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Your reference: D1789/07
Our reference: COR/625/2007

Date: 10 December 2007

Dear Marie Therese

THE BELFAST STRATEGY GROUP

Thank you for your letter of 29 November. First of all, apologies for any confusion that has arisen around your proposed membership of this group. I understood that, as soon as it had been recognised that you were a key person missing from the group we were keen to get you along to the next meeting and as this was imminent, the invitation was made by phone.

The recollection in the office (this all took place before I joined) is that you were due to attend on the 26th September but due to another meeting over-running you were unable to make it in the end.

As Frank finished on the 27th September I can only assume that the formal letter inviting you on to the group got overlooked. Apologies for that and hopefully this letter can put things right as I appreciate that you need a formal letter to enable consideration by and endorsement of the Development Committee.

I attach a copy of the draft Terms of Reference for the Group. As these have not yet been finalised I intend revisiting them and tabling them for discussion at the next Strategy Group meeting, which will take place in early February. I thought it might also be helpful if I briefly set out the rationale for setting up the Group. As Action Plans were being developed, for the 15 Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, Government Departments expressed some concerns about possible difficulties in resourcing the partnership work, given other competing priorities. The community and political representatives conversely raised concerns that the level of engagement by statutory at Neighbourhood level in some instances was not sufficiently robust. The Strategy Group, with membership from a range of Departments, was considered an appropriate vehicle to oversee the implementation of the Neighbourhood Strategy in Belfast. We envisage it meeting three or four times a year

(maybe more in the early stages) to consider at a city-wide level the emerging themes and strategic issues arising from the implementation of Action Plans.

I hope this clarifies the position and again apologies for any misunderstandings. I hope you will be able to join us at the next themed workshop on 'Health matters' which has now been scheduled for the afternoon of 28 January 2008, details of which will follow shortly.

Many thanks. Hope you have a great Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely

[signed by]

ELAINE WILKINSON

cc: Cllr Michael Brown, Chairman of Development Committee
Mr Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Mr N Malcolm, Committee Clerk
Mr Alastair Campbell, Departmental Private Secretary, DSD

Neighbourhood Renewal Belfast Implementation Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

- 1 In 2003, Government published its strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, *People and Place*. The strategy aimed to close the gap between those who live in the 10% most disadvantaged areas and the rest of Northern Ireland. Improvements to quality of life in the designated *Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs)* would be brought about by improving services and by focussing on 4 strategic themes: Community Renewal, Social Renewal, Economic Renewal and Physical Renewal. All Government Departments signed up to the strategy and participate on a Ministerial Group chaired by the Social Development Minister. The Ministerial Group is setting Regional Targets to be achieved through effective delivery of the Neighbourhood Renewal initiative.

- 2 There are 36 NRAs in Northern Ireland, of which 15 are in Belfast. Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO) is the lead delivery body for Neighbourhood Renewal in the city and is therefore seeking to engage effectively with the full range of Government Departments and statutory bodies that shape or deliver services in NRAs. The 15 Belfast NRAs are:
 - Inner North Belfast
 - Crumlin Ardoyne
 - Rathcoole
 - Ligoniel
 - Upper Ardoyne
Ballysillan
 - Colin
 - Lenadoon
 - Greater Falls
 - Upper
Springfield
Whiterock
 - Andersonstown
 - Greater
Shankill
 - Tullycarnet
 - Inner East
Belfast
 - Inner South
Belfast
 - South west
Belfast

DRAFT

- 3 Action plans are either completed or nearing completion in the majority of these NRAs. Further details on the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and on progress in each NRA are available from BRO.

Objectives

- 4 The overarching objective is to ensure effective implementation of Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans to help meet the aims set out in *People and Place* and to achieve the Regional Targets developed by the Ministerial Group on Neighbourhood Renewal.

Stakeholders

- 5 Whilst the work of the Group will help to bring benefits to residents of NRAs, the main stakeholders are the range of Government Departments, Agencies and NDPBs that are called upon to deliver Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans. Each of the Departments/Agencies/NDPBs may be asked to nominate a member of the Group. Representatives should be at a senior level in the organisation. As the lