendation is:
 - elected Councillors – 6, one from each political party group
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 - other statutory agencies – 2 nominees from the Belfast Chief Executives' Group
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 - private business sector – 2, one each from CBI and Belfast City Centre Management
 - churches – 2, one each from the Protestant and Catholic churches
 - minority faith groups – 1 nominee from appropriate organisations
 - minority ethnic groups - 1 nominee from appropriate organisations.

Subject to Council approval, letters will be issued in the next couple of weeks to relevant organisations and umbrella bodies, commencing the selection process and inviting nominations from appropriate representatives for the Good Relations Partnership.

7. The proposed Good Relations Learning & Development Strategy has been withdrawn, as most respondents felt that the principal beneficiaries of this would be Council employees and not those in the wider community. This will be re-submitted in due course under priority 2.2 of the Peace III Programme "developing key institutional capacities for a shared society", which is more appropriate for this project¹.

8. The Council's bid is for an amount of £12 million or €18 million; this figure includes the additional staffing required and our projected management costs of just under 10% of the total.

9. The Action Plan outlines the proposed methodology for implementation. To retain a strategic outcome focused approach and ensure that the activities under the Plan are delivered in a co-ordinated and coherent manner, we will commission the majority of the work (80%) and distribute 20% of the funding by way of open calls. This is based on advice from SEUPB and other EU funders, who recommend that open calls should be reduced, as the assessment of these is very resource intensive and often results in a low success rate for applicants. The SEUPB have agreed with this 80/20 ratio.

10. We will also set up a small grants scheme of up to £500,000 per year (assuming a successful bid of £12m).

¹ Learning and Development Strategy only included under priority 1.1 on SEUPB advice

11. The proposed timescale for the delivery of the Peace III Programme will have to be postponed as the SEUPB now inform us that they will require a minimum of 13 weeks from the time they receive our final Plan until they are able to make any decision. We hope to be able to submit our Plan in early March so may not receive any response until around May 2008. Although we may begin to draw up procedures and draft up Job Descriptions etc for anticipated staff in a parallel process at this time, we will not be able to advertise or begin a recruitment process until we receive a formal SEUPB notification of offer.²

12. The SEUPB have also informed us that they expect spending targets to be even over the period of the Plan. Our original proposal was that most expenditure would take place in the later years of the Plan so the spend targets have also been revised.

13. SEUPB have agreed to train our financial staff in EU procedures when we receive their Financial Guidelines, promised in May 2007.

14. Various minor textual changes have also been made and these are outlined in the Consultation Summary Table.

Recommendation

This Peace Plan was considered and approved by the Good Relations Steering Panel at its meeting on Friday 8 February.

The Committee is requested to consider the content of this Peace Plan and approve it for submission to the Special EU Programmes Body following ratification by Council in early March.

Officer to contact for further information:

Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, ext 6020

² The Committee is reminded that the Peace III Programme officially started in January 2007



BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

PEACE III

Priority 1.1 - Building positive relations at the local level

PEACE & RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

2007 - 2010

*Revised following consultation process
January 2008*

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1 PREFACE

1a STATEMENT of PURPOSE for the PLANNING PROCESS

This Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan (Peace Plan) sets out how Belfast City Council will manage and deliver *Theme 1.1: Building Positive Relations at the Local Level* of the Peace III programme within its own administrative area.

The Council's planning process is based on the principles of participation, openness, shared ownership, representativeness and mutual respect. We will ensure that these principles also underpin the implementation of the Peace Plan.

1b STATEMENT of the GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

In view of its population size (268,000), the boundary for the Belfast City Council area will be the geographical area for this Plan. Belfast's daytime population is significantly greater as many people travel in to work, do business or shop.

As the capital city of Northern Ireland, Belfast has a regional, as well as a city-wide focus. In the proposed reorganisation of local government, Belfast's status will be the least changed and the city will remain the most significant location for innovative good relations practices.

1c LEAD PARTNER

Belfast City Council will be the only Council and lead partner in this Peace Plan. We will work closely in collaboration with other local statutory agencies, bodies with a regional remit who work in Belfast and our social partners in the development and implementation of this Plan including, where appropriate and practical, neighbouring Councils.

Belfast is the largest of the 26 District Councils in NI with over 2,600 staff and 51 elected Members representing 6 political parties. This political composition reflects the make-up of the city as a whole, being around 50/50 unionist/nationalist. It is the largest of the District Councils with a fully accountable system of corporate governance and financial management. Its gross expenditure in the last financial year was in excess of £140m.

The Council's own commitment to proportionality principles is well established and firmly embedded in our internal procedures. We have an Equality Scheme and our business is managed through formal Standing Orders, a Scheme of Delegation and a range of financial procedures. We have our own internal Audit, Governance and Risk Service and comply fully with all the requirements of the Local Government Auditor.

The Council acknowledged at an early stage that social divisions in Belfast were deep-rooted and that it would require a joint approach from a number of agencies, both

statutory and voluntary, to effect change in society and address issues such as sectarianism and racism. The Council has co-operated with a range of other agencies in the city in examining the issues that cause division and since 2002 has had a Good Relations Steering Panel, with representatives from a range of external agencies.

We have formed a successful partnership with the other major local statutory bodies, developing a Good Relations Plan for Belfast and involving a number of Chief Executives in discussions about broader good relations issues at a policy level, most recently through the Peace II-funded Conflict Transformation Project¹. This Project aims to build collaborative actions between local organisations to address the legacy of conflict within a divided city and develop positive responses to enable us jointly to tackle subjects like sectarianism and racism.

1d STATEMENT of ENDORSEMENT

As the Belfast City Council Peace III Partnership will be established in shadow form only at this stage, the Partnership Contract (Appendix D) is still in draft form and will be fully developed and endorsed in due course by all the members of the Partnership, who are key to the successful implementation of this plan.

¹ This project is funded by Belfast Local Strategy Partnership through the EU Peace II Programme

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan (Peace Plan) sets out how Belfast City Council will manage and deliver theme 1.1 of the EU Peace III Programme: "*building positive relations at the local level*" for the period 2007–2010.

Belfast City Council will be the lead partner in this Peace Plan, which covers the administrative area of the Council. The Plan was drawn up in accordance with detailed SEUPB guidelines and the actions included are complementary and add value to our current programme of good relations work in the city.

The broader strategic framework of the *Shared Future* and related policy documents are outlined. The Plan is based on a set of public values - of consent, the rule of law, inclusion, diversity and pluralism - previously agreed by Council.

A profile of the Council area, with an analysis of the local social and economic situation is included. The issues with greatest impact on Belfast, namely sectarianism and racism are identified.

The Plan draws attention to the need for tolerance, respect for diversity and inclusion, as these are the key to the future success of Belfast as a city in a competitive global economy. The key challenges are to improve relationships and tackle prejudice to allow Belfast to achieve its full potential.

Our vision for the city in terms of good relations is of a shared, peaceful, welcoming and open city, where people are connected in a common citizenship.

The Council has 4 broad aims:

- securing shared city space
- transforming contested space
- developing shared cultural space
- building shared organisational space

A number of specific actions and projects are set out under each of these, identifying how the Council will achieve its aims and objectives and with which partners and organisations it intends to work.

The Council is determined to address directly the issue of sectarianism that has been a major blight on life in Belfast for so many years. Apart from the direct costs of the recent troubles, sectarianism has resulted in many indirect costs, including ongoing division and tension, segregated patterns of housing and schooling and separation in many areas of social and community life.

Belfast is not a city noted for its tolerance and unfortunately in recent years, racism has also become apparent with increased numbers of minority communities coming to

Belfast in hope of a better future. We are determined to tackle both sectarianism and racism and promote our vision of a better Belfast.

Division, intolerance and mistrust have hindered the potential of our city and must be addressed if Belfast is to become a prosperous European capital. This Peace Plan therefore centres on supporting efforts to promote equality, social inclusion and community cohesion and deal with the key issues of sectarianism and racism. The Action Plan is strategic in focus and will represent a collaborative approach to building peace and reconciliation at a city-wide level.

To manage the Plan, the Council will establish a new Good Relations Partnership, in shadow form only at this stage, made up of elected Councillors along with representatives from the voluntary sector, community sector, major statutory agencies, trade unions, business sector, churches, minority ethnic and minority faith groups.

Partnership members will be fully trained in their new roles and responsibilities and a partnership contract will be drawn up for this purpose. They will have responsibility for endorsing the Action Plan, developing firm criteria against which projects will be assessed and overseeing implementation.

The Council's bid for the period of the Plan is for an amount of £12 million or €18 million, to be allocated across the 4 themes. This figure includes our projected management costs of just under 10% of the total and the additional staffing required both to support organisations in developing suitable projects on peace and reconciliation issues and to ensure compliance with the strict financial standards set by the SEUPB.

The Action Plan outlines the proposed methodology for implementation. To retain a strategic outcome focused approach and ensure that the activities under the Plan are delivered in a co-ordinated and coherent manner, we will commission 80% of the work and distribute 20% of the funding by way of open calls. We will also establish a small grants scheme of up to £500,000 per year (assuming a successful bid of £12m).

Details of our monitoring and evaluation procedures are included, along with baseline indicators and our performance management arrangements.

The Council's proposals to improve tolerance and trust, to build positive relationships and to reduce levels of sectarianism and racism in Belfast have been welcomed and generally endorsed through a recent comprehensive public consultation process. The revised Peace Plan will be presented to our principal Committee, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, in February 2008.

3 INTRODUCTION

3a DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

This Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan (Peace Plan) has been drawn up in accordance with the guidelines from the SEUPB and outlines Belfast City Council's proposed partnership arrangements and activities for the delivery of the Peace III programme for the period 2007-2010.

As the democratically elected body within the city, the Council is committed to demonstrating civic leadership and working in partnership with a range of public, private, voluntary and community organisations for the well-being of its citizens.

The Council supports the overall objective of the Peace III programme which is "to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation" since this is very much in line with our own aims for our good relations work. We support proposals that address peace and reconciliation, peace-building and conflict resolution and seek to promote the normalisation of social and economic life and community cohesion. We expect to build on the success and experience of the previous Peace programmes with a renewed emphasis on reconciliation, specifically focusing on acknowledging and dealing with the conflict, building positive relations and contributing towards a shared society.

The objective of Theme 1.1 of Peace III, *building positive relations at the local level*, is "to challenge attitudes towards sectarianism and racism and to support conflict resolution and mediation at the local community level".

This Peace Plan is Belfast's response to this challenge. We have consulted widely in the development of the Plan and will continue to engage regularly with our social partners in its implementation, to maximise the contribution towards the Programme objectives, stated outputs and results. A full report on our public consultation exercise is attached as Appendices E, F and G.

The Plan was developed entirely in-house by staff from the Good Relations unit.

3b DESCRIPTION of the PARTNERSHIP and its MEMBERSHIP

The Council has substantial experience of successful partnership working, at local, regional and European levels and is well placed to influence existing alliances and work with new networks, working together to resolve common issues.

Previous Peace programmes and other initiatives have facilitated increased engagement and building peace and reconciliation between the two main communities. We will build on the lessons learned from the District Partnerships and LSPs which have helped to establish a good foundation for future work and will take advantage of the competence and capacity developed at that time.

For the past 5 years, we have had a Good Relations Steering Panel, comprised of both political and external representatives, which deals with issues around equality, good relations, sectarianism, racism and cultural diversity. We are currently re-focusing the work of this Steering Panel and will revise and extend its membership to be as inclusive, open and effective as possible and to demonstrate our commitment to maximise the effect of the Peace III funding. The newly re-titled Good Relations Partnership will continue to carry out its existing work along with the new Peace III responsibilities. The actions envisaged in the Peace Plan will be additional and complementary to those in the existing Good Relations Plan for Belfast.

The **Good Relations Partnership** will be established in shadow form early in 2008, in line with SEUPB advice. This will allow the Partnership members to be fully trained in preparation for their new roles and responsibilities. We envisage training similar to the "On Board" programme, delivered by CIPFA to members of various Boards in Northern Ireland, which covers roles and responsibilities, relationships with stakeholders, the Nolan principles, conflicts of interest, standards of behaviour and accountability etc.

The Shadow Partnership will have responsibility for endorsing the Action Plan, for the overall management of the Council's element of the Peace III programme and for determining the criteria to be used for funding.

The Shadow Partnership will be reviewed in 6 months time and the membership revised or extended if necessary.

There was considerable discussion around the **composition** of the Partnership during the period of public consultation. We will seek appropriate nominations through representative sectoral bodies for the final membership, which will be:

- elected Councillors – 6, one each from 6 political party groups on the Council
- voluntary sector – 2 nominees
- community sector – 2 nominees
- other statutory agencies – 2 nominees from the Belfast Chief Executives' Group
- trade unions – 2 from ICTU
- private business sector – 2, one each from CBI and BCCM
- churches – 2, one each from the Protestant and Catholic churches
- minority faith groups – 1 nominee from appropriate organisations
- minority ethnic groups - 1 nominee from appropriate organisations.

It is our experience that this size of committee (20) allows for both adequate representation and efficient conduct of business. This membership list (attached as Appendix C) is in line with the recommendations of a review report by Futureways² and agreed by Council in October 2006.

² *A New Shape for One of the Oldest Professions? Politics and Civil Society, the Good Relations Task in Belfast City Council, a Review of Good Relations Steering Panel, Futureways Programme, August 2006*

During consultation a significant number of people stated that whatever selection process was used it should be open and transparent to all. There was also consensus during consultation regarding the need for continuing good two-way communication and feedback between Partnership members and the sectoral interests they represent, to ensure accountability.

A partnership agreement in draft form only at this stage (attached as Appendix D) will be developed, which will outline the Partnership's composition, the respective roles and responsibilities of the various partners and a commitment to empowerment in relation to those partners and the voluntary/community sector in Belfast. The partnership agreement will be based on the Council's existing Codes of Conduct, revised as appropriate for Partnership members, with a particular reference to declarations of conflict of interest.

As the Good Relations Partnership will in effect be a Working Group of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Chairman of the Partnership will be an elected Member of Council, to ensure effective information flow and continuity.

To ensure an appropriate balance in terms of geographical representation, gender, political opinion and religious belief, the Council reserves the right to make a final decision on the composition of the revised Good Relations Partnership, reflecting the diversity of the city. We also reserve the right to co-opt individuals with appropriate expertise to provide advice and guidance on specific matters, as required.

3c CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

The future statutory introduction of community planning will require Councils to consult their residents in the future about local issues and encourage participation in decision making. In Belfast, we already consult on a regular basis with our citizens and our major surveys have consistently indicated sound support for the Council taking a more pro-active role in the promotion of community relations in the City. For example, 34% of those interviewed in our recent public survey of 2007 stated that the Council's main priority should be promoting good relations between communities.

Our draft Consultation Document, approved by Council on 1st October 2007, outlined how we proposed to manage and deliver Peace III funding under the theme 1.1 "building positive relations at the local level". We undertook an extensive public consultation exercise on our Peace III proposals during October and November; this was a shorter consultation period than normal but we were attempting to meet the SEUPB timetable.

Complete details of the proposed consultation process, a draft letter inviting participation, a draft agenda for facilitators, a response form for consultees and estimated costs of the consultation process were included as Appendices in the full Consultation Document, which was also made available on the Council's website

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/goodrelations A diagram outlining the consultation process undertaken is included as Appendix E.

Every effort was made to ensure wide public awareness of the Council's proposals and that the consultation process was as open and participative as possible:

- the full Consultation Document was on the website from Tues 2 October
- a press release was issued in the name of the Lord Mayor
- articles were published on the NICVA e-Bulletin and the Community Relations Council's Information Bulletin
- advance notice was sent to the 5 District Partnership Boards, requesting them to issue attached fliers to their own local organisations and inviting them to organise an event in their own area
- fliers were issued to over 650 groups on our Good Relations mailing list
- a letter was issued to the major statutory bodies in Belfast
- an article was included in *City Matters*, the Council magazine which is issued to 126,000 addresses in Belfast.

We organised 4 meetings in the north, south, east and west of the city in the last week in October and encouraged groups to organise their own local consultation sessions. We responded to 9 additional requests for outreach meetings with various sectoral interests, to ensure that our proposals were in line with the needs and expectations of the voluntary and community sector in Belfast.

Staff from the Good Relations Unit led the sessions and made presentations on the Council's proposals at all these events. We had a pool of 6 independent researchers, chosen from the Community Relations Council's select list to ensure transparency and impartiality, who facilitated the discussions at the consultation meetings. We engaged Gráinne Kelly (who co-devised the principles of peace and reconciliation used by the SEUPB) to collate all the responses made both at the consultation sessions and in written submissions and produce a final report.

The Equality Officer from the Good Relations Unit assisted in the public consultation process, ensuring that we made particular efforts to involve S 75 groups and marginalised groups from areas of social deprivation, to promote social inclusion. She arranged and led a special session with the Council's S 75 groups to enable full discussion on the draft Plan. (See Appendix K for Equality Statement).

We organised special sessions with three of the target groups identified by the SEUPB. We met and discussed our proposals with the members of the City Council's Youth Forum and the All Party Reference Group on Older People. We facilitated a consultation session with representatives from the women's sector in Belfast; women, who make up over 53% of the city's population, have substantial experience in peace-building and are likely to play a major role in Peace III.

Altogether over 220 participants, representing 125 organisations, took part and we received 15 written submissions; all those making submissions received replies. All the written submissions and Gráinne Kelly's full report were made available on the Council's website in December 2007; her full report and a table summarising the key points raised during consultation and the Council's considered response to those points are included as Appendices F and G.

The Council is aware of its statutory obligations under the disability legislation. We will make efforts to encourage disabled people to seek nominations as representatives on the Good Relations Partnership.

As a result of the consultation exercise, a considerable number of changes have been made and incorporated into the Action Plan. The Shadow Partnership, when fully established and trained, will have responsibility for endorsing the Action Plan and for drawing up firm criteria to be used in determining Peace III funding.

We will maintain consultation with the relevant local sectoral interests throughout the period of the Plan and intend to engage in ongoing discussions in the implementation phase in order to ensure openness and responsiveness and maximise the Plan's effectiveness.

3d OVERVIEW of the STRATEGIC CONTEXT of the Plan

The Peace Plan has been developed to be complementary to our current work on community and race relations in Belfast and to add value to our existing local programme.

The additional Peace III funding will enable us to develop and enhance our own work on good relations and the actions in our Good Relations Strategy and Good Relations Plan, which build on our work on equality. A key element of our work is in facilitating networks and developing relationships that will proactively promote positive change both at an individual level and between communities.

The Peace Plan is also complementary to other broader government regional policies and strategic initiatives including *A Shared Future*, the *Racial Equality Strategy*, *Section 75* of the *NI Act 1998*, the *Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy*, current proposals under the Review of Public Administration (RPA) and neighbourhood renewal.

The recent NI Assembly's Draft Programme for Government for 2008-2011 refers specifically to the need to promote tolerance and inclusion as a priority area, with "a better future" of fairness, inclusion and equality of opportunity as a cross-cutting theme. The Draft Programme for Government recognises the clear link between our future prosperity and creating a stable society, stating that "we must also continue our efforts to address divisions within our society. Progress has been made but sectarianism, racism and intolerance are still too evident. They mar our reputation, blight our economic prospects and have a corrosive effect on our society".

The Government of Ireland has also recognised the need to tackle sectarianism and has stated in its *Blueprint for Ireland's Future 2007-12* that "the hard reality is that, as politics has progressed in the North, sectarianism has festered and in many cases grown. It represents by far the largest threat to lasting peace and needs urgent attention". The Irish Government acknowledges the need to improve dialogue between the nationalist and unionist traditions and to reduce tension, particularly in interface areas and has increased funding accordingly for this purpose.

The Council is aware that developing a culture of peaceful tolerance, interaction and social stability is the crucial key to sustaining prosperity in Belfast.

The arrival of many migrant workers to Belfast, particularly since the extension of the EU in 2004, has made Belfast's population more diverse in recent years and this is likely to continue. It is important that the underlying local prejudices manifested in sectarianism do not develop further into racist attitudes.

The importance of the value of tolerance playing a key role in a successful economy is increasingly being recognised at an international level. The social characteristics of city-regions have a big influence over their economic success and competitiveness. The academic Richard Florida³, for example, states that "places that offer a high quality of life and best accommodate diversity enjoy the greatest success in talent attraction /retention and in the growth of their technology-intensive economic activities".

In particular, we will ensure that the Peace Plan links closely to the broader City Development Plan for Belfast and contributes to the overall improvement of the city.

3e GUIDING PRINCIPLES and VALUES

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; there can be no good relations without equality.

We are committed to supporting the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence in a pro-active manner and aim to mainstream these concepts into all of our activities, policies, structures and procedures. Recognising that diverse groups are interdependent and basing relationships amongst them on agreed principles of fairness and equality is an essential foundation for our good relations work in Belfast.

In line with the *Shared Future* policy, we developed our own Good Relations Plan for Belfast, with specific relation to our own particular local context and circumstances and

³ *Competing on Creativity*, Report for the Ontario Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation and the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, Richard Florida, Meric Gertler et alia, November 2002

in association with the other major local statutory agencies. The Council agreed that in the absence of a shared moral or political consensus, a '**public values**' approach could be adopted. The values considered particularly relevant to Belfast are consent, the rule of law, inclusion, diversity and pluralism. Widespread acceptance of these values as the basis for a plan would directly address the good relations problems in the city.

- **Consent** – the principle of consent can have a local as well as constitutional significance. It signifies that change of any kind must take place peacefully and via persuasion, rather than through coercion. Most of all, it conveys to minorities of all kinds that they will not be driven down a particular path against their will. It thus embodies the notion of individual security as a human right.
- **Rule of Law** – complementing the principle of consent is the principle of the rule of law, an acceptance of the legal framework and the institutions that enforce it. In the final analysis, the guarantee of individual security cannot be perpetually enforced by the actions of the security forces alone. Their role is to intervene when the rule of law is flouted by individuals or institutions. Security ultimately depends on the widespread acceptance of the rule of law. The rule of law is made real when each individual is treated as equal before the law, when individuals have legal redress if wronged and when there is community consensus around the law and its implementation. Even in an international context, this is widely recognised as a fundamental basis of civic society. The World Bank, for example, cites the rule of law as a key base for the development of social capital.
- **Inclusion** – the principle of inclusion is important in two senses: the first concerns the ways in which social exclusion and marginalisation feed political grievance and intensify community division; the second accepts that there are multiple sources of community and civic leadership – everybody can get onboard – past activities, no matter how murky, should not prevent participation. It also accepts that there should be no single source of community leadership to which others are subordinate.
- **Diversity** – the principle of diversity compels us to recognise that difference is not necessarily a threat and that the ability to bond only with others like ourselves is a brake on both personal development and community cohesion. It demands that we respect difference without affirming a purely relative world of tolerance for everything. For example, we want to rule out such practices as the abuse of children or the subordination of women or the practice of hate crime.

In this vein, the Community Cohesion Programme in Britain suggests that a cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities
- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, and

- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.
- **Pluralism** – the principle of pluralism is diversity for the political arena. It recognises the reality that individuals and parties with different, even antagonistic, political aspirations can work together across agreed, and sometimes very limited, political agendas. The key, in a situation where no single group has overall dominance, as within the current Council, is negotiation and persuasion. Importantly, where there are no permanent majorities, individual political aspirations can only succeed to the extent that they are convincing to those who do not share them.

These values are complemented by two other core ideas:

- the importance of developing a common citizenship for the diverse citizens of Belfast, with a civic rather than an ethnic identity
- the sustaining and expansion of public spaces, accessible to all, from which no citizen feels excluded and through which all citizens can travel freely.

When these values are applied, we can produce a 'vision' of what Belfast could be like. The essential claim is that Belfast becomes one city where people are connected via the medium of citizenship. It should also be a shared city, a peaceful city, a welcoming city and an open city, concepts which are more fully explored below in our Vision for the City at 6a. These values, which were discussed and agreed by the six political party groups on the Council as the basis for our Good Relations Plan, are carried forward as the guiding principles and values for our Peace Plan.

The SEUPB guidelines name 5 cross-cutting themes:

- cross border co-operation
- equality
- sustainable development
- impact on poverty
- partnership

With the exception of the first, given our location, all these themes already underpin all our policies and procedures and are well mainstreamed into our operational work. We will continue to work closely with the Community Relations Council and Border Action and will develop links with Co-operation Ireland and other such bodies to maximise the number of cross-border contacts and activities to try to achieve the 30% target of cross-border work set. Our principal task will remain that of continuing to support contact and develop relationships within the deeply segregated city of Belfast, to counter both sectarianism and racism.

The Council's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity, achieving sustainable development, targeting areas of deprivation and working in partnership with others are well known and integrated into all our activities.

Target groups and areas

The SEUPB guidelines for Peace III highlight certain target groups and beneficiaries, namely:

- victims of the conflict
- displaced people, who have moved because of violence or from interface areas
- people who have been excluded or marginalised from economic, social and civil networks as a result of problems related to sectarianism, racism and the conflict, to include, *inter alia*, a focus on young people, women and older people
- former members of the security and ancillary services
- ex-prisoners and their families
- public, private and voluntary sector organisations and their staff who have a contribution to make towards developing a shared society.

The SEUPB guidelines also highlight certain target areas, which show the effects of conflict and/or community polarisation as a result of the conflict, including:

- sectarian interface areas where segregation, inter-community conflict and dispute is high and community relations are correspondingly poor
- disadvantaged areas suffering the effects of physical dereliction as a consequence of the conflict
- areas that have experienced high levels of sectarian and racial crimes, incidents and tensions
- areas where social and economic development has been inhibited by the conflict and problems of exclusion and marginalisation exist, illustrated by low levels of income, skills and qualifications.

We have ensured that our Action Plan is particularly focused on these groups and areas and we will continue to work closely with other agencies, such as the Community Relations Council, NI Housing Executive and Health Trusts *inter alia*, to ensure that the effectiveness of the Plan is maximised.

The implementation of our Peace Plan will also be closely linked to our wider involvement in other European Union programmes, such as INTERREG, URBACT and networks like Eurocities and Quartiers en Crise.

4 AREA PROFILE

4a KEY SERVICE PROVIDERS

The Council has long been aware of the need to work with a range of other agencies in order to address issues arising from the legacy of the conflict and problems like sectarianism and racism that affect Belfast. We have had external representatives from the churches, the trade unions, the business sector, minority ethnic groups and the Community Relations Council on our Good Relations Steering Panel since 2002. More recently we have developed close working relationships with most of the major service providers in the city and in late 2006 produced a city-wide Good Relations Plan in collaboration with the major statutory agencies in the city:

- the relevant Health Board, Health Trusts and Hospitals (now Belfast Health & Social Care Trust))
- Belfast Education & Library Board
- Belfast Institute of Further & Higher Education (now Belfast Metropolitan College)
- Department for Social Development
- NI Housing Executive
- Police Service of N Ireland
- Belfast Local Strategy Partnership.

The Good Relations Plan for Belfast incorporates the good relations actions planned by the Council along with those of others – in housing, health, education and the police – to initiate the process of embedding shared future principles into all our operations.

Building on the success of the Good Relations Plan, the Council has established a group, which has begun to examine broader good relations issues at a strategic policy level. The Chief Executive of the City Council chairs a Project Reference Group of Chief Executives and senior officers from 9 other public agencies in Belfast⁴ that has overseen a number of locally relevant research projects and a seminar series. Most recently the Group has undertaken a study visit to Chicago, to better understand the dynamics of transforming a divided city. This work has also been supported through EU funding through the Peace II-funded Conflict Transformation Project⁵ which seeks to build an evidence base to inform policy and practice particularly in relation to shared space.

It is not possible here to list all those who deliver local services but the Council's SNAP⁶ programme is currently undertaking a city-wide survey which will gather information on all the services being delivered in Belfast. It is anticipated that the results of this comprehensive survey will be available in late 2007 and these will be used in determining priority areas and strategic gaps in delivery.

⁴ those listed above plus the OFM/DFM and Community Relations Council

⁵ This project is funded by Belfast Local Strategy Partnership through the EU Peace II Programme

⁶ SNAP = Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme

4b AUDIT of CURRENT POLICIES and CURRENT SERVICE PROVISION

In 2004-05 the Good Relations Steering Panel commissioned Dr Mike Morrissey to conduct a comprehensive audit of good relations activities in Belfast to identify gaps and potential overlaps and to inform its future activities.

We are developing our database further by undertaking a quantitative audit of good relations activities and initiatives in the city under our current Peace II-funded Conflict Transformation Project; the final research report will be available in April 2008.

The SNAP survey will provide initial up-dated information on those organisations undertaking Good Relations activities in Belfast at a neighbourhood level.

4c ANALYSIS of CURRENT ECONOMIC, SOCIAL and ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION

Northern Ireland is in a period of dynamic change and Belfast has been transformed over the past few years. In 2006 Belfast was described in the Lonely Planet Guide as a "boom town" and one of the top 10 cities "on the rise".

Overall the data shows that Belfast is making good progress and the city has improved across the range of indicators⁷ in absolute terms. Over the last five years, Belfast has seen major retail and residential developments, an increase in the financial services sector and a drop in unemployment levels to an all-time low. House prices across the city have increased significantly and, following a sustained period of population loss, its residential population (268,000 or 15% of the total for NI) has begun to stabilise⁸.

Belfast is still a city of contrasts. On many measures of socio-economic performance there has been a narrowing of the difference between the Belfast region and UK averages, although a gap still remains on most aspects. The challenge facing us is to ensure that all of our citizens are able to share the new opportunities and the 'feel-good' factor that has developed with the peace process. Unfortunately, there are still many areas within the city where there has been little change and disadvantage remains a major problem, with pockets of deprivation all over the city but especially in north and west Belfast.

In spite of various Government initiatives over the years (ranging from the Belfast Areas of Need, Belfast Action Teams, Making Belfast Work and the Belfast Regeneration Office to the current Partnership Boards) social and economic deprivation continues to have a significant impact on the city.

⁷ Professor M. Parkinson CBE "Where Is Belfast Going?", European Institute for Urban Affairs, Liverpool John Moores University (July 2007) p1

⁸ *ibid.* p2

Belfast has 9 of the 10 most deprived wards in NI in terms of multiple deprivation and the worst 10 wards in NI in terms of health deprivation are in Belfast. Average life expectancy is lower in Belfast and the city has a higher proportion of school leavers with no formal qualifications than elsewhere in NI. There is well documented evidence that areas suffering high deprivation generally have poorer health standards and lower educational attainment levels. Economic inactivity and unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment, continue to be problems in Belfast. There is still a heavy reliance on public sector employment.

A detailed area profile of Belfast is included as Appendix H and this section summarises only key statistics.

Peace III will enable us to address some of these issues. The Council will lead in the development of this Plan, but it needs the support of other public agencies and the contribution of our vibrant voluntary and community sector to make it a success.

4d ISSUES with GREATEST IMPACT on BELFAST

The social divisions that exist in Northern Ireland are most evident in Belfast and segregation defines many aspects of our lives. Although the Council has begun work to address the divisive issues of sectarianism and racism, we will appreciate the substantial additional funding offered under Peace III to support our efforts and help to bring about major change in our society.

The Council is supported in its aims by the citizens of Belfast. Our major public consultation surveys of both 2004 and 2007, in each of which over 1500 people were interviewed, confirmed that residents believe that the promotion of good relations should remain a top priority for the Council.

During the conflict of the past 30 years, Belfast was the seat of the most intensive violence in NI and suffered disproportionately as a result. Problems of security, crime, community relations and racist incidents, are particularly acute in Belfast and have had a consequent impact on mutual suspicion and fear.

The impact of violence results in multiple costs for communities. Belfast contains the highest number of sectarian interface areas in NI (over 70% of the total) where segregation remains high and inter-community tensions and violence is ongoing; inter-community relations are correspondingly poor. In these areas social and economic development has been inhibited by the conflict and problems of exclusion and marginalisation persist, illustrated by low levels of income, skills and qualification. Many disadvantaged areas suffer the effects of physical dereliction as a direct consequence of the conflict.

The highly segregated nature of Belfast is obvious as expressions of community identity are often expressed in highly visible ways – e.g. murals, kerb painting, or the flying of flags. The Council has recently embarked on a project entitled Re-imaging

Communities, managed by the Arts Council for NI, which is attempting to encourage local communities to remove the more aggressive wall murals and replace them with more acceptable forms of expression.

Flag flying has been a feature of Belfast for many years and it is common to see flags flying on lampposts for many months until they have become tattered and torn, particularly in loyalist areas. There are obvious chill factors associated with such marking of territory and evidence from a recent survey indicates that both loyalist and republican flags and murals potentially have a detrimental effect on the economy of local areas. Responses indicate that although a good proportion of people from the 'other' community are deterred from shopping in areas with flags and emblems, a substantial proportion of the 'same' community are also less willing to shop there – indicating that political symbols act as a more general commercial disincentive⁹.

Between 1969 and 1999 Belfast, with less than 20% of the population, suffered more than 40% of all security-related fatalities and a disproportionate share of security-related injuries in NI. The most obvious effect of this violent history has been increasing residential polarisation. More than 50% of the city's population now lives in segregated wards that are either 90% Protestant or 90% Catholic community background. Segregation in public housing is virtually complete in Belfast.

The recent increase in house prices in Belfast has resulted in a shortage of affordable housing and community fragmentation in some areas. It has also led to difficulties for those few areas regarded as "mixed" in retaining their character. Economic investment in the city has been uneven and private developers and private investments have played a role in changing the face of the city.

Levels of tolerance are low and community attitudes are insular. Successive survey results¹⁰ indicate how political developments (good and bad) have a substantial impact on how one community views the other. Local research¹¹ highlights mutual fear and suspicion, with identities asserted defensively and via exclusion rather than openly and via engagement. Large numbers of people live parallel lives, with little or no cross-community contact and little knowledge about the other community.

There is evidence to suggest that individuals forego employment opportunities and access to services, including social services, in areas which they perceive to be dominated by the 'other'.¹² This serves to further isolate and marginalise communities in areas already seriously disadvantaged by under-investment, poor levels of health, educational under-achievement and environmental dereliction.

⁹ Dr. Dominic Bryan, research for the NI Life & Times Survey, 2007

¹⁰ *NI Life & Times Surveys*, www.ark.ac.uk

¹¹ *Fear and Ethnic Division*, P. Shirlow, Peace Review Vol. 13 No. 1, 2001

¹² *A Policy Agenda for the Interface*, C. O'Halloran, P. Shirlow and B. Murtagh, Belfast Interface Project, 2004

The demography of Belfast has become more diverse very rapidly in recent years, particularly since the accession of new states to the EU in May 2004, when the citizens of 8 central and eastern European countries gained the right to work in the UK. Between 2005 and 2006 population growth due to migration was the highest ever observed in NI and for the first time was more than natural growth; about a third of all migrants to NI have come to Belfast.¹³

This new migration has been generated by our growing economy and a demand for workers which cannot be met from the local population. A conservative estimate puts this figure at around 7,500 migrants for the period 2004-06. Most new migrants to Belfast come from Poland, followed by Slovaks, Filipinos, Indians and Czechs. There are considerable variations by employment sector, with health sector employees predominantly Filipinos, Indians and Malays.¹⁴

¹³ NISRA Mid-Year population estimate, July 2007

¹⁴ *New Migrants and Belfast*, Dr Neil Jarman, Institute for Conflict Research, a research report commissioned by the Good Relations Steering Panel of Belfast City Council 2007.

5 AREA SWOT ANALYSIS

5a SWOT

The following SWOT provides an internal and external analysis of the area in relation to the objectives of Theme 1.1.

Strengths – Internal	Weaknesses – Internal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comprehensive governance, financial and risk management systems • agreed inter-agency Good Relations Plan & associated public values • strong track record of delivery through partnership working including the Good Relations Steering Panel • previous experience of delivering substantial projects, including EU & other funding programmes with appropriate monitoring and audit procedures • excellent models of practice in the area of conflict transformation across the city • experience of working within regional networks such as COMET & Arc 21 • experience of work with diverse communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uncertainty in relation to out-workings of the Review of Public Administration and its implications for Belfast City Council • fractured structure of governance in Belfast • multiple demands for partnership working within a limited pool of resources • requirement to establish a new structure and relationships to manage Peace III programme
Opportunities – External	Threats – External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local devolved administration • significantly improved community relations and reduced inter communal violence • predicted growth in the NI economy • Review of Public Administration and centrality of A Shared Future • significant resource of cross-community and cross-border linkages developed under previous Peace interventions • substantial experience of anti-sectarian and anti-racism work in NI and UK • opportunities to share learning in the field of conflict transformation with other regions emerging from conflict • new migrant communities will help fill labour market gaps and bring greater cultural diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased demands on public expenditure • expectations of community and voluntary sector re Peace III • remains a highly segregated society with ongoing intra- and inter-community tensions • underlying structural weaknesses such as high level of long term unemployment and declining population • negative reactions to the changing ethnic and racial makeup of the population • lack of co-ordinated approach to migrant worker issues

5b SUMMARY STATEMENT of NEED and KEY CHALLENGES

Although social and cultural divisions are prevalent throughout NI, it is within Belfast that they are most evident. The segregated patterns of life in the City are marked at all levels – on the whole, people live in separate residential areas, go to separate schools, to different churches and social clubs, celebrate different traditions and even read different local morning newspapers.

In many areas there is little cross-community contact or interaction between catholic/nationalist and protestant/unionist communities, with neighbourhoods side by side in geographical terms but often living parallel lives with little in common.

The levels of segregation in the city are marked at all levels and expressions of support for one's 'own' community are often expressed in physical form – e.g. in the form of gable end murals, kerb painting, or the flying of flags. All these territory markings act as chill factors.

The most obvious and dominant expression of the sectarian divisions in the city are the interfaces, spatial expressions of mistrust and mutual fear. Belfast has more physically defined interfaces than any other Council in NI, with 42 identified interface barriers which are clear physical structures, such as brick walls or security barriers. However, not all are physically demarcated and "an interfacemay be unnoticeable to the outsider but local people know exactly where it is."¹⁵

In Belfast, a report in 2002 suggested that increased community polarisation and worsening sectarian divisions had been accompanied by intensified tensions between neighbouring interface communities.¹⁶

A survey of 2004 noted that interface violence has been a significant factor sustaining fear, mistrust and hostility between communities. It stated that "The recurrent and persistent presence of inter-community tensions, street disorder and violence in numerous interface areas in north and east Belfast has been a notable factor of the transitional period between militarised conflict and an established peaceful society"¹⁷.

Levels of territoriality are high and apart from the city centre and the main arterial routes, there is a corresponding lack of shared public spaces, accessible to and commonly used by all sections of the population.

While both communities accept that relations are likely to improve in future, there is a disparity in the extent to which they welcome opportunities for cross-community contact. There is evidence of a growing sense of alienation and marginalisation within the Protestant community, with a degree of suspicion that community relations involves a hidden agenda and making political concessions.

¹⁵ *A Policy Agenda for the Interface*, C. O'Halloran, P. Shirlow, B. Murtagh, Belfast Interface Project, 2004

¹⁶ Paper by Dr. P. Shirlow at Royal Geographical Society Conference, Queen's University Belfast, 2002.

¹⁷ *Demography, Development and Disorder: Changing Patterns of Interface Areas*, N. Jarman, Institute for Conflict Research, 2004

Over recent years, Belfast has experienced a marked increase in levels of inward migration. This was unfortunately accompanied by a sharp rise in racially-motivated incidents and attacks, which in NI doubled from over 400 in 2003/4 to over 800 in 2005/6.¹⁸ When the Peace III programme closes in 2013, our ethnic mix will probably have altered again, with further challenges for inclusion and race relations. Although the issue of migration is one affecting all parts of the EU, there are additional challenges for Belfast given our legacies of bitter inter-communal antagonism and acute territorialism.

Evidence from social attitude surveys throughout NI indicates that Catholic, Protestant and ethnic minority communities in general continue to portray low levels of tolerance or appreciation of diversity.¹⁹

In summary, there are significant human, economic and social costs in Belfast as it emerges from a period of protracted violent conflict. The development of Belfast as the region's capital city is inhibited by the 'diseconomies of division'. Considerable resources applied to deal with security issues could be devoted to urban regeneration or social need. Public services and amenities face the extra cost of the duplication of services and parallel delivery. The segmentation of both housing and labour markets reduces choice and the efficiency of the operation. Conflict and division affect the city's image as an investment location. Investment decisions in the city are often consciously and unconsciously shaped by the dynamics of divisions and the legacy of violence.

In an ever-changing, global environment, cities need to be vibrant, attractive places to live, work and invest in. Modern cities must be socially and economically stable as well as inter-connected, dynamic and attractive to investors. Social capital theory highlights that the health of any society is influenced not only by the measurement of tangibles, but by the quality of relationships that allow free transactions in community life.

The themes for this Peace Plan have been selected to reflect the needs of Belfast in terms of improving relationships and tackling prejudice, both sectarian and racist, to allow the city to be successful in a competitive economy.

¹⁸ PSNI statistics, reported in *The Next Stephen Lawrence?* R. McVeigh, Research Report for the NI Council for Ethnic Minorities, June 2006

¹⁹ *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, Ten Years of Social Attitudes to Community Relations in Northern Ireland*, J. Hughes and C. Donnelly, August 2001

6 VISION, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

6a VISION FOR THE CITY

The Council's public values model (set out in detail above at 3e, Guiding principles and values), combined with the two core concepts of developing a common civic citizenship and sustaining and expanding inclusive and accessible public spaces, shapes the vision of what Belfast could become in the future.

The fundamental claim is that Belfast should become one city, where people are connected via the medium of citizenship. It should also be:

- a shared city
- a peaceful city
- a welcoming city and
- an open city.

A shared city

Belfast is a city where every citizen knows that they belong and can participate together in the life of the city. The test of fairness and equality lies in how the city treats its weakest communities, groups and citizens.

A peaceful city

There are real differences of aspiration and experience. Belfast is committed to change through dialogue and exclusively non-violent means, in which all views are considered. Everyone is treated fairly by the law and the law is respected by everyone.

A welcoming city

We come from different backgrounds and traditions, each of which has a place. There is thus a collective responsibility to ensure there is a place in the city for identities other than our own.

An open city

The public places of the city and its institutions belong to, should be accessible to and trusted by all of those who live and work in the city.

In our vision for the city, as stated in our Corporate Plan²⁰, we want to make Belfast a better place for everyone. ***We have a vision of Belfast as a modern and welcoming city with a quality of life to rival the best in the world - in short, we believe in a better Belfast.*** We want to help create a city:

- that is vibrant and prosperous
- that is attractive and clean
- that is safe and secure
- where there is equality of treatment and opportunity for everyone with good relations between all citizens
- where quality of life improves continuously
- where the decisions that are made reflect what is best for this and future generations
- where customer focused Council and public services are provided fairly
- where all organisations work in partnership for the common goal of a better society
- with a strong cultural life.

Our vision in terms of our Good Relations Strategy is for a stable, tolerant, fair and pluralist society, where individuality is respected and diversity is celebrated, in an inclusive manner. 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; there can be no good relations without equality. We are committed to supporting the principles of equity, diversity and inter-dependence in a pro-active manner and aim to mainstream these concepts into all of our activities, policies, structures and procedures.

The Peace Plan will also build on recent work on conflict transformation in the city, funded by the Belfast LSP. Peace III funding will provide a significant boost to our efforts to promote good relations and assist us in our aim of achieving a more secure and tolerant society at city level. There is no doubt that sectarianism, and more recently racism, represents the greatest threats to stability and prosperity in Belfast and impedes the full potential offered by the peace process.

We will work closely with a range of groups at local level and with the Community Relations Council and the Community Relations Unit within OFM/DFM at regional level, to ensure that the additional Peace funding dovetails with and adds value to our current community and race relations work and maximises its effectiveness.

²⁰ To ensure full understanding of our work, this Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan should be read in conjunction with other relevant Council plans and policies, i.e. the Corporate Plan and Good Relations Plan, which are available on the website www.belfastcity.gov.uk

We believe that there will be significant progress in the achievement of this Vision over the period up to 2015. In the early years, during the period of this Plan i.e. up to 2010, we anticipate that there will be evidence of positive attitudinal change, with increasing contact and interaction between communities and the development of trust, confidence and increased tolerance.

We will encourage local communities to engage in dialogue about issues of difference and division and begin meaningful discussions around expressions of identity and topics that have in the past proved very contentious in Belfast. We will anticipate a reduction in the physical manifestations of division, both sectarian and racist – i.e. aggressive murals, paramilitary flags and racist graffiti.

We will promote a focus on positive expressions of shared identity and encourage an increased awareness and understanding of all the various cultural traditions that exist in Belfast, old and new.

We will support constructive efforts to diffuse tensions and support conflict mediation and resolution at the local level. We expect to see a reduction in the number of parades being regarded as contentious in Belfast.

In particular, we will support constructive efforts to promote community dialogue around the issue of physical markings of segregation and aim to work towards the removal of some peacelines, where locally agreed, and the reduction of the number of areas regarded as being interfaces or flashpoint areas. We will aim for the physical regeneration of these areas and positive improvements in youth service provision here.

We will continue to support organisations working to promote community cohesion and expect to see a reduction in the number of hate crimes recorded, both sectarian and racist. We will support areas that are currently “mixed” to retain their character.

We will work with the major public agencies on the city to protect and increase our shared public spaces and improve mobility around the city, particularly labour mobility.

The Peace Plan will encourage minority and marginalised groups to take part fully in civic society. This grass roots “bottom up” approach will support communities to become actively involved in decision making which affects them directly. This will be in line with both our Community Support Plan and with the participatory principles that will underpin the future introduction of community planning.

Following a review, we will then build on this positive change over the later period with further significant change having occurred by 2013 and the end of the Peace III programme. The Council appreciates that this timeline needs further development; we will facilitate this through the establishment of our Partnership and consultation with key partners across all sectors.

6b CONSULTATION on VISION

The Council has consulted widely on its good relations work at various times over the past few years. In the autumn of 2002, the Good Relations Steering Panel undertook a wide-ranging series of consultation meetings with representatives from a range of sectors within the city, including Churches, faith groups, ethnic minorities, trade unions, business, statutory bodies, voluntary organisations, community organisations and community relations specialists, advisors and academics. The meetings, used to gauge opinions and views about the Council's vision for good relations, were well attended, with lively discussions and the reactions to the Council's proposals were very positive. The Council adopted the vision for the Good Relations Strategy in February 2003.

We drew up our Good Relation Plan for Belfast in association with the other major statutory agencies and consulted closely with them in its development in 2006.

The Council is supported in its aims by the citizens of Belfast. Our major public consultation surveys of both 2004 and 2007, in each of which over 1500 people were interviewed, confirmed that residents believe that the promotion of good relations should remain a top priority for the Council.

In the autumn of 2007, we completed a comprehensive consultation process on our proposals for "Building positive relations at the local level" under 1.1 of the Peace III Programme. Our consultation process is set out above at 3b and full details are included at Appendices E, F and G. The consultation process met with general agreement for our plans and confirmed support for the Council's vision and approach.

6c BROAD AIMS and OBJECTIVES

As our Good Relations Plan has been widely agreed within the public sector of the city, the City Council, the Community Relations Council and the SEUPB have agreed that it and its themes should form the framework for the Peace Plan. Our public consultation has supported this and accordingly, derived from the vision set out above, the Peace Plan will have 4 broad aims:

- securing shared city space
- transforming contested space
- developing shared cultural space
- building shared organisational space

The actions envisaged in this Peace Plan will be additional and complementary to those included in our Good Relations Plan. The extra funding provided under Peace III will add value to the work of a range of agencies, underpinning the equality and good relations responsibilities of statutory agencies and ensuring the participation of the voluntary and community sector in this crucial area of work. This will help to mainstream the concepts of peace and reconciliation and provide a lasting legacy for the Peace programme.

Feedback from the public consultation exercise supported our view that these four broad themes provide enough flexibility to incorporate a wide range of appropriate approaches to peace and reconciliation work. We will also consider any proposed activity that covers more than one theme or that does not fit neatly into a theme but clearly contributes to the overall aims of the Plan.

Each aim is set out below, with a number of specific objectives for each.

SECURING SHARED CITY SPACE
Aim: To secure and expand the public places of the city, from which no citizen feels excluded and through which all citizens can travel freely and safely.
<p>Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To work with key partners in the city to secure and manage public spaces and develop integrated mechanisms to protect their shared nature 2. To undertake work on primary routes, to ensure they are accessible to all, to promote community engagement and bridging capital and improve quality of life 3. To provide support for communities that are currently mixed to secure community cohesion
TRANSFORMING CONTESTED SPACE
Aim: To reduce inter-community tensions and conflict and to support the integrated regeneration of those communities at the interface, having dealt with the legacies of conflict.
<p>Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To support dialogue, mediation and inter-community engagement, particularly around issues of division (e.g. parades, flags) 2. To support social and economic regeneration projects with an explicit inter-community relationship-building focus 3. To support long-term engagement with young people at flashpoint areas 4. To support inter-community physical refurbishment programmes in interface areas and areas of conflict.

DEVELOPING SHARED CULTURAL SPACE

Aim: To celebrate and give place to the different backgrounds and traditions of the citizens of Belfast and build a collective responsibility to ensure there is a place for identities other than our own.

Objectives:

1. To support quality contact and understanding of expressions of different cultural identities for the purposes of building respect and sustainable relationships.
2. To support engagement work that challenges perceptions, develops understanding and encourages dialogue between communities
3. To support work where diversity is explored positively, via a range of media – e.g. sport, the arts, music, heritage, history, culture or language to promote a civic identity
4. To develop a forum and support strategy for migrant workers in the city, with key partner agencies, to welcome newcomers and promote cohesion and integration

BUILDING SHARED ORGANISATIONAL SPACE

Aim: to build and sustain institutions which are fair and accessible to all, are committed to change through dialogue, and in which every citizen knows that they are represented and can participate.

Objectives:

1. To build the capacity of organisations in relation to the appreciation of diversity and the promotion of tolerance, mediation and conflict resolution
2. To encourage shared experiences in employment patterns e.g. apprenticeship schemes or employability programmes
3. To support information sharing and advocate good practice in conflict transformation and integration processes through networks, study visits and research

7 PREFERRED OPTION for ACHIEVING AIMS and OBJECTIVES

Peace-building is a long-term challenge and the Council is well aware that it requires sustained efforts by a range of agencies. As Senator George Mitchell said, in response to the news that devolved government was to return to Northern Ireland on 8 May 2007 "While one can agree on political and security measures, it takes a very long time, generations perhaps, to change people's hearts and minds". We intend to build on our existing work and partnerships to maintain our efforts in this regard, to make a difference in Belfast.

The Partnership will adopt a strategic, outcome focused approach, centred on reconciling communities and contributing towards a shared society. Our key priorities throughout will be on addressing sectarianism and racism in Belfast.

In developing the Peace Plan a range of options have been identified and analysed and the following is the Council's preferred option for delivery of the Peace Plan, along with the criteria used in consideration.

Commissioned work and open calls

We will deliver the programme of work through a mix of commissioned work on thematic areas and open calls. Advice from the SEUPB and other funding agencies is to reduce the number of open calls, as experience shows that their assessment is heavily resource intensive, time consuming and often results in a low success rate for applicants. We will therefore limit the amount of funding available for open calls to a maximum of 20% of the total sum available and the Partnership will develop firm criteria on which applications will be assessed.

We will commission the majority of the work, based on actual and demonstrable need. We feel this will allow the Partnership to maintain a strategic focus and ensure that the Peace Plan is delivered in a co-ordinated and coherent manner by a range of organisations with relevant experience. We also believe that this is a more beneficial and cost effective approach which will maximise the potential of the Plan to make a difference and leave a lasting legacy. We know from local experience and feedback from consultation that there are many agencies in Belfast who are in a position to assist in delivering the Peace III programme. We may invite initial submissions of expressions of interest for particular projects from appropriate organisations, to be used to develop firmer proposals.

Additionality and standards required

All work undertaken under the Peace Plan must demonstrate additionality, take account of and be complementary to, existing government and Council policies. This includes our own ongoing good relations work supported by the Community Relations Unit within the OFM/DFM under the District Council Community Relations Programme and the current Re-Imaging Communities Programme, managed by the Arts Council for NI. It also applies to other Council initiatives including our Community Support Plan; Community Safety Strategy; Economic Development and SNAP programmes etc. All projects must comply with all standard Council requirements e.g. Child Protection,

Health & Safety, Event Management etc. and appropriate delivery agencies must sign up to a Good Relations Statement, such as that devised by the Community Relations Council.

Governance and joint working

We will invite organisations with appropriate expertise to deliver specific actions to achieve the objectives of the Peace Plan, as agreed by the Partnership. In view of the very specific SEUPB financial and monitoring requirements, it is likely that only organisations with well developed financial management and corporate governance capacity will be in a position to receive successful commissions. We will expect the majority of our funding to be in the form of large allocations e.g. £100,000 and above.

We expect organisations to work collectively or to come together in the form of local coalitions or consortia in order to be able to deliver projects jointly under the Peace Plan. We encourage smaller groups to work in collaboration with larger ones for developmental purposes, networking and to ensure the sharing of resources and best practice and we encourage larger groups to form new partnerships and develop new links, particularly cross-community links.

Single identity work will be eligible but, since peace and reconciliation is a central theme of this Programme, we will expect to see clear development and progress towards meaningful cross-community engagement and/or inter-community funded projects. This is already a standard condition in our existing Good Relations grants scheme (see Appendix L for our current Good Relations Grant Aid Fund criteria).

Small Grants

Although the Council strongly supports the concept of a small grants scheme being an integral part of our Peace III programme, we are aware that a balance must be struck between making such grants available and the onerous EU financial monitoring required in their administration. Experience suggests that a disproportionate amount of effort may be required to manage such a programme.

However, we do not regard the awarding of small grants as being incompatible with a strategic approach; rather they go hand in hand and can be very beneficial if co-ordinated through an over-arching framework. A small grants scheme will maximise the spread and effect of the programme, ensuring that a range of groups and bodies may become involved with good relations activities, identifying local issues and key needs and filling any gaps, often with innovative proposals. The underlying principles of the programme are more likely to become embedded at broader societal level as more people participate.

We have a well-established Good Relations grant-aid fund and considerable experience in assessing and allocating grant-aid. We have recently revised our criteria to be based

on principles of good community engagement devised for us by Gráinne Kelly²¹ (of Hamber and Kelly). We intend to expand our current scheme by £500,000 per year²² to encompass an additional Peace III small grants scheme (each up to £25,000) by enhancing our current arrangements.

We are pleased to report that during our public consultation it was clear that there was widespread endorsement of the need for the inclusion of such a Small Grants Programme to support the valuable work being done within the smaller community and voluntary sector organisations.

Partnership actions led by the Council

The Council will lead and deliver a number of strategic actions at city level, in partnership with other agencies/organisations. The first of these will be the establishment of a forum and support network for migrant workers, in view of the rapid increase in inward migration in the city; this will co-ordinate activities and support efforts towards community cohesion.

The Council's own applications will be scrutinised and assessed by an independent body to ensure that they meet the objectives. Our projects have to be additional and complementary to our ongoing work in good relations, in line with the *Shared Future* agenda and the future government sponsored Challenge programme.

Other requirements

We reserve the right to commission work with a specific cross-border theme, or to give priority to projects with a cross border element, to ensure that we meet our overall target of 30% of the overall programme being cross-border, as set by SEUPB.

As impact on poverty, equality and sustainable development are among the cross cutting themes of the Programme, we reserve the right to give priority to projects that demonstrate positive and effective outcomes in these areas, particularly those that will leave an appropriate legacy. We will endeavour to minimise the environmental impact of the Plan by encouraging the use of web-based or electronic communication. On a broader and complementary front, the Peace Plan and its underlying principles will become an integral part of the Council's approach to sustainable development by improving the current social fabric and quality of life of the city's residents and by promoting their future social and economic progress.

In accordance with current Council policy, resources will be targeted at New TSN areas²³ and towards marginalised or disadvantaged groups. We will seek to ensure an equitable geographic spread of funding allocation across the city, relative to need. Where disadvantaged communities appear to lack capacity to apply for funding on a competitive basis, we may assist through direct facilitation or targeting in appropriate circumstances.

²¹ *Community Engagement, Good Relations and Good Practice - Guidelines on good practice*, by Gráinne Kelly, commissioned on behalf of the Good Relations Steering Panel, adopted Nov 2006

²² assuming a successful bid of £12m

²³ Now OFMDFM's *Life Opportunities: Government's anti poverty and social inclusion strategy for NI*

8 PEACE and RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

8a INDICATIVE ACTIONS

In the Consultation Document we gave examples of the type of activity envisaged under the 4 themes of the Peace Plan, which formed the basis for discussion with our key stakeholders during the public consultation. The examples were intended to be illustrative but not definitive or prescriptive and we welcomed creative, innovative and practical suggestions for inclusion in the Plan, including proposals for research or training in related areas.

Following consultation, we now outline our proposals under each of the 4 themes. Some of these themes arise also from the study visit made to Chicago, another well known divided city, in late 2007 by the Project Reference Group of Chief Executives and senior managers from the major public agencies in Belfast (as outlined in 4a, Key Service Providers).

As stated above, we know from local experience and feedback from consultation that there are many agencies in Belfast who are in a position to assist in delivering the Peace III programme. Some organisations are named in this Plan, but this should not be regarded as a definitive list and may be subject to change. Cross-border elements may be incorporated alongside city-wide linkages.

We would expect to see measurable improvement in all of these areas over the next 5 years of Peace III.

❖ Securing Shared City Space

There was some confusion apparent during the consultation process around the interpretation of "space" - we would like to clarify that this should be interpreted as widely as possible, i.e. not only in the definition of physical space, but space for dialogue, for discussion and relationship building. The building of trust, relationships and confidence between people at local level is central to the Action Plan as this is a basic requirement for full participation in civic life.

The social divisions that permeate NI society are most evident within Belfast, with high levels of residential segregation and many people living "parallel lives". Mobility around the city is poor and its territorial nature is exacerbated by a radial-based public transport system. Many of Belfast's citizens feel they have access only to limited areas of the city so a key element of a successful plan would be to open access to every part of the city, ensuring that all citizens can move about freely and safely and access all activities and facilities, including jobs and services.

Research shows clear links between well-connected communities and good health and well-being outcomes in the broadest sense. A report by Demos for the Commission for

Racial Equality²⁴ highlights the important role that public space can play in achieving sustained encounters between diverse communities as well as developing an overall sense of belonging. In a highly segregated city like Belfast, where territory is contested, shared space is critical and must be protected and extended. We acknowledge and value the role played by many local communities in maintaining shared access to many facilities. The Council's own programme of civic events can help to create a sense of belonging and civic pride.

To achieve this, we will:

- take steps to secure the city centre as an integrated space and ensure that major public spaces, including retail, leisure and entertainment, remain shared, safe²⁵ and accessible for all, including the young, the elderly, women and the disabled, by working with the DSD, BCCM, PSNI and other appropriate agencies
- develop an integrated approach to ensure that the primary arterial routes are safe and accessible to all, with a particular focus at interface areas, by leading a project with the DSD, DRD, Housing Executive, Community Safety Partnership, DPP, the community sector and other agencies
- develop new models and ensure that all regeneration projects are "good relations proofed" and permit open access, by working with a range of agencies, including the Planning Service, the Strategic Investment Board and private developers
- work with Translink and community transport providers on mobility and safety issues
- support areas that are currently mixed (e.g. Ballynafeigh) to protect their character, continue to diffuse tensions and promote community cohesion
- support research on movement and mobility patterns in and around Belfast
- support projects by community groups and local employers on safe routes to work (i.e. acknowledgement of chill factors)

❖ **Transforming Contested Space**

Sectarian divisions are often expressed in physical form – e.g. murals, flags, bonfires, all of which act as chill factors to others and as deterrents to investment. The key sites for inter-community conflict within Belfast are the interface areas where several specialist networks are already operating. Nevertheless, the Council has a major role in ensuring that there is a strategic co-ordinated approach to this work by convening agencies and projects to work together as consortia. In this manner, we will develop an integrated regeneration programme for the interfaces which will benefit not only local areas but the city as a whole.

²⁴ *Equally Spaced? Public Space and interaction between diverse communities*, a report for the Commission for Racial Equality, by Lownsbrough, H. and Beunderman, J. from Demos, July 2007

²⁵ Community safety is a principal concern in Belfast; 54% of respondents in our recent public survey said that the Council's priority should be working to make local areas safer

To achieve this, we will:

- develop a framework for intervention that encourages and promotes social and economic regeneration with an explicit inter-community relationship-building focus by working with the various interface networks that exist, e.g. BIP, BCRC, North Belfast Community Action Unit, Intercomm, Interaction and others
- promote and facilitate dialogue, mediation and inter-community engagement, particularly around issues of division, i.e. parades, flags, derelict sites etc. by working with a range of agencies e.g. Mediation NI, Forthspring, Greater Village Regeneration Trust, North & West Belfast Parades & Cultural Forum et alia
- support local community-led projects in developing good practice regarding contested space e.g. Finaghy Crossroads community charter on flag flying
- support areas that are currently under threat of community tension to reduce pressure and prevent further polarisation and physical divisions
- aim to reduce manifestations of sectarianism or racism or patterns of territoriality i.e. murals, flags and bonfires and promote community cohesion by working with organisations such as NIHE, PSNI, DRD, NIFRS, Groundwork NI
- support local community plans that are aimed at taking down interface walls and other physical barriers e.g. BIP, BCRC and others
- provide a capital enhancement programme for inter-community facilities in interface areas as that in Suffolk/Lenadoon
- work with the BELB's Youth Service and other local youth providers, including the Council's Youth Forum, to develop long-term engagement for young people at particular flashpoint areas.

❖ **Developing Shared Cultural Space**

The Council has initiated and will continue to support a range of cultural diversity events, which introduce the concept of difference and confer a civic place for all the different cultural backgrounds in the city. We have made genuine efforts to "open up" the City Hall for use by all local communities and will continue to affirm respect for different cultures as the city's population becomes more diverse.

There was some confusion during consultation over the term "shared cultural space"; we would clarify that this refers to all aspects of culture, and expressions of identity in the broadest possible sense – Irish, Ulster-Scots, Polish, Chinese etc.

The aim here is to build an open and tolerant city, where many cultures, creeds and ideas are accepted and the rights of others are respected. Sectarian and racist attitudes often arise because of lack of contact and knowledge of other cultures so we want to enable communities to learn about and understand 'other' traditions.

To achieve this, we will:

- support projects that provide opportunities for community groups to express their identity and traditions in a positive manner, in collaboration with others, promoting diversity as an opportunity, via various media - art, culture, music, history, heritage, sport, language etc. - openly challenging perceptions, developing understanding and tolerance and building sustainable relationships within and between communities e.g. South Belfast Round Table on Racism
- work with a range of groups to support local community festivals, based on a new civic charter on standards, based on the Chicago City of Parades model e.g. Chinese New Year, St. Patrick's Day, Orangefest etc e.g. work with Grand Orange Lodge and Féile an Phobail
- work with church consortia to develop inter-church initiatives to be delivered at local level, such as that exemplified in Clonard-Fitzroy; Ballynafeigh Clergy Fellowship; the Irish School of Ecumenics; to encourage greater inter-church participation and understanding and counter intolerance, particularly among young people
- support the IFA and its network of local clubs to promote anti-sectarianism and anti-racism work through football
- work with the Council's Sports Development Officer to identify a range of other appropriate sports, e.g. boxing, with an established cross-community base; and other sports, some with existing cross-border links, to promote anti-sectarianism and anti-racism work through their extensive club linkages, particularly targeting young people
- work with the Council's Culture & Arts Unit to identify appropriate arts organisations and devise an enhanced programme of development outreach support for the good relations aspects of their work
- lead a project, in association with a range of agencies, including OFM/DFM, ICTU, PSNI, NIHE, NICEM, MCRC, the Polish Association, Belfast CABx, Chinese Welfare Association, Indian Community Centre, BITC and others to establish a city-wide forum and support network for migrant workers in Belfast
- support the Belfast Group of CABx to ensure that adequate information and advice on a range of issues is available for migrant workers
- support the ICTU to ensure that adequate information and advice on employment issues is available for migrant workers
- support the Belfast Metropolitan College, which has over 53,000 students enrolled on full-time and part-time courses and is one of the biggest colleges of further and higher education in the UK, to ensure adequate support for migrant workers who want to learn English and assistance towards the College's good relations activities
- work with local groups that provide assistance for asylum seekers and refugees, welcoming them to Belfast and helping them to settle here
- provide a permanent exhibition space for community use in the re-furbished City Hall, ensuring that all communities have a central civic space.

❖ **Building Shared Organisational Space**

The emphasis here will be on creating a new collaborative governance within the city and its organisations. This will be complemented by good relations training, designed to build the capacity of organisations to be able to challenge prejudice, intolerance, sectarianism and racism in a shared society.

To achieve this, we will:

- build the capacity of local voluntary and community organisations in relation to the appreciation of diversity, the promotion of tolerance, mediation and conflict resolution, especially for target groups in the programme, i.e. young people, older people and women; in particular inter-generational projects e.g. LINC
- work with organisations that provide specialist training to enable particular groups within local voluntary and community organisations to engage and contribute to the development of a shared and increasingly diverse society, e.g. TIDES, Transition Training, Trademark
- work with formal and informal education providers in developing models of engaged citizenship and public participation
- support the use of innovative models of learning, including interactive and e-learning spaces to challenge sectarianism, racism and injustice
- support information sharing and advocate good practice in conflict transformation and integration processes through networks, study visits and research at a national and international level
- support employability projects on a city-wide basis that encourage shared experiences in employment patterns, in particular for those who are long-term unemployed
- support training projects, apprenticeship schemes and employability programmes for target groups in the programme, e.g. young people and women in areas of need, that aim to improve labour mobility
- investigate the possibility of supporting local employers, e.g. through the CBI or IOD, to have regard to good relations issues in their future work.

8b SMART OBJECTIVES

The SMART objectives at this stage are necessarily limited, as it is not clear what the amount of the Peace III funding will be, or the precise timescale within which the Partnership will have to operate.

For these reasons, the following restricted list is suggested:

By the end of 2010, the final year of the current phase of the Peace Plan, the Council will:

- develop at least 2 projects, in partnership with other major agencies, in different areas of the city, designed to ensure and demonstrate that primary routes are accessible and safe for all
- support at least 2 research projects on mobility patterns in the city
- develop, in association with a consortia of interface network agencies, a framework for intervention at the interfaces and plans to remove or reduce at least 3 interface divisions
- host at least 10 discussion sessions with a range of groups throughout the city on issues of division
- develop, in association with youth providers in the city, a long-term engagement strategy for young people in at least 4 flash point areas
- develop, in association with inter-church consortia, at least 4 initiatives to build mutual understanding and tolerance to be delivered at local level
- support the development of anti-sectarianism and anti-racism programmes and their delivery through at least 3 major sports networks in the city
- lead a project, in association with a range of agencies, to establish a city-wide forum and support network for migrant workers in Belfast and hold at least 2 major events on this theme
- support at least 4 training projects for local voluntary and community organisations on diversity, tolerance and mediation for target groups
- support at least 2 employability training schemes for target groups, designed to improve labour mobility

The Council would point out that attitudinal changes will depend not only on the Peace Plan but on many other variables, including the current political climate, which is outside our control.

8c PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators

We agree that there is significant merit, under Priority 1.1 of Peace III, in seeking alignment with the baseline indicators developed to capture progress on sectarianism and racism. SEUPB identify the following 2 high level baseline indicators as most fitting for the purposes of this programme:

- society is free from racism, sectarianism and prejudice
- positive and harmonious relationships exist between communities at interface areas.

We will disaggregate these indicators at a Belfast City Council level, where possible utilising available data from NISRA and other such agencies. Additional detail on Baseline Indicators to be used is given in 9c.

8d ANNUAL PROJECTED RESOURCE ALLOCATION

We have estimated that our total bid will be in the region of £12m or €18m. Taking into account the current position in Belfast, we expect to make an indicative allocation over the 4 themes outlined as follows:

Theme	% split	Total £m	Total €m
securing shared city space	30%	£3.6	€5.4
transforming contested space	30%	£3.6	€5.4
developing shared cultural space	25%	£3.0	€4.5
building shared organisational space	15%	£1.8	€2.7
		£12.0	€18.0

We have determined these approximate allocations having taken into account the comments made during consultation along with:

- our responsibility to ensure that public spaces of the city can be used by all
- Belfast's current social divisions as outlined in the statement of need
- our civic duty to promote tolerance, respect and inclusion and
- the need to ensure that public services can be delivered for a shared future.

The above figures include the Council's management costs, which will be allocated across all themes.

8e MANAGEMENT COSTS

Peace building and reconciliation work is by its very nature unpredictable and risky. The Council will manage carefully the inherent risks in this work to ensure that its procedures and systems are robust and meet demanding EU financial requirements.

Although we acknowledge the enormous value of the EU contribution towards peace and reconciliation projects in the city, it is the Council's clear view that the management responsibility of the programme is significant and that this additional administrative burden should not be borne by the ratepayers of Belfast, but by the EU, through the SEUPB allocation, at 100%.

We anticipate having to ensure that additional staff are in place to assist voluntary and community groups from the early stages of project development, during the appraisal and assessment process, making of recommendations to the selection panel (Good Relations Partnership), monitoring and verification of expenditure, reporting of progress against agreed targets and indicators and through to project closure.

We had already received requests from community groups, prior to public consultation, for improved support and information flow during the project development stage, particularly in view of the enhanced focus of the programme on peace and reconciliation. This view was repeated during the public consultation, which highlighted the importance of the need for additional staff with expertise in good relations to provide developmental support. The public consultation also raised the issue of the need for good communication and the need to document good practice on good relations work and capture good news stories as they emerged.

We envisage recruiting/appointing additional staff, who will liaise closely but will probably be located in two distinct areas of the Council:

- within the Good Relations Unit, to assist groups in developing appropriate projects; to organise calls for applications; appraise projects; assess applications and make recommendations for funding to the Good Relations Partnership.
- within the Financial Services Section, to deal with all claims, to ensure that all projects are properly monitored and that expenditure is compliant not only with standard Council and local government audit procedures but also with the more stringent EU financial requirements, to ensure probity and public accountability.

We have estimated that the following staff will be required:

Good Relations Unit	No.	Financial Services	No.
Programme Manager	1	Financial Project Manager	1
Project Devt Officer	3	Monitoring Officer	4
Communications Asst	1	Business Support Asst	2
Business Support Asst	2		
Totals	7		7

The initial view of the Council's Business Improvement Service is that this staffing structure is reasonable and that the indicative grades are commensurate with existing Council structures and grades. Detailed job descriptions and competencies required will be drawn up in due course, in line with standard Council terms and conditions. We reserve the right to review staffing arrangements after the first tranche of funding i.e. in 2010.

We are aware that the "technical assistance" element available to LSPs under Peace I and Peace II, initially around 15%, was reduced to 9% in the Peace II extension period and that this was widely regarded as insufficient. The final SEUPB guidance on priority 1.1 states that "management costs associated with the implementation of a project are eligible. However, they will be subject to close scrutiny as part of the assessment process."

We consider our anticipated total management and administration costs of £1,165,323 or under 10% of the total bid of £12m, as set out below, to be reasonable and are happy for our overall costs to be examined. As stated above, the Council expects the SEUPB to include an adequate allocation for management and administration within our overall funding award to allow this additional programme of work to be administered effectively, at no extra cost to the citizens of Belfast.

We understand that SEUPB expect Councils to absorb a proportion of the costs associated with the Peace III programme. We will make a contribution in kind by absorbing the cost of any necessary furniture and equipment, as it will be more beneficial that these are retained as assets at the end of the programme.

PROJECTED MANAGEMENT and ADMINISTRATION COSTS for 2008-2010**Projected salary costs for management of Peace III programme, including National Insurance, Superannuation and anticipated pay awards:**

Good Relations	No	Proposed grade	Salary 2008/9	Salary ²⁶ 2009/10	Total for 2 years £
Programme Manager	1	PO 7	53,056	56,690	109,746
Project Devt Officer ²⁷	3	PO 4	42,771	45,946	88,717 x 3 = 266,151
Communications Asst ²⁸	1	SO 2	33,490	36,084	69,574
Business Support Asst	2	Scale 6	27,510	29,747	57,257 x 2 = 114,514
Financial Services					
Financial Project Manager	1	PO 4	42,771	45,946	88,717
Monitoring Officer	4	Scale 6	27,510	29,747	57,257 x 4 = 229,028
Business Support Asst	2	Scale 2/3	18,240	19,487	37,727 x 2 = 75,454
Total salaries	14				953,184
Contingency for staff cover costs @ 5% approx.					47,659
Total salary costs					1,000,843

Additional running costs:

Public consultation exercise (detailed in Appendices E, F and G)	20,000
Recruitment costs; advertising; assessment centre costs for 5 senior posts	25,000
Advertising, promotion and marketing	15,000
Printing and publications	15,000
Accommodation/ rental costs @ £720 per person per year x 2 years	20,160
Equipment support costs (e.g. ISB) @ £1040 per person per year x 2 years	29,120
Staff training, insurance, travel, telephone, car parking, stationery @ £900 per year x 2 years	25,200
Evaluation of programme	15,000
Total additional running costs	164,480

Total additional running costs	164,480
Total salary costs	1,000,843
TOTAL MANAGEMENT COSTS FOR PEACE III	1,165,323

²⁶ Salaries based on period April 08-March 2010; may need to be adjusted to suit SEUPB timelines

²⁷ These officers will also administer the small grants element of the programme (£500,000 p.a.)

²⁸ This officer will deliver a communications plan for the entire programme, ensuring all information is shared and continuously up-dated, in both paper and web formats.

8f SPEND TARGETS and DATES for ACHIEVEMENT

Although we envisage that the programme of work and funding will build after the first year, we have revised our expenditure targets in line with SEUPB guidance requiring an even spend profile over the 3 year period.

We therefore anticipate that expenditure, by calendar years, will be approximately in the region of:

	Total £m
2007/8	0.40
2009	5.80
2010	5.80
	£12.0

Ongoing Council management costs, detailed above, will be spread across all years.

Dates for achievement

The following are indicative dates and are dependant on the Council being in receipt of an agreed Letter of Offer by the middle of May 2008.

New Good Relations Shadow Partnership set up	February 08
Begin staff recruitment process	June 08
Development of procedures/operational manuals	June 08

We would anticipate there being a number of opportunities for applications. The detail will be clarified following the consultation process and discussion with new Good Relations Partnership but an indicative time line is:

Call for expressions of interest	August 08
1 st call for applications	September 08
Recommendations to Partnership	November 08
Decisions approved by Council Meeting	December 08
Letters of Offer issued	mid January 09

We may make further calls for applications over the remaining period; this will be determined by the level of funding that remains to be allocated and the strategic priorities at the time.

An annual report will be published in September 2009, 2010 and 2011. These will be used to evaluate progress to date and revise strategic priorities, if required.

8g PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

Alongside SEUPB requirements, the criteria for projects will be based on good practice available. This will include existing criteria for the Council's Good Relations Fund, the Peace II programme criteria and the Community Relations Council's existing frameworks. The Good Relations Fund criteria are listed in Appendix L.

We expect to be able to use the Peace III funding in association with other match funding sources, i.e. from the Community Relations Unit within the OFM/DFM, from the Community Relations Council, from the International Fund for Ireland and other sources, to be able to support projects using a cocktail of funding and to enable this to lever other funding sources, so as to maximise the potential of the Peace III programme.

All unsuccessful applicants for funding will be given the opportunity to request a meeting to receive formal feedback on their applications. A formal review process will be drawn up in line with the current guidance issued by the SEUPB for the Peace II programme.

9 MANAGING the STRATEGY

9a MONITORING and EVALUATION PROCEDURES

We will develop procedures for both financial and non-financial monitoring based on Best Practice and the guidance issued by SEUPB. We will commission research to ensure that the programme is kept under continuous review and that successful projects may be mainstreamed.

9b MEASUREMENT of IMPACT

Expected outputs and outcomes under priority 1.1 "*building positive relationships at the local level*" are shown below; these should have a direct impact on the communities supported through the Programme, with improved levels of trust and tolerance and decreased levels of prejudice.

Output	Result	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No. of programmes developed and implemented ▪ No. of events that address sectarianism and racism or deal with conflict resolution ▪ No. of participants attending above events ▪ Community balance of participation in events ▪ No. of active marginalised and minority groups participating in the programme ▪ No. of young people participating in the programme ▪ No. of cross-border linkages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changes in attitudes towards cross-community and cross-border activities ▪ In priority communities, the proportion of people who have contacts/recognised friends in the other community increases ▪ No. of sectarian incidents reduced ▪ No. of racist incidents reduced ▪ No. of interface incidents reduced ▪ Reduction in the number and visibility of paramilitary style murals ▪ Reduction in the number of peace walls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved levels of trust and tolerance in supported communities, decreased levels of prejudice

We will use a variety of methods of measurement for each indicator, including official government Census and NISRA data, PSNI and NIHE statistics and other quantifiable information. We will also use the results of attitudinal surveys, e.g. the Council's own public consultation exercises, the NI Life & Times Survey and other general monitoring and evaluation data as appropriate. All data will be input to the SEUPB database to enable trend information to be captured.

9c CAPTURING RESULTS and BASELINE INDICATORS

Monitoring and evaluation is a key part of Council procedures, to ensure proper implementation and continuous improvement in the light of emerging evidence.

“Measuring” the impact of peace and reconciliation programmes is extremely difficult and previous programmes have acknowledged this. We agree that there is a clear need to develop a more robust qualitative monitoring and evaluation framework to capture the more intangible outcomes and are keen to be involved in this as it would inform our own future strategies and planning. Under a Peace II-funded extension project, we are developing a set of baseline measures to determine the levels of segregation in the city and identify subsequent changes.

The Government has recognised that developing policy and interventions to challenge attitudes of sectarianism and intolerance are complex and challenging areas. The OFM/DFM’s Baseline Report to monitor the implementation of *A Shared Future* and the *Racial Equality Strategy* outline a number of good relations indicators which can be used to assess the impact of those policies over time. These indicators will monitor change and developments in community and race relations and allow ongoing analysis and enhancement of the policies themselves.

We will use the indicators as prescribed by SEUPB in the Peace Plan guidelines (attached as Appendix I). We will also use the baseline indicators included in our current Good Relations Plan (attached as Appendix J). These are already collected by the other agencies associated with the Good Relations Plan for the city – for example, statistics collected by the NI Housing Executive, the PSNI, or by regular surveys such as the NI Life and Times Survey. The Council will also be developing indicators for use in its SNAP and community planning purposes and the range of indicators developed will facilitate appropriate and targeted allocation of resources.

The promotion of good relations is one of the Council’s key priorities in improving the quality of life in Belfast and our commitment to this is central to all our activities. Our performance management framework already contains a number of performance indicators intended to keep the organisation’s focus on this vital work and measure its impact on communities. The indicators are based on both quantitative and qualitative information and this performance information will be considered by our Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, in the context of other key organisational indicators, so that the relationship between promoting Good Relations and the way the Council delivers services and allocates resources can be effectively explored. This performance information will continue to be refined as part of an on-going process during the next 3 years of the Corporate Planning process and will be aligned to the broader policy context.

9d REPORTING and FEEDBACK ARRANGEMENTS

The Council has robust planning and monitoring processes and the outputs from the Peace Plan will be monitored in accordance with the established reporting procedures to Committee. Ongoing review and evaluation will be embedded in this plan, through regular reports to the formal Council's Good Relations Partnership and the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee structure.

The Council will publish an Annual Report within 6 months of the year end. This report will be included within the Council's publication scheme, will be available in a variety of formats and will be downloadable from the website.

The Council will also ensure that all the reporting requirements of the Managing Authority, Accountable Department and the European Commission are met.

The Council will provide information on the implementation of the Peace Programme, including work being commissioned, calls for applications and updates through a range of media including:

- Belfast City Council's *City Matters* magazine, delivered to all households in the city (about 126,000 addresses)
- Internal staff magazines of local public sector bodies, including the Council's own Intercomm
- Organisational websites, including the Council's website.

9e FUTURE CONSULTATION

We will review the Peace Plan and all our activities in early-2009 to ensure that the aims and objectives of the programme are being met. We may re-prioritise activities if they do not appear to be having a positive impact and may take remedial action if required.

We will review the practicalities and cost implications of the implementation of the small grants element and may consider the possibility of out-sourcing the management of the small grants scheme to an appropriate external agency.

We reserve the right to commission an independent review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Plan, to ensure value for money and compliance with the aims of the programme.

Glossary of abbreviations used

ASHE	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
BCCM	Belfast City Centre Management
BCRC	Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium
BELB	Belfast Education & Library Board
BHSCT	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
BIP	Belfast Interface Project
BITC	Business in the Community
BMC	Belfast Metropolitan College
CABx	Citizens' Advice Bureaux
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy
CWA	Chinese Welfare Association
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DPP	District Policing Partnership
DRD	Department for Regional Development
DSD	Department for Social development
EU	European Union
GRU	Good Relations Unit
IDBR	International Departmental Business Register
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
IFA	Irish Football Association
IOD	Institute of Directors
LGD	Local Government District
LINC	Local Initiatives for Needy Communities
LSP(s)	Local Strategy Partnership(s)
MCRC	Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
NI	Northern Ireland
NICEM	Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
NICVA	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
NIFRS	Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NILTS	Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey
NIMDM	Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency
OFM/DFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PUL	Protestant/ loyalist/ unionist
RPA	Review of Public Administration
S 75	Section 75 of the NI Act, referring to equality groups
SEUPB	Special European Union Programmes Body
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, Time-dependent
SOA	Super Output Area
SNAP	Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (analysis)
TSN	Targeting Social Need
UK	United Kingdom
WINS	Women into Non-Traditional Sectors

Appendix B

Confirmation of Lead Partner

Belfast City Council will be the Lead Partner for the purposes of developing and implementing Priority 1.1 "building positive relations at the local level" of the Peace III Programme, within the Belfast City Council administrative district boundary.

Appendix C

Membership List (20)

The **Good Relations Partnership** will be established in shadow form early in 2008, in line with SEUPB advice. This will allow the Partnership members to be fully trained in preparation for their roles and responsibilities and to begin to start work firming up the criteria to be used in determining applications for funding.

The Shadow Partnership will be reviewed in 6 months time.

There was considerable discussion around the **composition** of the Partnership during the period of public consultation and the final membership will be:

- elected Councillors – 6, one each from 6 political party groups on the Council
- voluntary sector – 2 nominees
- community sector – 2 nominees
- other statutory agencies – 2 nominees from the Belfast Chief Executives' Group
- trade unions – 2 from ICTU
- private business sector – 2, one each from CBI and Belfast City Centre Management
- churches – 2, one each from the Protestant and Catholic churches
- minority faith groups – 1 nominee from appropriate organisations
- minority ethnic groups - 1 nominee from appropriate organisations.

The Council may decide to use an independent organisation to act as a nominating body for both the voluntary and community sector organisations, to ensure impartiality and transparency in the process.

The Council reserves the right to make a final decision on the composition of the new Good Relations Partnership, to ensure an appropriate balance in terms of geographical representation, gender, political opinion and religious belief.

The Council reserves the right to co-opt individuals with appropriate expertise to provide advice and guidance on specific matters, as required.

Full details of the names of those nominated and appointed to the Good Relations Partnership will be made available as soon as possible.

Appendix D

Partnership Contract (*in draft form*)

Belfast City Council will establish a Good Relations Partnership in shadow form early in 2008, as described in detail in the full Peace Plan above.

The membership of 20 people will be as set out in Appendix C.

This new Partnership will in effect be a Working Group of the principal Committee of the Council, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Partnership will be chaired by an elected Member of Council to ensure effective information flow and continuity.

The decisions of the Partnership will be subject to the approval of the full Committee and ratification by full Council, as with all Working Groups.

The Shadow Partnership will have responsibility for endorsing the Action Plan, the overall management of the Council's element of the Peace III programme, determining the criteria to be used in determining applications for funding and approving funding applications.

The Partnership will meet monthly (except in July) and Council staff will provide secretarial, administrative and other support services.

All Partnership members will participate equally in its operation and will be expected to contribute positively towards the aims of the Peace III Programme.

The members of the Partnership will receive full training in their new roles, responsibilities, relationships, conflicts of interest and standards of behaviour.

All members of the Partnership will act as representatives for the various sectors from which they have been nominated and will be expected to report regularly to their constituents, to ensure good ongoing feedback, consultation, and accountability.

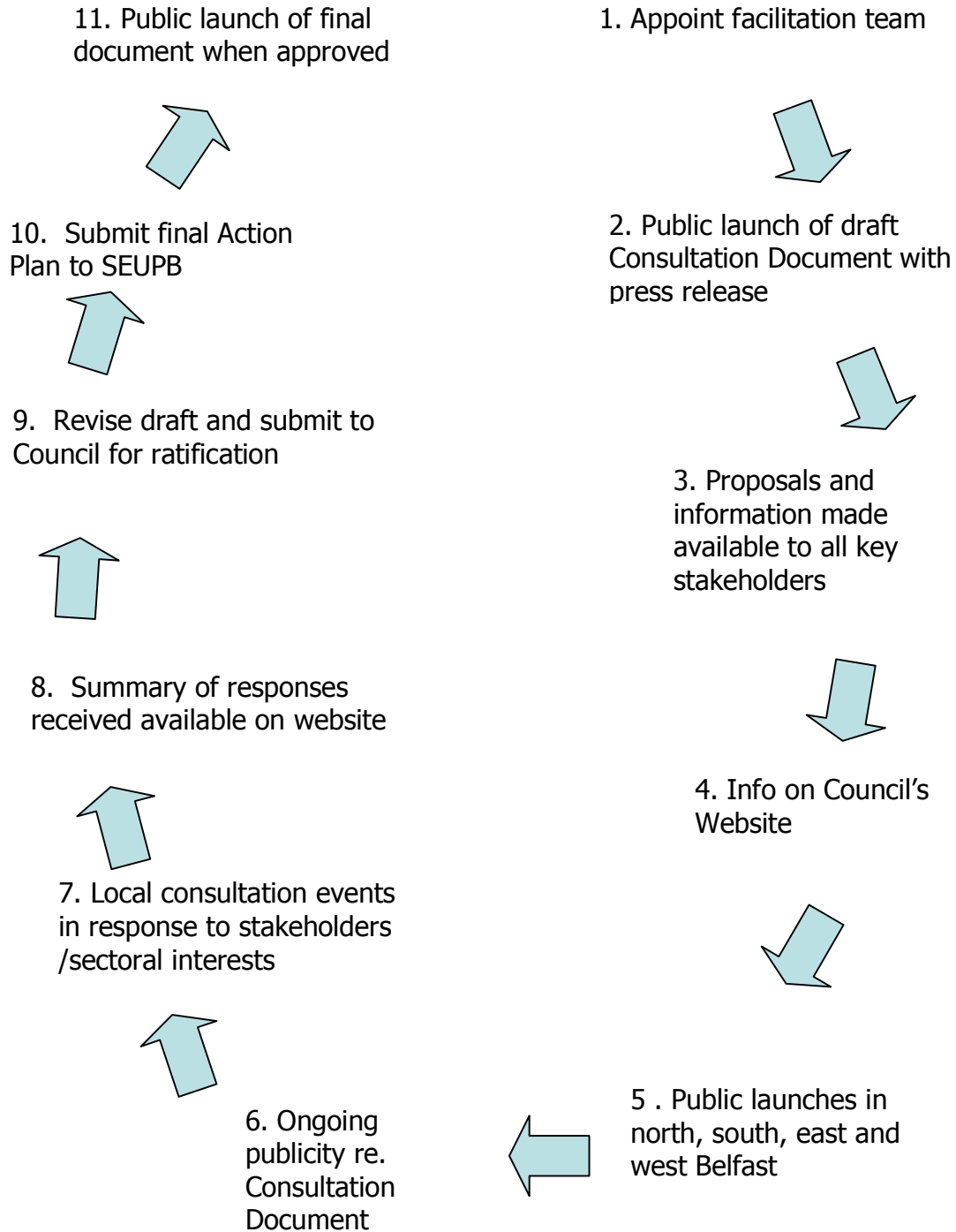
Belfast City Council will retain legal responsibility for the management of the Peace III funds allocated, including financial monitoring and audit requirements; the Council will also be responsible for any officers who may be employed under this Programme.

The Partnership will be bound by a partnership agreement to be drawn up by the Director of Legal Services, in consultation with Partnership members²⁹.

The Shadow Partnership will be reviewed in 6 months time and the membership revised or extended if necessary.

²⁹ This will be based on the Council's existing Codes of Conduct, revised as appropriate, with reference to the Council's Standing Orders, regarding agreed rules of procedure.

Outline of consultation process undertaken



Summary of responses to consultation***Collated by Gráinne Kelly*****1. Introduction**

This document summarises the key messages drawn from the responses to the Belfast City Council's Draft Peace and Reconciliation Plan 2007-2010 during the consultation process. Each response was analysed according to the six questions posed in the consultation document. The key themes and issues raised under each relevant section are highlighted and summarised on the basis of the responses submitted. A full list of respondents is included in Annex A.

2. Consultation Process

The consultation period for the Draft Peace and Reconciliation Plan ran for a period of two months from the 1st of October to the 30th of November 2007. A draft Peace Plan was launched by the Lord Mayor of Belfast in a press release on 3 October 2007. The press release included details of the consultation response form and key questions which the Council posed in relation to the draft document. These questions form the structure of this Summary of Consultation Responses document and are detailed in Appendix M. The Chief Executive wrote to all other Chief Executives of the major public and private sector agencies in Belfast, seeking their support and offering a 'consultation roadshow' to assist with public sector consultation, if required.

Information about the Peace Plan was sent to all key stakeholders together with a covering letter inviting them to the 4 key consultation events across the city and to organise additional consultation events at local level. A copy of the Peace Plan was also made available on the Council's website at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/goodrelations, along with information on the opportunities for consultation events, a draft response form and the closing date for responses.

Four large consultation events were organised in the north, south, east and west of the city. The structure of these (and all subsequent consultation events) began with an overview presentation of the Peace Plan, introduced by a member of the Good Relations Unit staff of the Council. The attendees were then split into smaller groups where an assigned, independent facilitator assisted the discussion, focused on the 6 key questions. The views from the groups were recorded by a facilitator/scribe and the detailed notes were written up for inclusion to the overall consultation submission.

In addition to the 4 geographical consultation events, the Council responded to further requests to hold similar events within other organisations or sectors, following a similar structure as outlined above. In total, 9 additional events were organised, with over 220 participants, representing 125 organisations. A full list of consultation events and organisations present is included in Annex A of this report. In total, 15 written

submissions were received during the consultation period. A list of written responses received is included in Annex A.

3. Report Structure

This report summarises the key findings as communicated in both the written responses and the events organised. It provides a summary of reactions to the draft Peace Plan received and a summary of the common issues which emerged from both verbal and written responses.

Q1. Do you agree with the profile of Belfast outlined in the draft Peace Plan?

It is worth noting that at several consultation events organised, and in the case of a number of written responses submitted, no particular comments were made with regard to the profile of Belfast and respondents indicated that they accepted that the profile of Belfast as outlined in the document was an appropriate reflection of the city. It was acknowledged by a number of respondents that it is difficult to provide a detailed profile of the city with limited space available, but the document had captured the main issues sufficiently well.

Having said that, a more significant number of consultation respondents, at both organised events and in written submissions, indicated that the profile of the city outlined in the draft Peace Plan 'glosses over the realities of what is happening on the ground' and that further information should be provided in a range of areas. The comments received have been compiled under a number of key themes emerging.

Statistical Data

A significant number of responses focused on the types of statistical information provided in the draft Plan with many suggesting the inclusion of additional data to illustrate the issues facing the city.

- It was felt by a number of respondents that some of the statistics used in the draft Plan were not particularly relevant and that there is a greater need to include current figures on segregation levels, interface areas and existing good relations activities in the city. It was indicated that robust data in some of these themes is currently available from other sources and should be utilised by Belfast City Council to provide a more detailed overview of the issues facing the city.
- A significant number of respondents questioned the use of 2001 census statistics in the document, as they do not reflect the increase in ethnic minorities and migrant workers to Belfast in recent years.
- It was also noted that it would be useful to map where the new ethnic minorities and migrant workers were living within the city in order to reflect the new diversity of some areas and target resources accordingly. One respondent suggested that other Section 75 groups should be mapped in a similar way, related to their area of residency.
- It was suggested by one respondent that a detailed profile of crime and specifically 'hate crime' would be particularly useful. Another suggested that

disabilist and homophobic incidents be included in the trend analysis data provided.

- It was also noted that little reference is made to health statistics and some analysis of how poor relations impacts on physical and mental health in the city would be welcomed.
- A number of respondents suggested that the findings of the city-wide survey under the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme (SNAP) be fully utilised and incorporated into the final plan.
- It was suggested by a number of respondents that current and relevant statistics should be gathered and details so as to provide a baseline against which future good relations and peacebuilding work can be measured. This could also serve the purpose of identifying gaps in provision which could then be strategically targeted in the Peace Plan.
- Many respondents raised the issue of deprivation and how the data provided do not fully reflect the pockets of deprivation which exist, even within perceived affluent areas. This was also highlighted with regard to the unemployment figures presented. It was felt that they did not illustrate the areas in which unemployment was particularly concentrated. It was indicated by a number of respondents that they would welcome the breakdown of key data by smaller area (ward or Super Output Area) in order to get a more detailed picture of deprivation across the city.
- The point was made that young people under the age of 25 account for roughly one-third of the population of Belfast, or 100,000 people. It was felt that the profile should reflect this significant figure, given that young people are listed as one of the target groups.
- It was argued in one response that current literacy levels should be reflected in the profile, given the significant literacy problems of its residents, particularly young people.
- It was also noted that the profile does not reflect the high suicide rate in Belfast, although it was acknowledged that current data on suicide rates is not readily available for the Belfast area.
- In reference to the £5 billion investment in the past decade highlighted in the Belfast profile, feedback from a number of respondents indicated that the profile should document further where this money has been invested. It was also suggested that this investment is most visible in the city centre rather than in outlying areas and did not, therefore, reflect an even experience across the city.
- One respondent expressed concern about the lack of reference to the sizeable Irish language community in the city.
- It was suggested at one consultation event that the statistical information provided could be displayed graphically, as a means of making it more accessible to the reader.

Housing and Economic Investment

The issue of housing costs in Belfast was raised in both consultation events and individual responses.

- It was felt that the document should reflect the increasing cost of housing in recent years and acknowledge the lack of affordable housing for those from low-income groups.
- Several respondents indicated that the role of private developers and private investment in changing the face of the city should be acknowledged.
- It was suggested at one consultation event that the data in the city profile should reflect the impact of rising house prices on local communities which has the effect of forcing people out of their areas and fragments communities.
- It was also noted that the significant growth in the student population in Belfast is set to continue and could result in increasing tensions in some areas.
- It was suggested that the profile of the city should acknowledge the increase in the population of the city during the working day, as many travel into the city from the commuter belt, dramatically changing the make-up of the city.
- A number of respondents highlighted the uneven distribution of economic investment in the city.

Wider impact

- A significant number of respondents indicated that the profile of Belfast should acknowledge that certain areas of Belfast have experienced the impact of the conflict more than others, and that indeed, Belfast city has experienced the conflict more directly than other parts of Northern Ireland as a whole. It was felt that this was important to acknowledge, given that Belfast City Council are bidding for grant aid in competition with other Council areas and should more clearly demonstrate why the budget of £12million from the PEACE III programme was justified.
- While it was acknowledged that the profile sets out the impact of the conflict on the city, one respondent felt that the wider regional and island(s)-wide context in which relations between the two main communities are framed should also be included, making reference to their differing constitutional preferences.
- It was recommended by one organisation that Section 4d of the Peace Plan, outlining issues with greatest impact and trend analysis, be amended to include recognition of the wider context of good relations work.

Section 75

- Concern was raised with regard to the categorisation of individuals into Good Relations / Section 75 groupings in order to make applications for funding.
- One organisation expressed disappointment at the gender-free content of the profile of Belfast, particularly given that women are one of the key target groups identified by SEUPB. It was noted that 53.2% of the population are women and that they are core to the success of a Peace Plan for the city.
- A number of respondents requested that the Peace Plan should be gender-proofed and the barriers that exist to prevent women from taking a full part in the task of peacebuilding analysed.
- It was suggested that there are additional gender-relevant indicators which should be considered to highlight the particular experiences of women in Belfast.

- It was noted by one respondent organisation that there was not enough recognition of direct correlation between women’s disadvantage and poverty in the city.

SWOT analysis

- In respect of the SWOT analysis detailed in the city profile, it was suggested that useful additions might be made, as follows:
 - *Strengths* Arterial Routes programme
Work with migrant communities to date
 - *Weaknesses* Lack of coordinated approach to new migrant issues
 - *Opportunities* Asset of new migrant communities to create diverse society and fill labour market gaps.
- It was also recommended that the SWOT analysis reflects the significant resource of cross-community (and cross-border) linkages and peacebuilding experience which has been built up through interventions funded under previous PEACE Programmes and other sources, including the Council’s own Good Relations Fund.

Q2. What are the main issues to be addressed to achieve the vision?

The draft Peace Plan states the vision of the city as: A Shared City, A Peaceful City, A Welcoming City and An Open City. It goes on to detail what this means in more detail and the four broad objectives, namely:

- Securing shared city space
- Transforming contested space
- Developing shared cultural space
- Building shared organisational space

The question was posed in the consultation process: What are the main issues to be addressed in achieving the vision of the city? Responses have been grouped under main themes emerging.

Joined-up Planning

In order to achieve the vision, several respondents indicated the need to work collaboratively with other statutory bodies, on issues such as health, education and physical planning. It was felt that without this joined-up working and engaging with those who have the power to make changes that the Council currently does not enjoy, the Plan will fall short of its vision. Concerns were expressed that not all other funders and agencies are working to the same vision and agenda, diluting potential success. The view was expressed at one consultation event that the vision for Belfast as set out in the Peace Plan needs to be clearly communicated to others, including other funding bodies and agencies.

Face the ‘Hard Issues’

Several respondents indicated that it is only through facing ‘hard’ or ‘problematic’ issues, such as interfaces, racist attacks on ethnic minorities and prejudice against ‘others’ that the vision will be achieved. It was felt by many that those working on

these issues currently should continue to be supported, rather than encouraging only new or 'innovative' projects which have no previous track record.

Measure Progress

A number of respondents suggested that the overall bid from Belfast City Council should include clear indicators, targets and outcomes in order to measure progress during the lifetime of the programme. These should be able to measure not only quantitative outputs but also those relating to attitudinal change and relationship-building.

Defining terminology

A significant theme running through many of the consultation responses was the request for further clarity with regard to terminology used in the Peace Plan vision for Belfast, particularly the use of the term 'space'. One written response indicated if the Peace Plan clearly defined what it meant by the types of 'space' as outlined, and provided examples of indicative, strategic activities under the four objectives outlined, they would consider the objectives to be acceptable. Another written response raised concerns over the breadth of the objectives outlined in the vision, indicating that currently "*almost any activity could potentially be funded under these headings*". It was suggested that the objectives should be clearly defined and further broken down into concise and clear criteria.

Be people focused

There was an expressed request that the Plan should focus on people, trust and relationship-building, rather than space, if it is to successfully achieve its vision. There was concern that the current perceived emphasis on space/material change is to the detriment of a people-focused approach. Concerns were expressed that the emphasis on '*visible things*' rather than people is due to the assumption that these are more easily measured. It was felt that the Plan should support communities in changing attitudes, perceptions and relationships, rather than only physical manifestations. One written response submitted indicated that in order to achieve the vision, the Peace Plan must aim to build maximum participation. This requires bottom-up approaches to reach those most affected by poverty, racism, sectarianism and the problems of interface communities described in the profile. This response also indicated concern over the perceived disconnection between the articulated vision and the approach to the PEACE III Operational Plan which emphasises relationship building, dialogue and promoting change. It expressed the view that this may result in a lack of focus and clarity which would affect the overall delivery of the Peace Plan.

Address the issue of ethnic minorities and migrant workers

A number of respondents indicated that an integration strategy for foreign nationals was needed if the vision was to be achievable. This might include addressing the issues of potential tensions within migrant communities and between migrant communities and 'local indigenous communities'. It was also suggested during one consultation event that the vision could be supported by promoting areas with high percentages of minority ethnic groups as tourist and local attractions, as in Chinatown in London.

Address need

At one consultation event, participants expressed concern over the vision outlined, based as it is on the Shared Future Strategic Policy context. It was an expressed view that the Shared Future context is 'very middle class' and the Council were seeking cosmetic changes and not addressing need. The need to address poverty (particularly child poverty) and social exclusion was highlighted if the vision was to be achieved.

Support and Complement existing work

Several consultation responses indicated that current and successful work around good relations implemented by the community and voluntary sector should continue to be supported under the proposed Peace Plan in order to build on what has already been achieved. However, a number of respondents indicated that some of the old ways of addressing relationship-building had become tired and that if the plan was to be achieved, new and innovative ways of working would have to be found. At one consultation event the participants highlighted their concerns that large statutory organisations will receive grant aid and community/voluntary sector groups will not. To achieve the vision it was felt by participants that the plan must not work in isolation but must add value to other strategic initiatives, such as the Housing Executive's Good Relations programmes.

Address marginalised communities

Several respondents indicated that in order to achieve the vision as set out in the Plan, there needs to be a continued investment at community level supporting those areas and communities which are most marginalised and deprived in the city.

Be Flexible

The view was expressed by a number of respondents that the vision should have an inherent flexibility, while continuing to invest in key themes and issues, as identified.

Be Realistic

A number of respondents indicated that while it is useful to have a vision for the city, it must be based on what is achievable within the timeframe. There were concerns expressed that the vision may promise too much and not be able to deliver on it.

Be Visible

It was highlighted in a number of responses that the Peace Plan will only be successful if it is highly visible and highlights good practice at work and promotes shared learning. One suggestion was that an Annual conference and/or publication should be organised to highlight the achievements to date. Another respondent argued the case for a comprehensive, two-way communications strategy which would inspire those involved in the supported projects to tell their stories.

Promote notion of 'shared space'

There was significant support of the idea that 'shared spaces' should be developed and promoted, not only in the city centre but also beyond. This includes support for the concept of shared workplaces which can provide venues where people from all backgrounds can meet.

Create a holistic vision of Belfast

It was suggested that it is important to view and present Belfast as a whole, rather than a collection of small communities and a town centre.

Economic vision

It was felt by a number of respondents that the vision of Belfast should incorporate the concept of a growing economy. This should include the involvement of private companies and developers in providing social development in the form of housing and local labour schemes, so that they too can become part of the 'social capital' of the city. It was acknowledged by several respondents that private developers are bringing a changing dynamic to communities and must therefore play their role in the development of good relations and shared space.

Build Capacity

A number of respondents expressed the view that capacity-building work was still required for some groups who are not skilled in 'form filling' and may lose out on the opportunities arising from the Peace Plan as a result. It was felt that may be particularly true for some PUL communities in the city. There was widespread endorsement of the need for the inclusion of a Small Grants Programme to support the valuable work within the smaller community and voluntary sector organisations.

Limit the Administrative burden

A number of respondents expressed concern over the potential administrative challenge that Peace III would present and indicated the necessity of addressing this if the vision is to be achieved within the short timeframe.

Gender-Proof delivery organisations

One organisation, in a written submission, suggested that given their role within the family, women are crucial to any strategy to secure shared/transformed space. As key users of a range of services, it was argued that attention be given to maximise women's involvement in the delivery of the Plan. This might also include the adoption of a pro-active gender auditing of organisations funded by the Council to ensure their involvement, particularly in decision-making roles.

Address issue of Policing

One participant at a consultation event expressed the view that the role of policing still required attention if the Plan was to achieve its overall vision.

Qs 3&4 Does the draft Peace Plan cover all the main issues? What needs to be changed or added to the Peace Plan?

The vast majority of respondents indicated that the draft Peace Plan did not necessarily cover all the main issues, although there was an acknowledgement from some that it did cover some of the most significant areas of concern, including interface work and the transformation of contested space. In the responses submitted, the answer to the question *Does the draft Peace Plan cover all the main issues?* was expanded and further articulated in response to the subsequent question, namely *What needs to be changed or added to the Peace Plan?* The changes or improvements suggested in the consultation responses have been detailed by theme/issue below.

Development of Baseline Data

A number of respondents indicated that the Peace Plan could go further in the establishment of a baseline upon which Council could monitor progress. It was suggested that this should include both qualitative and quantitative outcomes and would provide clear indicators of change as a result of the PEACE III intervention.

Recognise community and voluntary sector contribution

Concerns were expressed by a number of respondents that the large statutory organisations would receive significant grant aid, at the expense of the community and voluntary sector. This was identified as a significant challenge in maintaining the current good relations work being carried out at local level. It was noted that the relationships which have been established as a result of this will be lost if the community and voluntary sector is not adequately supported in the Peace Plan. The recommendation of a number of respondents was that the Peace Plan should be changed to support the consolidation of community learning and set out how the Plan will aim to support sustainability for those groups engaging in good relations work currently. One consultation event suggested that investment in social economy projects would provide a legacy to the Peace Plan after 2010 within local communities. Additionally, it was noted that the Peace Plan should acknowledge that individuals and groups engaging in good relations work are coming together on a voluntary basis.

Documenting Good Practice

It was noted on several occasions that the Peace Plan should indicate how Belfast City Council and delivery agents will document good practice on good relations work and capture good news stories as they emerge.

Address funding gap

A common theme noted within a significant number of responses was the concerns with regard to the funding gap between PEACE II and PEACE III, which appears inevitable, given the timeframes proposed. Significant concerns were expressed with regard to the impact of a lack of continuity of funding, with the potential loss of institutional learning for organisations, if staff cannot be retained.

Locate Peace Plan within changing context

The Peace Plan should be cognisant of the current Review of Public Administration, the council's role within it and the impact of changes.

Terminology and definitions

A significant number of respondents highlighted the issue of definitions of various terms used within the draft Peace Plan document, particularly terms such as 'space', 'shared space', 'peaceful', 'shared organisational space' and 'shared cultural space'. It was noted that such terms *"look different depending on where you are standing and what your community has experienced."* A significant number of respondents highlighted particular concerns over the use of the term 'space' which some felt was overemphasised and had the potential to cause confusion or could be misinterpreted. It was felt by many that the Plan should be less 'space' focused and more 'people' focused in its approach. The question was posed as to whether the concept of 'shared space' was restricted to the city centre or will the Peace Plan endeavour to create

shared space in other parts of the city? Overall there was a request from many respondents that the terminology should be made clearer and terms used should be clearly defined.

Cross-border funding

A number of respondents questioned the 30% objective for cross-border funding, with concerns expressed that organisations in Belfast will engage in 'unfocused partnerships' and that organisations based in the southern border counties will be overloaded with proposals from potential partners. At one consultation event, participants expressed the view that this was an example of 'funders dictating need' and this needed to be challenged at the highest level. It was suggested in a written response that a useful starting point in developing cross-border strategies within the Peace Plan would be to review previous/current cross-border projects in the Belfast area to identify models and activities for extension or replication and to assess best practice in the field.

Protect current shared space

The point was made that the Peace Plan does not currently outline how it will seek to protect the shared space that currently exists within the city. It was also argued that the Plan should recognise the need for the development of guidelines for the use of shared spaces. It was also noted that the concept of 'contested space' goes well beyond the city centre and this reality should be reflected in the Peace Plan.

Joined-up approach

A number of respondents commented on the range of initiatives which are currently on-going in Belfast and the opportunities which arise from a more coordinated approach to tackling problems in Belfast. It was felt that the Plan should clearly articulate how it would collaborate with all other relevant government and statutory agencies and local partnerships. It was suggested that the Peace Plan could be an opportunity to line up the various strategies under one banner and concentrate activities in a more coordinated manner.

Additionality

One written response from the arts and cultural sector noted that the draft Peace Plan requires that grant applicants will be required to demonstrate 'additionality'. It argued that given the fragility of the arts and cultural sector, some flexibility should be built in to the way additionality is defined so as not to exclude medium and small scale arts-based organisations. Another response indicated the need for the Plan to be more specific about how it will ensure additionality within the parameters of the PEACE III Operational Plan. It indicated that PEACE III is focused on more direct approaches to reconciliation and places emphasis on participation, partnership and a bottom-up approach – principles which should be reflected in the Peace Plan.

Support for existing work

Considerable comment was made that the Peace Plan should recognise and highlight the good relations work which is currently being implemented and the relationships that have already been established. At one consultation event, it was noted that "*the requirement for innovation sits uneasily with walking away from the experience and expertise that has been gained over the last decade.*" There was a general concern

expressed by several respondents that the draft plan should be changed so as to take greater cognisance of the needs of the community and voluntary sector organisations. This includes the need for a Small Grants programme to ensure that those with existing peacebuilding skills and experience are not lost through termination of contracts due to funding difficulties.

Multi-culturalism and diversity

Multi-culturalism was identified as a gap by a significant number of groups in the draft Plan. The question was posed as to how existing work on race relations will be supported in the Peace Plan and how this can be further articulated. There was also a strong view expressed that the Plan needs to place a positive emphasis on vibrancy and celebration of each community's diversity.

Staffing levels

Concerns were consistently raised during the consultation process with regard to the staffing and salary levels proposed for the funding distribution structures. It was felt that if large sums were to be spent on staffing the Peace Plan, there had to be clear and measured outcomes which were expected of such staff.

Commissioned work

It was noted at one consultation event that there is a need for the Peace Plan to outline and define how commissioned work will be developed in a transparent way, including the development of research themes and the tendering process to be put in place.

Appeals

It was suggested that the Peace Plan should clearly set out the appeals process that will be applied to those who wish to contest a Partnership decision.

Q5. Who should be involved in the delivery of the Peace Plan?

At the consultation events organised by Belfast City Council, it was clear that the attendees had many questions and requests for clarification in relation to the delivery mechanisms associated with the PEACE III Programme and the means by which the Partnership would be established and convened. Three main themes emerged in relation to the questions posed, firstly, the composition of the proposed Partnership, secondly, the selection process for the establishment of the Partnership itself and finally the operation of the Partnership, once formed.

Broadly speaking, many of the respondents welcomed the Partnership approach proposed in the Plan as the most appropriate and inclusive way forward. However, the key message was that the establishment of the most effective and representative Partnership possible was integral to the ultimate success of the Peace Plan and the delivery of the overall vision, as articulated.

1. Partnership Composition

Political Representation

A significant number of respondents commented favourably on the proposal for the number of politicians to sit on the Partnership, welcoming the fact that it was not 'top-heavy with politicians'. However, concerns were expressed by a number of respondents about the potential for 'party-political decision-making' as well as the 'potential for external political impact and influence on the Partnership make-up'. The issue of 'all-party representation' was also raised with several views suggesting that the Partnership would not be 'proportionally representative' as a result. It was argued that this model would make it difficult for marginalised groups to access funding. It was suggested that the community and voluntary sector representation should at least equal that of the political representation on the Partnership. Concerns were raised as to the potential gender representation of the elected members nominated for the Partnership and whether this the overall Partnership will have a gender-balance as a result.

Community and Voluntary Sector Representation

Perhaps not surprisingly, the representation of the community and voluntary sector on the proposed Delivery Partnership was the focus of much discussion at consultation events and comment in written responses.

It was suggested by a considerable number of respondents that a clear distinction is needed between the community sector and voluntary sector and that each should be separately represented on the Partnership. A frequently repeated suggestion was that the community sector and voluntary sector should be allocated four seats each. A widely expressed view was that the allocation of four seats to the community and voluntary sector, as suggested in the draft Peace Plan, was insufficient, given the breadth and depth of the sector and the range of issues which it tackles in the Belfast area. Another suggestion made was that the number of community and voluntary sector representatives be increased to six.

There were competing views as to whether the four representatives (as suggested in the draft Peace Plan) from the voluntary sector should be chosen from the north, south, east and west divisions of the city. Some felt this might be a useful demarcation, but the majority felt that this would represent a 'false division' of the city. It was suggested in one response that representation should be chosen from organisations with a city-wide remit. It was also suggested that any members chosen must represent the vision as outlined, rather than the sectoral interest which they might come from.

The point was also made that the community representatives chosen 'should not be the same old faces' or 'the usual suspects' and that it was important to have a mix of experience and new people on the Partnership. The majority agreed that the representation from the sector should broadly reflect the religious make-up of the city.

At one consultation event it was noted that unease was expressed with regard to the grouping of 'minority ethnic' and 'faith groups' together. It was suggested that faith should be a singular pillar representing all faiths/religions. Some, at the same event,

queried the churches representation on the Partnership at all. At another consultation event, concern was raised as to which of the churches would be represented and noted that the church representation on such partnerships is often filled by a lay person as opposed to a member of the clergy.

There was general agreement among respondents that efforts should be made to ensure the two-way communication between the Partnership members and the sectors they represent, to ensure optimum exchange of information between the Partnership and the community it serves. One suggestion made was the use of an interactive website as a feedback mechanism to ensure transparency and accountability.

Considerable comment was made in the consultation responses to the absence of a representation in the proposed Partnership from the arts and cultural sector and suggested that they represent a 'community of interest' that deserves a voice on the proposed body.

A significant number of respondents argued for the inclusion of target groups (including young people and older people) on the Partnership, given the specific focus of the PEACE III Programme. Others indicated that it would be important that all Section 75 categories be represented on the Partnership. Attention was drawn to the Council's obligations under section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, to have due regard to the need to encourage the participation by disabled people in public life. This, it was noted in one response, included bodies such as the proposed Good Relations Partnership.

It was suggested that regional sub-committees of the Partnership might be formed to represent the four parts of the city. One view was expressed that the voluntary and community representatives serve one year only on the Partnership and then be replaced by new members on a rotation basis.

Other representatives

The allocation of two places to the trade union and business sector were queried given that the Plan is set out "*essentially a community initiative.*"

Several respondents queried the proposal for two representatives from the statutory agencies, believing that more government departments should be included in the Partnership.

Given the emphasis on cross-border work in the PEACE III Programme, it was suggested that the Partnership should include someone with cross-border management knowledge.

One proposal was that private developers should be represented on the Partnership so they can be held accountable for decisions made within the private sector.

A number of respondents questioned how a gender-balance in the Partnership can be achieved and whether some form of ring-fencing should be considered to ensure women in the community are well-represented on the body.

2. Selection Process

Differing opinions were expressed with regard to the appointment of representatives on to the Partnership. That being said, comment was made by a significant number of respondents that whatever selection process is chosen, it should be open and transparent to all.

In relation to the selection of community and voluntary sector representatives, many respondents ruled out a public appointments process and argued that the Council should use existing community networks to make nominations. However, other responses indicated that the most effective way to select the representatives would be for interested parties to apply '*as if it were for a job*', through public advertisement rather than through a nomination process. This would ensure that any individual would be eligible to apply and this would widen and democratise the process. Others expressed concerns that there might not be a cohort of people with the necessary skills and experience applying, if this process was adopted.

There was no consensus among respondents as to whether the use of existing structures such as the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) were sufficiently representative as to be a vehicle for selection of community and voluntary sector nominees. Some expressed the view that NICVA does not represent all in the sector, while others believed that it was the most appropriate body through which a nomination/selection process could be facilitated.

It was suggested that if a selection process is to be put in place, applicants should have the opportunity to present their vision and to state what they believe they could bring to the Partnership.

3. Partnership Working

It was suggested that there should be a clear, detailed working agreement for the Partnership members so that each member understands their role and their accountability. It was also suggested that a mid-term evaluation and on-going monitoring be built in to the process of establishing and developing the Partnership.

Q6. Do you agree with the proposed allocation of the budget?

Although the consultation document did not directly pose the question, several respondents commented on the size of the overall budget which the Peace Plan is seeking from SEUPB. It was acknowledged by many that £12 million is a substantial investment, however it was noted that it will not necessarily go a long way in such a large metropolitan area. It was suggested by a number of respondents that a figure closer to £20 million was more realistic, given the population of the city and the issues to be addressed. That being said, there was general acceptance that the overall PEACE III budget is substantially less than previous PEACE Programmes.

In relation to the allocation of the budget, the key themes which emerged from the consultation process included:

Allocation size

Considerable comment was made in relation to the indicative percentages allocated to the four themes, as outlined in the draft Peace Plan. Many respondents felt that that percentage splits were too prescriptive and allocation should be more responsive to the demand received through the application process.

A number of respondents indicated that the allocation should be reduced to 'securing shared city space' and 'building shared organisational space' and more weighting given to 'transforming contested space' and 'developing shared cultural space'. This was not a view held by all. One organisation indicated their wish for more resources to be allocated to 'transforming contested spaces' and 'securing shared city space'. There was a request made that the Peace Plan clarifies which type of projects will fall under the four objective areas, so organisations are applying under the most relevant theme.

A repeated view expressed during the consultation process was that the budget should be divided according to need, rather than allocated according to the four themes, as outlined. This might require the implementation of a needs analysis in order to ensure appropriate allocation of resources.

Grant applications

There was some confusion as to the proposed application process for funding to the community and voluntary sector organisations, and an overall plea for this to be further clarified in the final Peace Plan.

Several respondents highlighted the absolute importance of a Small Grants Programme which will support smaller groups and should involve less bureaucracy and form-filling. It was suggested that the current Good Relations Small Grants Programme administered by the Council is a useful template for the release of small grant funding under the PEACE III Programme. It was suggested that there was a need for a rapid response to applications received to the Small Grants Programme and that different levels of funding, ranging from £5,000 to £25,000 might be a useful means of streamlining applications.

On the other hand, a number of respondents indicated a preference toward supporting large projects, which had the ability to leave a '*legacy of good work and real change*'. Some felt that PEACE III should be 'big and bold' as it was the last opportunity to utilise EU funding for peace and reconciliation.

It was suggested at one consultation event that Belfast City Council could consider earmarking a percentage of the Council rates to match the £12 million budget in order to sustain the supported work beyond 2012.

Cross-border element

There was significant comment made as to the 30% allocation of funding to cross-border work. There was some confusion as to how the cross-border element of the projects would be assessed and many expressed concerns that the cross-border linkages would be difficult to establish and maintain as Belfast has no geographical boundary with the southern border counties. The point was also raised that this cross-border requirement might lead to artificial and funding-driven applications, which do

not accurately reflect the need on the ground. Some respondents accepted the thrust of the argument in favour of cross-border activity but felt that it should be an optional, rather than compulsory element of any application. Concerns were expressed that for those that do not have existing cross-border partnerships in place, this element would pose significant difficulties in securing funding for their projects. It was suggested that Belfast City Council might facilitate the matching of partner groups in the border region in order to ensure take up. It was noted that Co-operation Ireland might usefully assist the Council in this regard.

Technical assistance

A number of respondents queried the budget allocation in the creation of new posts at Belfast City Council to administer the Peace Plan and the salary levels suggested. Feedback demonstrated that the majority of those who addressed the issue of staffing levels and salaries indicated their displeasure at the proposal as laid out in the Peace Plan and felt that this should be curtailed so as to ensure the greatest possible delivery of funding to the community level. One suggestion was made that the Council could sub-contract work rather than employing a full staff team as a means of reducing salary costs.

With regard to the proposed Migrant Workers Group, concerns were raised as to the control/ownership resting with Belfast City Council. The staff levels and salary costs proposed to administer the Forum were also queried by a number of respondents.

Additional issue raised with regard to the consultation process

The point was made that the contact details provided for submission of responses to the consultation document did not contain a textphone number, thereby disadvantaging deaf persons.

Annex A

Consultation Events

North Belfast:	Belfast Castle, 29 October
South Belfast:	Malone House, 31 October
West Belfast:	Farset, 1 November
East Belfast:	The Mount, 2 November
Community Arts Forum,	6 November
Belfast City Council Youth Forum,	6 November
Section 75 groups, Belfast Council	9 November
Conflict Transformation Network	12 November
Training for Women Network	21 November
The Vine Centre	22 November
Falls Community Council	26 November
Gleann Boxing Club	27 November
Albert Foundry Bowling Club	28 November

Organisations represented at Consultation Events

174 Trust	Disability Action
Albert Foundry Bowling Club	DLI CEP
Arts Ekta	Donegall Pass Community Forum
Ashton Community Trust	East Belfast Community Education Centre
Ballymacarrett Artistic & Cultural Society	East Belfast Partnership
Ballysillan Community Forum	East Belfast Project
BCC European Unit	East Belfast Training and Social
BCDA	Edgehill College
BCRC	Egyptian Society NI
BELB	Equality Commission
Belfast City Council Youth Forum	Fall's Women's Centre
Belfast Community Circus School	Falls Community Council
Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium	Forthspring
Belfast Humanist Group	Gaelscolaíocht Éireann
Belfast LSP	Greater Ballysillan CEP
Belfast Metropolitan College	GEMS
Belfast Model School for Girls	Gleann Boxing Club
Belfast Trust	Greater Shankill Community Centre
Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre	Groundwork
Belfast YMCA	Imagine International Ltd
Beyond Skin	Indian Community Centre
Blackie River Centre	Inner East Youth Project
BMC	Institute for Conflict Research
Boys Brigade	Intercomm
Chinese Welfare Association	Ionad uibh Eadrach
Church of Ireland Reconciliation	Irish Football Association
Citizens Advice Belfast	LINC
City Bridges	Linfield Football Club
Cluain Ard Women	Linfield Ladies
Coiste na n-Iarchimi	Mediation NI
Community Arts Forum	Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
Community Foundation	New Border Foundation
Conflict Transformation Network	Newhill Community Centre
Conservation Volunteers NI	Newhill First Steps
Co-operation Ireland	Newtownabbey Borough Shadow Youth Council
Cornerhouse	NI Children's Enterprise
COSO	NI Council for Integrated Education
Creative Youth Partnership	NI Submariners Association
Crown Project	NICRAS
Dance United	NIHE
	North Belfast Interface Network

Northern Visions	Tides Training
Ocean Youth Trust Ireland	Tinderbox
People First	Transition Training
Pobal	TWN
Presbyterian Church	UNBCEP
PSNI	Upper Andersonstown Community Forum
QUB	Upper Ardoyne Community Partnership
Rathcoole CEP	Visual Access NI
Relatives for Justice	WEA
Short Strand Community Centre	West Kirk Community Partnership
Short Strand Community Forum	WISPA
Skillsmart	Women into Politics
South Belfast Partnership	Women's Institute
Springvale Learning	Women's News
Springwell House	Women's Resource Development Agency
St. Joseph's Primary School, Slate St	Women's Support Network
Stadium Youth & Community Projects	Workforce Training
Star Neighbourhood Centre	WPYSG
Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project	Young Enterprise
Suffolk Community Forum	Youth Link
Taughmonagh Community Forum	Youthnet
The Vine Centre	

Written Responses

All-Party Reference Group on Older People
Belfast City Council's European Unit
Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium
Belfast Exposed
Belfast Healthy Cities
Belfast Local Strategy Partnership
Clonard Monastery
Conflict Transformation Network
Cooperation Ireland
Disability Action
NI Council for Ethnic Minorities
NI Equality Commission
NI Housing Executive
Tar Isteach
Women's Resource & Development Agency

CONSULTATION COMMENTS AND COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

Appendix G

This table summarises the key points that emerged as common concerns from both the consultation sessions and written submissions and sets out the Council's response.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE	COUNCIL COMMENT
<p>Q1. Do you agree with the profile of Belfast outlined in the draft Peace Plan?</p> <p>Most respondents indicated that the profile of Belfast was an appropriate reflection of the city, some acknowledging that it was difficult to provide a detailed profile within the limited space available.</p> <p>Some indicated that further statistical data could be provided in a range of areas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • segregation levels, interface areas and existing good relations activities, to provide a baseline against which to measure future work, gaps and progress 	<p>The Good Relations Unit's own Peace II-funded Conflict Transformation Project's research will assist in providing this information, which should be available around the end of April 2008.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the increase in ethnic minorities and migrant workers to Belfast in recent years 	<p>Reference to this already included in Plan at 4d and 4e.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the findings of the city-wide survey under the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme (SNAP) could be fully utilised and incorporated into the final plan 	<p>Timing of SNAP results means that it is not possible to incorporate them here.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the data provided does not fully reflect the pockets of deprivation which exist, or areas of particularly high unemployment. 	<p>The full SNAP results, when available, will be used in targeting areas of deprivation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over a third of the population of Belfast (100,000+) is under the age of 25; the profile should reflect this, as young people are listed as one of the target groups. 	<p>Agreed – text to be revised accordingly.</p>

<p>Housing and Economic Investment</p> <p>The profile should reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the recent increase in the cost of housing 	Reference already included in Plan at 4c
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the impact of rising house prices - a shortage of affordable housing and fragmentation of local communities. 	Agreed – text to be revised accordingly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role of private developers and private investment in changing the face of the city. 	Agreed – text to be revised accordingly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the significant increase in the daytime population of the city, as many travel into the city to work 	Agreed – text to be revised accordingly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the uneven distribution of economic investment in the city. 	Reference already included in Plan at 4e
<p>Wider impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belfast experienced the conflict more directly than other parts of NI and certain areas of Belfast suffered more impact than others. 	Reference to the special case for Belfast already included in Plan at 4d and 4e
<p>Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women, a key target group identified by SEUPB, make up over 53% of the population and have substantial experience in peace building. 	Agreed – text to be revised accordingly
<p>SWOT (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested additions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Strengths</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arterial Routes programme Work with migrant communities Significant resource of cross-community and cross-border linkages and peace-building experience built up through interventions funded under previous PEACE Programmes and other sources, including the Council’s own Good Relations Fund. 	Agreed – text to be revised accordingly

<p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of coordinated approach to migrant issues <p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New migrant communities will help create diverse society ○ New migrant communities will help fill labour market gaps. 	<p>Agreed – text to be revised accordingly</p> <p>Agreed – text to be revised accordingly</p>
<p>Q2. Main issues to be addressed to achieve the vision?</p> <p>Joined-up Planning The need to work collaboratively with, and communicate the Peace Plan vision to, other statutory bodies on e.g. health, education and physical planning. The Plan can not work in isolation but must add value to other strategic initiatives, e.g. Housing Executive’s Good Relations programmes.</p>	<p>Reference to this already included in Plan at 3 and 7.</p>
<p>Measure Progress Clear indicators, targets and outcomes, both quantitative and qualitative, needed in order to measure progress and attitudinal change.</p>	<p>These will be clearly agreed and defined by the new Shadow Partnership, in accordance with the Council’s performance management framework.</p>
<p>Clearly defined terminology and criteria More clarity with regard to terminology used, particularly the use of the term ‘space’ and clear criteria to be established.</p>	<p>The concept of “shared space” was intended to be interpreted in the widest sense possible i.e. not just physical space but space for dialogue, discussion and relationship building.</p>
<p>Be people focused The Plan should focus on people, trust and relationship-building and changing attitudes and perceptions, rather than physical space.</p>	<p>Agreed – text to be revised to reflect fact that the building of relationships , trust and confidence is fundamental to the plan.</p>
<p>Issue of ethnic minorities and migrant workers Potential tensions within migrant communities and between migrant communities and local indigenous communities outlined.</p>	<p>To be addressed in migrant worker project to be led by the Council in partnership with other agencies.</p>

<p>Support and complement existing work Current successful work especially around the “hard issues” e.g. interfaces, racist attacks, should continue to be supported under the proposed Peace Plan in order to build on what has already been achieved, although new and innovative ways of working would also have to be found.</p>	<p>These themes already identified in the Plan. The concept of “additionality” must be demonstrated to meet EU requirements.</p>
<p>Address marginalised communities and need Needs continued investment at community level supporting areas and communities that are most marginalised; need to address social exclusion.</p>	<p>Reference already included; impact on poverty is one of SEUPB’s cross-cutting themes.</p>
<p>Be realistic and flexible The plan must be based on what is achievable and deliverable within the timeframe and be flexible in response.</p>	<p>Reference to this already included in Plan at 9e.</p>
<p>Be visible and promote good practice The Peace Plan will only be successful if it is highly visible, highlights good practice and achievements and promotes shared learning.</p>	<p>Importance of good communication recognised; the proposed structure includes a post of Communications Assistant.</p>
<p>Create a holistic vision of Belfast It is important to view and present Belfast as a whole, rather than a collection of small communities and a town centre.</p>	<p>Agreed – reference to “One City” where citizens connected via the medium of citizenship included in 6.</p>
<p>Economic vision Private companies and developers provide social development in the form of housing and local labour schemes; they too become part of the ‘social capital’ of the city.</p>	<p>Agreed – Council proposals refer to need to involve private sector developers for this purpose.</p>
<p>Build Capacity Capacity-building work is still required for some groups; may be particularly true for some PUL communities in the city.</p>	<p>Noted – the plan proposes recruiting additional good relations developmental staff for this purpose</p>

<p>Q3&4 Does the draft Peace Plan cover all the main issues? What needs to be changed or added to the Peace Plan?</p>	
<p>Development of Baseline Data A baseline against which Council could monitor progress should include both qualitative and quantitative outcomes and would provide clear indicators of change as a result of the PEACE III intervention.</p>	<p>The Good Relations Unit's own Peace II-funded Conflict Transformation Project's research, plus central Council data will assist in providing this information.</p>
<p>Recognise community and voluntary sector contribution Concerns were expressed that the large statutory organisations would receive significant grant aid, at the expense of the community and voluntary sector.</p>	<p>Small grants scheme to be established – already included in Peace Plan.</p>
<p>Documenting Good Practice The Peace Plan should indicate how Council and delivery agents will document good practice on good relations work and capture good news stories as they emerge.</p>	<p>Agreed – text to be revised accordingly</p>
<p>Address funding gap Concern re to the probable funding gap between PEACE II and PEACE III, which appears inevitable, given the timeframes proposed and its impact.</p>	<p>City Council has no responsibility for this – an issue for SEUPB.</p>
<p>Cross-border funding Concern re the 30% target for cross-border funding. Need to review current cross-border projects in Belfast to identify models and assess best practice.</p>	<p>Council has already raised concerns about this target, set by the SEUPB. Agreed – Council has already made contact with Border Action, Co-operation Ireland et alia.</p>
<p>Protect current shared space Need to protect the shared space that currently exists within the city and develop guidelines for the use of shared spaces.</p>	<p>Research underway through GRU's Conflict Transformation Unit; also link to Housing Executive's strategies.</p>
<p>Joined-up approach Range of initiatives currently on-going in Belfast. Council should lead a coordinated approach, collaborate with all other relevant government, statutory agencies and local partnerships and concentrate activities in a more coordinated manner.</p>	<p>Agreed – see response above under Q2</p>

<p>Additionality Given the fragility of the arts and cultural sector, there should be some flexibility in how additionality is defined so as not to exclude medium and small scale arts-based organisations.</p>	<p>The Good Relations Unit will liaise closely with the Council's Culture & Arts Unit to identify appropriate arts organizations to be supported through Peace III funding.</p>
<p>Support existing work The Peace Plan should recognise and highlight the good relations work currently being implemented and experience gained over the last decade.</p>	<p>Agreed – but Peace III has a different focus from previous Peace programmes so needs new approaches.</p>
<p>Small Grants programme Widespread endorsement of inclusion of Small Grants Programme.</p>	<p>Noted – already included in Plan.</p>
<p>Multi-culturalism and diversity Multi-culturalism identified as a gap and how existing work on race relations will continue to be supported.</p>	<p>The theme " shared cultural space" will support race relations work and positive expressions of identity.</p>
<p>Staffing levels Concern re staffing and salary levels proposed.</p>	<p>Salary grades of additional staff must be in line with existing grades and structures.</p>
<p>Commissioned work Need to define how work will be commissioned, including the development of research themes and the tendering process to be put in place.</p>	<p>Council has an open and transparent procurement procedure in place.</p>
<p>Appeals The Peace Plan should clearly set out the appeals process for those who wish to challenge a Partnership decision.</p>	<p>This will be developed in detail by the Good Relations Partnership when established, based on SEUPB guidelines.</p>
<p>Q5. Who should be involved in the delivery of the Peace Plan?</p>	
<p>Partnership Composition - Political Representation Concern expressed about the potential for 'party-political decision-making'.</p>	<p>For legal reasons, the Partnership will effectively be a Working Group of the Council, reporting to the principal Committee, the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.</p>

<p>Community and Voluntary Sector Representation</p> <p>Suggested that a clear distinction needed between the community sector and voluntary sector and that each should be separately represented on the Partnership. Allocation of four seats to the community and voluntary sector, as suggested, was insufficient.</p>	<p>Good Relations Partnership to be established in shadow form early in 2008. Nominations will be invited from both voluntary and community sectors. Partnership of 20 considered optimum size, in experience of Council.</p>
<p>Important to have a mix of experience and new people on the Partnership; also gender balance.</p>	<p>Agreed – Plan already includes reference to need for overall balance in 3b.</p>
<p>Some queries re church representation on the Partnership.</p> <p>Unease expressed re grouping of ‘minority ethnic’ and ‘faith groups’ together.</p>	<p>The Council views church participation in peace-building as vital; e.g. a recent report stated almost 70% of registered youth groups in NI were faith/church based³⁰.</p> <p>Agreed – text to be revised to read one representative each from minority ethnic groups and one from minority faiths.</p>
<p>General agreement re need for good two-way communication between the Partnership members and the sectors they represent.</p> <p>An interactive website suggested as a feedback mechanism.</p>	<p>Agreed – feedback essential to ensure transparency and accountability.</p> <p>Agreed – good communication important; website option will be explored.</p>
<p>Some respondents argued for the inclusion of target groups (including young people and older people) on the Partnership, given the specific focus of the PEACE III Programme.</p>	<p>Not possible to include all sectoral interests on Partnership. Special consultation sessions were arranged with the Council’s Youth Forum and Older People’s Group; these groups will be kept informed of Council progress on Peace III but it is not considered that they should be directly represented on the Partnership.</p>

³⁰ Faith Based Youth Work in NI, Youthnet Research Report, 2006

Need to encourage participation by disabled people on bodies such as the proposed Good Relations Partnership.	The Council is aware of its statutory obligations under disability legislation. A special consultation session was arranged with the Council's S75 groups. People with disabilities will be encouraged to seek nominations on the Partnership.
Selection Process A significant number of respondents stated that whatever selection process is chosen, it should be open and transparent to all.	Agreed
There was no consensus among respondents as to the selection process to be followed; applicants should have the opportunity to state what they believe they could bring to the Partnership.	Noted – the Council may use an independent body to aid the selection process for voluntary and community sector representatives.
Partnership Working Should be a clear, detailed working agreement for the Partnership members so that each member understands their roles and responsibilities.	Agreed – the Council will also arrange appropriate training for the members of the Partnership when established.
Q6. Do you agree with the proposed allocation of the budget	
Allocation size Indicative percentage splits regarded as too prescriptive and allocation should be more responsive to the demand received through the application process.	Detailed criteria and procedures are to be developed and firmed up by the new shadow Partnership.
Small Grants Programme Current Council Good Relations Grant Aid Programme suggested as a useful template for small grants funding under the PEACE III Programme.	Agreed – already referred to in Plan at 7.
Suggested that the Council could consider earmarking a % of the Council rates to match the £12m budget in order to sustain the work beyond 2012.	Not possible. Council has already made clear (10) that the additional costs of Peace III should not be borne by the ratepayers but by the SEUPB. We will, however, keep the programme under review for possible mainstreaming of certain projects.

<p>Cross-border element Some concern re the 30% target for the cross-border element of the programme. Suggested that the Council might facilitate the matching of partner groups in the border region in order to ensure take up.</p>	<p>Council has already raised concerns about this target, set by the SEUPB.</p> <p>Agreed – Council has already made contact with Border Action, Co-operation Ireland et alia.</p>
<p>Proposed Good Relations Learning & Development Strategy Concern expressed that the principal beneficiaries of this would be Council employees; suggestion that this proposal would fit more readily under priority 2.2 of the Peace III Programme “ developing key institutional capacities for a shared society”.</p>	<p>Agreed – proposed project to be withdrawn</p>
<p>Technical assistance Queries re the budget allocation re the creation of new posts in the Council to administer the Peace Plan and the suggested salary levels.</p> <p>Suggestion that the Council could sub-contract its Peace III work rather than employing a full staff team as a means of reducing salary costs.</p>	<p>Staff salary grades have to be in line with existing grades and structures.</p> <p>Not possible – the Council is the lead partner and has to retain legal and financial responsibility for management and administration.</p>

Appendix H

Detailed Area Profile

Demography

On Census Day 29th April 2001 the resident population of Belfast Local Government District (LGD) was 277,391. Of this population:

- 21.7% were under 16 years old and 19.7% were aged 60 and above;
- 46.8% of the population were male and 53.2% were female; and
- 47.2% were from a Catholic Community Background and 48.6% were from a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' Community Background.

The average age of population in Belfast LGD was 36.6 years compared to 35.8 years for NI. Over a third of the population (100,000+) was under the age of 25 years.

The population density in Belfast LGD was 24.15 persons per hectare, compared to 1.19 for NI.

In Belfast LGD 41.3% of persons aged 16 and over were single (never married) and for NI it was 33.1%.

In Belfast LGD there were 3423 births registered in 2004. In total 53.5% of births were to unmarried mothers.

The Total Period Fertility Rate (TPFR) is the average number of children that would be born to a cohort of women who experienced, throughout their childbearing years, the fertility rates of the calendar year(s) in question. In western countries a TPFR of about 2.1 is required to maintain long-term population levels, assuming no migration. The Total Period Fertility Rate (2000-2004) for Belfast LGD is 1.51.

In Belfast LGD there were 2794 deaths registered in 2004.

The standardised mortality ratio is a method of comparing mortality in different populations, while allowing for differences in the age structure of these populations. A value of 100 equals the average mortality for Northern Ireland, any value greater than 100 indicates above average mortality. In Belfast LGD the Standard Mortality Ratio (2000-2004) for all ages was 107, for age 75 years and under it was 120.

The estimated population of Belfast LGD at 30 June 2005 was 267,999, a decrease of -979 (-0.4%) on the 2004 population of 268978.

In 2017 the population of Belfast LGD is projected to be 257,941 persons.

There were 1238 marriages registered in 2003 in Belfast LGD, 39.2% of which were at a Registrar's Office.

Comparisons	DISTRICT	N.IRELAND
	Belfast	N.I
Resident population	277391	1685267
% persons under 16 years old	21.7	23.6
% persons aged 60 and over	19.7	17.6
% male	46.8	48.7
% female	53.2	51.3
% Catholic Community Background	47.2	43.8
% Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related) Community Background	48.6	53.1
Average age of population	36.6	35.8
Population density (persons per hectare)	24.15	1.19
% persons 16 and over single (never married)	41.3	33.1
Births (2004)	3423	22318
% of births to unmarried mothers (2004)	53.5	34.5
Total Period Fertility Rate (2000-2004)	1.51	1.80
Deaths (2004)	2794	14354
Standard Mortality Ratio for all ages (2000-2004)	107	100
Standard Mortality Ratio for age 75 years and under (2000-2004)	120	100
Estimated Population (2005)	267999	1724408
% change Estimated Population (2004-2005)	-0.4	0.8
Projected Population 2017 (2002 based)	257941	1788389
% of marriages at a Registrar's Office (2003)	39.2	27.5

Datasets used: Census 2001: KS01 Usually Resident Population, KS02 Age Structure, KS04 Marital Status, KS07b Community Background (NISRA Census Office).

Births 2004, Deaths 2004, Marriages 2003, Mid Year Estimates 2005, Population Projections 2002 based.

Crime and Justice

There were a total of 33416 offences recorded in Belfast LGD in 2005/06 financial year. These can be broken down by type of crime, the categories are shown below:

- Offences against the person - 23.6%
- Sexual Offences - 1.1%
- Burglary - 9.0%
- Robbery - 2.8%
- Theft - 26.9%
- Fraud and forgery - 4.5%
- Criminal damage - 27.4%
- Offences against the state - 1.3%
- Other offences - 3.4%

Statistics on bankruptcy and actions for mortgage possession are produced by the High Court in the Northern Ireland Courts Service.

There are two types of bankruptcy petition, i.e. debtor's petition presented by the debtor themselves or a creditor's petition presented by the creditor to whom the money is owed. In Belfast LGD, there were 247 bankruptcy cases disposed in 2005. These cases resulted in 63 bankruptcy orders sought by the creditor and 79 bankruptcy orders sought by the debtor.

In Belfast LGD, there were 269 mortgage cases disposed in 2005. These cases resulted in 132 final possession and sale and possession orders i.e. the court ordered that the property be taken into possession and in some cases sold. As the parties involved can often negotiate a compromise, not all such actions lead to eviction.

Comparisons	DISTRICT	N.IRELAND
	Belfast	N.I
Total offences recorded (2005-06)	33416	123194
% offences against the person (2005-06)	23.6	25.1
% sexual offences (2005-06)	1.1	1.4
% burglary (2005-06)	9.0	10.4
% robbery (2005-06)	2.8	1.4
% theft (2005-06)	26.9	23.9
% fraud and forgery (2005-06)	4.5	4.1
% criminal damage (2005-06)	27.4	28.2
% offences against the state (2005-06)	1.3	1.1
% other offences (2005-06)	3.4	4.3
Bankruptcy cases disposed (2005)	247	1614
Bankruptcy orders sought by creditor (2005)	63	414
Bankruptcy orders sought by debtor (2005)	79	385
Mortgage cases disposed (2005)	269	1549
Final possession and sale and possession orders (2005)	132	837

Datasets used:

Recorded Crime 2005/06 (PSNI), Bankruptcy Cases Disposed 2005 and Mortgage Cases Disposed 2005 (NI Court Service).

Deprivation - NIMDM 2005

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005 (NIMDM 2005) was published in May 2005. The report identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across Northern Ireland. The results for Belfast LGD are shown below.

Belfast LGD has an Extent of 48%, this means that 48% of the Belfast population live in the most deprived Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland.

The Income Scale shows that there are 82986 people in Belfast LGD experiencing Income Deprivation, while the Employment scale shows that a total of 30119 people in Belfast LGD experience employment deprivation.

On the Average SOA Rank measure Belfast LGD has a rank of 4 out of 26 LGDs. On the Income Scale measure Belfast LGD has a rank of 1 out of 26 LGDs.

Within Belfast LGD the most deprived Super Output Area is Whiterock 2 (ranked 1 in NI) and the least deprived Super Output Area is Stranmillis 1 (ranked 872 in NI).

LGD Scores and Ranks (NIMDM 2005)	LGD Score	LGD Rank
Local Concentration	882.37	1
Extent	48%	2
Income Scale	82986	1
Employment Scale	30119	1
Average of SOA ranks	587.80	4
Average of SOA scores	34.59	2

[Ranks range from 1 (most deprived LGD) to 26 (least deprived LGD)]

Datasets used:

Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005 (NISRA).

Education, Employment and Economic Activity

While Belfast remains the capital city and regional economic driver of NI, it is worth bearing in mind some of the key challenges it faces:

- a heavy reliance on the public sector for employment - 38% of all jobs in Belfast are in the public sector; 72% of all public sector jobs in NI are located in Belfast, which hampers the growth of the private sector
- low levels of business start-ups – only 4.5% of the adult resident population in Belfast are engaged in enterprise activity as measured by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (lowest in NI).

On Census Day, in Belfast LGD looking at the population aged 16-74:

- 19.2% had degree level or higher qualifications;
- 56.9% were economically active, 43.1% were economically inactive; and
- 5.4% were unemployed, of these 42.6% were long-term unemployed.

On Census Day, of the 99644 people aged 16-74 in employment who lived in Belfast LGD 77341 worked in Belfast LGD (77.6%).

The top three LGDs where the working age population of Belfast LGD worked were:

1. Belfast (77.6%);
2. Castlereagh (5.6%); and
3. Newtownabbey (4.8%).

Of those who left school in 2004-05, 55.6% gained 5 or more GCSEs at grade C and above, 32.3% went on into higher education and 20.1% went on into further education. Finally in 2006 30.1% of the post primary school population were entitled to free school meals.

In 2004:

- 16.9% of persons aged 18-59 were claiming Income Support¹;
- 12.8% of persons aged 16-59/64 were claiming Incapacity Benefit¹; and
- 15.2% of persons aged 16+ were claiming Housing Benefit¹.

The Census of Employment is a statutory survey that is conducted every two years in Northern Ireland. It provides information on the nature and characteristics of non-agricultural businesses. In 2005 there were 192447 employee jobs in Belfast LGD.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) provides a wide range of information on hourly, weekly and annual earnings of employees in Northern Ireland. The median gross weekly earnings for all employees in Belfast LGD at April 2006 was £373.6 compared with a figure of £ 324.7 for NI and £ 364.1 in the UK. Figures use the home postcode of employee. The median measures the amount earned by the average individual i.e. the level of earnings above which half the population fall.

The Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) showed there were 6035 VAT registered Businesses in Belfast LGD in 2004.

Comparisons	DISTRICT	N.IRELAND
	Belfast	N.I
% degree level or higher qualifications	19.2	15.8
% economically active	56.9	62.3
% economically inactive	43.1	37.7
% unemployed	5.4	4.1
% of unemployed, who were long term unemployed	42.6	40.4
% school leavers gained 5 or more GCSEs at grade C and above (2004-05)	55.6	63.1
% school leavers continued on into higher education (2004-05)	32.3	38.2
% school leavers continued on into further education (2004-05)	20.1	27.6
% of the post primary school population entitled to free school meals (2006)	30.1	18.9
% of persons 18-59 claimed Income Support (2004) ¹	16.9	10.8
% of persons 16-59/64 claimed Incapacity Benefit (2004) ¹	12.8	10.7
% of persons 16+ claimed Housing Benefit (2004) ¹	15.2	9.7
Employee jobs (2005)	192447	683054

Median gross weekly earnings all employees (2006)	<i>£373.6</i>	<i>£ 324.7</i>
Number of VAT registered businesses (2004)	<i>6035</i>	<i>53830</i>
Number of farms (2006)	<i>29</i>	<i>26739</i>
Total agricultural labour force (2006)	<i>60</i>	<i>49952</i>

Datasets used:

Census 2001: KS13 Qualifications and Students, KS09a Economic Activity, Place of residence by area of workplace (NISRA Census Office).

Income Support 2004, Incapacity Benefit 2004, Housing Benefit 2004 (DSD), Census of Employment 2005, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2006 and Inter Departmental Business Register 2004 (DETI), Farm Census 2006 (DARD), School Leavers Survey 2004/05 and School Census 2005/06 (DE).

¹Census 2001 population data used to create rate.

Health and Care

On Census Day 29th April 2001, in Belfast LGD:

- 24.2% of people had a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability;
- 11.8% of the population noted that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others; and
- 65.8% of people stated that their general health was good.

In 2005-06, residents of Belfast LGD had 97246 hospital episodes.

In 2005 58.1% of children aged 3-5 were registered with a dentist.

Comparisons	DISTRICT	N.IRELAND
	Belfast	N.I
% people with limiting long-term illness	<i>24.2</i>	<i>20.4</i>
% population provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others	<i>11.8</i>	<i>11.0</i>
% people stated their health was good	<i>65.8</i>	<i>70.0</i>
Hospital episodes (2005-06)	<i>97246</i>	<i>582533</i>
% of children aged 3-5 registered with a dentist (2005)	<i>58.1</i>	<i>62.4</i>

Datasets used:

Census 2001: KS08 Health and Provision of Unpaid Care (NISRA Census Office). Hospital Episodes 2005/06 and Dental Registrations 2005 (DHSSPS).

Housing and Transport

On Census Day 29th April 2001 there were 113,934 households in Belfast LGD. Of these households:

- 56.1% were owner occupied and 43.9% were rented;
- 24.0% were owned outright;
- 15.8% were lone pensioner households;
- 11.0% were lone parent households with dependent children; and
- 44.9% had one or more persons with a limiting long-term illness.

On Census Day 29th April 2001 the average household size was 2.38 for Belfast LGD, compared to 2.65 for NI.

There are projected to be 120,600 households in Belfast LGD in the year 2015, with an average household size of 2.11 persons.

In 2003 there were 123,384 domestic properties in Belfast LGD:

- Terraced - 49.0%
- Apartments - 17.0%
- Semi-Detached - 24.9%
- Detached - 9.1%

The average rates bill for Belfast LGD in 2004/05 was £503, compared to £569 for NI. For Belfast LGD this represents an increase of 5.4% from 2003/04, compared to an increase of 8.4% for NI.

The average new house price in Belfast LGD in 2004/05 was £ 125,281 - this compares to an average of £ 117,756 for NI the same year.

In 2005 there were 1930 new dwelling starts in Belfast LGD.

In 2005/06 there were 2504 planning applications received and 2296 planning decisions of which 92.8% were granted.

The 2001 House Condition Survey showed that 21.0% of all non decent homes were in Belfast LGD.

There were 5063 noise complaints made in Belfast LGD in 2004/05, the highest category being 'Domestic' at 84.1% of all noise complaints.

On Census Day in Belfast LGD 56.2% of households had access to a car or van, 57.0% of persons aged 16-74 in employment usually travelled to work by car or van. This compares to 70.6% in NI.

In 2005, 91,329 cars were licensed to addresses in Belfast LGD, 12.3% of which were cars registered to a disabled driver or for transporting disabled people.

Comparisons	DISTRICT	N.IRELAND
	Belfast	N.I
Number of households	113934	626718
% owner occupied	56.1	69.6
% rented	43.9	30.4
% owned outright	24.0	29.4
% lone pensioner households	15.8	12.8
% lone parent households with dependent children	11.0	8.1
% one or more persons with a limiting long-term illness	44.9	41.3
Average household size	2.38	2.65
% of households had access to car or van	56.2	73.7

% of persons aged 16-74 in employment usually travelled to work by car or van	<i>57.0</i>	<i>70.6</i>
Number of domestic properties (2003)	<i>123384</i>	<i>685676</i>
% terraced (2003)	<i>49.0</i>	<i>31.0</i>
% apartments (2003)	<i>17.0</i>	<i>9.4</i>
% semi-detached (2003)	<i>24.9</i>	<i>24.0</i>
% detached (2003)	<i>9.1</i>	<i>35.6</i>
Average rates bill (2004/05)	<i>£ 503</i>	<i>£ 569</i>
Average new house price (2004/05)	<i>£ 125281</i>	<i>£ 117756</i>
Cars were licensed (2005)	<i>91329</i>	<i>763663</i>
% of cars registered to a disabled driver or for transporting disabled people (2005)	<i>12.3</i>	<i>8.6</i>

Datasets used:

Census 2001: KS15 Travel to Work, KS17 Cars or Vans, KS18 Tenure, KS19 Rooms, Amenities, Central Heating and Lowest Floor Level, KS20 Household Composition, KS21 Households with Limiting Long-term illness, KS22 Lone Parent Households with Dependent Children (NISRA Census Office). Household Projections 2002 based and Household Average Size Projections 2002 based (NISRA Demography Branch), Domestic Properties 2003 (VLA), National House Building Council Average Rates Bill 2004/05, NHBC Registered New House Prices 2004/05 (DSD), New Dwelling Starts 2005 (DRD), Planning Applications 2005/06 (DOE Planning Service via DSD), House Conditions Survey 2001 (NIHE), Noise Complaints 2004/05 (LGD), Cars Registered 2005 (DVLNI).

BASELINE INDICATORS (recommended by SEUPB)**Society is free from racism, sectarianism and prejudice.**

Indicator
Number of racial incidents and crimes recorded
Number of homophobic incidents and crimes recorded
Number of sectarian incidents and crimes recorded
Number of incidents and crimes recorded motivated by religion
Number of incidents and crimes recorded motivated by disability
Number of attacks on symbolic premises: churches/chapels; GAA/AOH property; Orange halls; schools
Number of clients presenting as homeless due to intimidation (and % awarded homelessness status)
% of people who think the area is a place free from displays of sectarian aggression
% of people who believe there is more racial prejudice than there was 5 years ago
% of people who believe there will be more racial prejudice in 5 years time
% of people who believe people from a minority ethnic community are less respected than they once were
% of people who are prejudiced against people from a minority ethnic community

Positive and harmonious relationships exist between communities

Indicator
Number of deaths per annum due to security situation
Number of casualties per annum as a result of paramilitary style shootings
Number of casualties per annum as a result of paramilitary style assaults
Number of security related incidents
Number of criminal damage offences with a hate motivation
Intimidation through physical damage to a building or graffiti by type
Number of Peace Lines
% of young people who worry about being threatened by paramilitaries
% of young people who worry about being assaulted due to religion, race or skin colour

Appendix J

BASELINE INDICATORS (identified in the Good Relations Plan)

Securing shared city space	
% of people who felt intimidated/annoyed by republican/loyalist murals, flags or kerb painting in the last year	NI Life & Times Survey
No. and type of sectarian/racial incidents and hate crimes recorded in Belfast	PSNI statistics
% of people who would define their main shopping area as a 'shared/neutral' space	NI Life & Times Survey
Transforming contested space	
No. of interface areas in Belfast	NI Housing Executive
No. of vacant houses at interface areas	NI Housing Executive
Proportion of population living in mixed/segreated ³¹ areas	Census data
No. of contentious parades as a % of parades notified by type	Parades Commission Annual Report
Developing shared cultural space	
% who believe racial prejudice in NI is on the increase/decrease	NI Life & Times Survey
% of people who have friends of a different religion	NI Life & Times Survey
Building shared organisational space	
% of people who are willing to work in a mixed religion workplace	NI Life & Times Survey
% of people who believe the government is actively encouraging shared communities where people of all backgrounds can live, work, learn and play together	NI Life & Times Survey

³¹ segregated if more than 70%, 80% or 90% of population in a Census Output Area is either from a catholic or protestant community background

EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Council has a duty to serve all its citizens fairly and is committed to encouraging the full participation of all the communities in the city in the activities outlined in the Plan.

Equality legislation

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Council, in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties, to have due regard to the need to promote **equality of opportunity** between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without. The Act also requires the Council, in carrying out its functions, to have regard to the desirability of promoting **good relations** between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Council's Equality Scheme, which details how the Council will fulfil its duties, was approved in April 2001. A fundamental part of that Equality Scheme was the production of a Good Relations Strategy, adopted in February 2003. Our Good Relations Strategy was commended as a model of good practice in both the *Shared Future* and *Racial Equality Strategy* documents from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Consideration of available data and research

This Peace Plan is based on information contained in the Council's own Corporate Plan and Good Relations Plan for Belfast, adopted by the major statutory bodies in the city. It includes actions that we feel will contribute to building positive relationships at the local level in Belfast, challenging attitudes towards sectarianism and racism and supporting conflict transformation and mediation at the local community level.

Consultation carried out to date

The Council's major surveys have consistently indicated sound support for the Council taking a more pro-active role in the promotion of community relations in the City. For example, 34% of those interviewed in our recent public consultation survey of 2007 stated that the Council's main priority should be promoting good relations between communities.

During October and November 2007, we undertook an extensive and participative public consultation exercise on our proposals for Peace III, seeking views on the equality and good relations impacts; this was a shorter consultation period than normal but we were attempting to meet the SEUPB timetable.

Our Equality Officer assisted in the public consultation process, ensuring that we made particular efforts to involve S 75 groups and marginalised groups from areas of social deprivation, to promote social inclusion. She arranged and led a special session with the Council's S 75 groups to enable full discussion on the draft Plan. We also offered to set up outreach consultation meetings for all community and voluntary groups.

The Council is aware of its statutory obligations under the disability legislation. We will make efforts to encourage disabled people to seek nominations as representatives on the Good Relations Partnership.

Assessments of impact

There is evidence that the negative effects of current divisions in the community impact differentially on a number of groups covered in S 75, particularly on people of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group.

It is our view that the policy proposals contained in this Plan should not have any adverse impact on equality of opportunity for any of the groups. In fact, the reverse is the case and the Plan has positive consequences for aspects of good relations in terms of all nine equality dimensions.

Since the Peace Plan aims to promote good relations positively between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group, it is likely to have a differential but positive impact in terms of all three dimensions of S 75 (2).

The Council believes that the promotion of good relations between all its citizens will assist in attaining its vision of a stable, tolerant, fair and pluralist society, where individuality is respected and diversity is celebrated, in an inclusive manner.

Consideration of mitigating measures or alternative policies

We are of the opinion that this Plan contributes directly to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations and should not result in any adverse impact. However, the Peace Plan will be subject to a full screening exercise in accordance with Council procedures and the screening outcome will be consulted on in the normal way.

Consultation and review

As with all Council policies, the Plan will be regularly monitored and reviewed in due course.

Good Relations Fund Criteria

The aim of the Good Relations Fund

The aim of the Good Relations Fund is to support community engagement in the context of good relations work. This is the process of making connections between individuals and communities. Its purpose is to challenge stereotypes, develop respect and mutual understanding, and build long-term relationships across cultural, religious, ethnic or racial divisions in Northern Ireland. (For more information, please see **Community Engagement, Good Relations and Good Practice** by Gráinne Kelly, commissioned on behalf of our Good Relations Steering Panel in September 2006.)

The objectives of the Good Relations Fund

The objectives of the Good Relations Fund are to facilitate groups through quality contact:

- “to build awareness, dispel myths and stereotypes and address sectarianism and/or racism
- to promote and encourage trust and mutual understanding through dialogue, learning about others and developing meaningful relationships
- to provide space to deal with the past and address issues of mutual interest or concern in relation to the *Shared Future* document and/or the *Race Equality Strategy* and
- to improve shared civic life by building sustainable networks to transform contested space and identity and implement collaborative actions.”

Assessment criteria

Applications will be scored on the following areas:

Being challenging and progressive – demonstrating a significant level of challenge and new learning, while maintaining the safety and well being of all involved. We will also support projects which challenge people within communities to widen their perspectives.

Respecting and valuing diversity and difference – enabling participants to engage in a process of challenging stereotypes and respecting and valuing differences in the context of good relations.

Inclusion, safety and purpose – having clear and agreed purposes, commitment to deliver between partners and agreed measures to ensure safety and quality in the programme.

Community engagement – involving people who have experienced social exclusion, segregation or conflict.

Sustainability, reflective practice, innovation – showing evidence of continuous engagement, improvement & good practice.

Who can apply?

The Good Relations Fund has been set up to help formal organisations within the Belfast City Council area, such as:

- community development groups
- cultural organisations
- minority ethnic groups
- migrant workers
- projects for young adults
- faith based groups and
- other organisations involved in community relations, reconciliation and cultural differences.

The scheme is aimed mainly at projects involving adults. If you work with children up to the age of five, you should contact your local health and social services first. Similarly, if you work with youth groups who are eligible for funding from other sources, you should apply to them first. You may get funding from organisations such as the Department of Education, the Belfast Education and Library Board and Youth Council for Northern Ireland. Public organisations will only be eligible for grant aid under exceptional circumstances.

What type of activities will this grant support?

The following list shows some examples of projects that are eligible for funding.

- Training events on building skills in mediation, anti-racism or anti-sectarianism
- Political discussions with speakers discussing the issues of conflict or racism (or both)
- A residential course with a group from another community to examine history, shared space or violence between communities
- Conferences on prejudice, discrimination and diversity (people's differences)
- Cultural diversity projects looking at history, symbolism and so on, delivered through drama, music or the arts
- Projects that will build positive race relations
- Publications examining community relations or cultural diversity issues in your community
- Support programmes for groups dealing with the results of the conflict
- Inter-community learning programmes on reducing conflict in 'interface areas' where different communities come into contact
- Good relations leadership programmes between groups of different faiths

Outline of proposed Migrant Worker Forum and Support Network

PROJECT TITLE	To establish and support a Migrant Worker Forum and Support Network																																									
PARTNERS (if applicable)	OFMDFM/ Race Equality Unit/ Community Relations Council / ICTU/ PSNI/ NIHE/ / NICEM/ MCRC/ Chinese Welfare Association / Polish Association/ Indian Community Centre/ BITC/ CABx/ Equality Commission/ private sector/ employers of migrant workers et alia																																									
HOW DOES PROJECT FIT PEACE III PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to address issues of (sectarianism and) racism in the city ▪ to co-ordinate, liaise and support inter-agency programmes and activities at civic level ▪ to co-ordinate and support activities within Council to maximise effectiveness ▪ to establish a network, identify good practice models from UK and Ireland and develop an appropriate local framework for Belfast ▪ to address practical issues re migrant workers – information, queries, language, accommodation, employment etc – in liaison with appropriate specialist agencies e.g. Law Centre, PSNI, NICEM, NIHE, ICTU, BMC, BITC etc ▪ to encourage and support social cohesion activities with host neighbourhoods in an environment of rapid demographic change ▪ to assist in empowering migrant groups within city ▪ to undertake research, identify trends in migration up-date data and share information sources and experiences 																																									
ESTIMATED TOTAL PROJECT COST	<p>4 full-time staff to support new network; provide research, information and practical advice; co-ordinate activity, support community cohesion</p> <p>Salary costs as outlined = £ 306,815 for 2 years 2008/10</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 30%;">Migrant Worker Forum</th> <th style="width: 5%;">No.</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Proposed grade</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Salary 2008/9</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Salary 2009/10</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Total salary costs for 2 years (inc Nat Ins and S'ann) £</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Project Manager</td> <td>1</td> <td>PO 5</td> <td>47,435</td> <td>50,738</td> <td>98,173</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Project Devt Officer</td> <td>1</td> <td>PO 3</td> <td>39,312</td> <td>42,499</td> <td>81,811</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Project Asst</td> <td>1</td> <td>SO 2</td> <td>33,490</td> <td>36,084</td> <td>69,574</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Business Support Asst</td> <td>1</td> <td>Scale 6</td> <td>27,510</td> <td>29,747</td> <td>57,257</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">306,815</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Migrant Worker Forum	No.	Proposed grade	Salary 2008/9	Salary 2009/10	Total salary costs for 2 years (inc Nat Ins and S'ann) £	Project Manager	1	PO 5	47,435	50,738	98,173	Project Devt Officer	1	PO 3	39,312	42,499	81,811	Project Asst	1	SO 2	33,490	36,084	69,574	Business Support Asst	1	Scale 6	27,510	29,747	57,257						306,815
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	Programme costs 80,000 @ £40,000 per year 20,000 research project Yr 1 20,000 devt of best practice model Yr 2 <u>30,000</u> 10 x Conference events to facilitate engagement 150,000 Total 456,815
ANY PRELIMINARY WORK UNDERTAKEN	Research undertaken by Dr Neil Jarman for Council provides evidence and statistical base; supports demand for city to take more pro-active approach to issue of migrants to Belfast – Council to lead a city-wide forum to address related issues. Would incorporate learning from Council’s own WINS project. Research by ICTU and DEL and others supports the need for such a network.
DATES	Recruitment to start spring 08; costs for 2 years 2008/9 and 2009/10

Figures do not include: Recruitment costs; accommodation/rent/rates, (furniture), IS support, parking, travel, stationery, telephone, postage etc.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Adjourned Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Review of the Priorities for Youth - 2008 onwards
Date:	Friday, 26th February, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Kevin Heaney (ext 6202)

1.0 Relevant background information

- 1.1 The Department of Education (DE) has recently written to the Chief Executive, letter dated 13th December (copy of which is attached at Appendix 1), to inform the Council of its intention to initiate a process to examine the Priorities for Youth within Northern Ireland which will build upon the current Strategy for the Delivery of Youth in NI 2005-2008.
- 1.2 Members will note that it is intended that the new Priorities identified through this process will be set within the exiting strategic framework rather than emerging from a review of the overall Strategy.
- 1.3 The Department's Youth and Community Relations Branch will be taking the lead on the review process. The DE has indicated that it intends to work with all stakeholders to identify the main issues currently facing youth work and to determine the priorities on which to focus, prior to and beyond the establishment of the new Education and Skills Authority.
- 1.4 Accordingly, the DE has stated their intention to take forward a process of engagement and consultation over the coming months to ensure that the key issues relating to youth are identified and prioritised in the future.

2.0 Key issues

- 2.1 It should be noted that addressing the needs and concerns of young people within the city is high on Belfast City Council's agenda and the Council has already designated 'youth champions' (consisting of representatives from all political parties and relevant Council Departments) to address youth related issues.
- 2.2 There is a clear affinity between youth and other services currently delivered by the Council including, for example, community development, community safety, sport, leisure and addressing anti-social behaviour.
- 2.3 Members will be aware that the Council, in its response to the RPA Emerging Findings Report in December, had called for the transfer of youth services, following a review of needs and investment levels, to local authorities and their integration within the Council's wider community development agenda. This would enable the Council to engage young people in the management of anti-social behaviour and community safety issues.
- 2.4 As Members will be aware, the findings of the recent residents survey carried out by the Council indicated that the most compelling issues of concern to local residents are anti-social behaviour, youth causing annoyance and having enough activities for kids to participate in.
- 2.5 In fact, 23% of respondents had identified anti-social behaviour as the worst aspect associated with living within Belfast and 41% responded that the provision of activities for teenagers would most help to improve their quality of life. The fact that Councils are leisure and recreation providers, have responsibility for community safety, community development and local enforcement regulations, provides a compelling case for outreach youth services to be located within local authorities.

Development of a Corporate Strategy for Children and Young People

- 2.6 Members will note that an inter-departmental working group has been established to consider the development of an appropriate process for developing a Corporate Strategy for Children and Young People and an accompanying implementation framework. **A more detailed report will be submitted to the Committee in due course setting out the proposed development process and seeking the views of Members.**
- 2.7 The ongoing work undertaken as part of this process will enable the Council to take a more informed and evidenced base approach to engaging with and informing the pending consultation process to be brought forward by the DE and enable the Council to advocate and lobby on behalf of the citizens of Belfast.

4.0 Resource Implications

Financial and Human Resources

There are no financial or Human Resource implications contained within this report.

5.0 Documents Attached

Appendix 1 Correspondence from the Department of Education informing the Council of the initiation of a Review of the Priorities for Youth - 2008 onwards.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	CONSULTATION - "EVERY SCHOOL A GOOD SCHOOL: A POLICY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT"
Date:	Friday 26th February 2008
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement, ext 6217
Contact Officer:	Patricia Flynn, CIT, Ext 6204

Relevant Background Information

Purpose

To bring to the attention of the Policy & Resources Committee details of a consultation by the Department of Education on its new draft School Improvement Policy entitled 'Every School a Good School'. This is an important policy area aimed at improving school performance and follows a review of the Department's current School Improvement Policy. The consultation runs from 21 January 2008 to 31 March 2008.

Background

The School Improvement Policy (SIP) was launched in 1998 and is aimed at tackling low achievement in specific schools whilst also raising standards for all. It has a number of separate but related strategies, including:

- The School Support Programme (offers a period of intensive support to individual schools);
- A strategy for the promotion of literacy and numeracy, including early intervention strategies and training for teachers to improve literacy and numeracy teaching;
- A strategy for promoting and sustaining good behaviour in schools;
- Guidance for schools on the development planning process including measures to improve the quality of school leadership;
- The development and dissemination of good practice in schools, including schools in areas of social need; and
- Guidance on target-setting as an integral part of development planning.

The purpose of the review was to assess the extent to which the current SIP was successful in terms of raising educational standards and to make recommendations as appropriate. The consultation document provides an analysis of the current system, highlights the issues which still need to be addressed and sets out a new draft school improvement policy.

Summary of the Consultation

The consultation document considers the overall performance of schools in Northern Ireland and the associated challenges. These can be summarised as follows:

- The number of schools where fewer than 40% of pupils obtain 5+ GCSEs A*-C (or equivalent) has been reduced significantly and the number of schools where fewer than 20% of pupils achieve this level has reduced by half.
- However, there is a gap in performance between the top performing schools (at primary, selective and non-selective post-primary school level) and those that perform less well. This view was reinforced by inspection evidence which indicated that as many as 12% of schools inspected had significant weaknesses or weaknesses which outweighed their strengths.
- NI schools generally perform better than those in England in relation to English and mathematics at Key Stage 2, GCSE level and at GCE A level. However, our performance in both these subjects has slipped behind England at Key Stage 3.
- In 2005/06, 63% of pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs Grades A*- C (or equivalent). However, when English and mathematics are taken into account, this falls to 51% (i.e. 5 or more GCSEs including English and mathematics) – a gap of 12 percentage points;

- Whilst the overall NI performance level at GCSE is positive, a significant number of NI pupils - 37% or 9,158 pupils - left school without this recognised qualification level (5+ GCSEs or equivalent at A*-C).
- In the case of socially disadvantaged pupils only 37% achieve a Level 2 qualification (i.e. 5 GCSEs Grades A* - C or equivalent) – a gap of 26%
- There is also a gap (12%) between the performance of girls and boys obtaining 5 GCSEs at A* - C (girls achieved 69%; boys achieved 57%).

The consultation outlines the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach to school improvement and suggests that it requires change because:

- The existing legislative framework lacks clarity in terms of the respective roles and responsibilities of the school and its Board of Governors; the Education & Library Boards; the Employing Authority; and the Department. Consequently. There are also issues in relation to accountability;
- School improvement is perceived to apply only to certain schools – schools not performing at an optimum level are not identified and are therefore not involved in the school support programme;
- Intervention powers are limited and there is a lack of effective interventions for schools which show little or no improvement;
- There is still insufficient emphasis across the system on raising standards; and
- There are weaknesses in target setting and the use of data. There are also deficiencies on the range of data available.

Key Issues

Key Proposals within the Consultation

The Department developed the new draft policy in consultation with education bodies and principals and pupils from across Northern Ireland. The Department has provided a detailed response booklet, and specifically seeks comments on the proposed:

- (i) Key characteristics of a good school;
- (ii) Key issues to be addressed by a School Improvement Policy;
- (iii) Key principles underpinning the new policy for school improvement;
- (iv) Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for the school improvement policy;
- (v) Actions to improve self evaluation and school development planning;
- (vi) Actions to improve leadership in schools;
- (vii) Actions to improve parental and community involvement;
- (viii) Actions to improve target setting and effective use of information;
- (ix) Development of a set of quality indicators; and,
- (x) Initial set of indicators for primary and post-primary schools.

Further Details

The consultation paper and a response booklet can be found on the Department's website, www.deni.gov.uk. While the Department will accept hard copy responses to the consultation, it is encouraging responses by email to: SchoolImprovementConsultation@deni.gov.uk. All responses should be forwarded to the Department by 31 March 2008.

Resource Implications

n/a

Recommendations

It is recommended that the consultation document be referred to the Party Groupings on the Council for individual consideration and comment, in line with the Committee's decisions and approach to previous Department of Education consultations.

Key to Abbreviations

SIP – School Improvement Policy

Documents Attached

N/a

**Belfast City Council**

Report to:	Adjourned Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Northern Ireland Sex Offender Strategic Management Committee – Request to make a Presentation
Date:	26th February, 2008
Reporting Officer:	Mr Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services
Contact Officer:	Mr Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (extension 6325)

Relevant Background Information

Correspondence has been received from the Head of Communications, Northern Ireland Sex Offender Strategic Management Committee, requesting an opportunity to make a presentation to the Committee on the subject of the assessment and management of the risk posed by sex offenders in Northern Ireland.

Resource Implications

There are no Human Resources or financial implications associated with this report.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note receipt of the correspondence and to take such action thereon as may be determined, bearing in mind the heavy demands and commitments already facing the Members.

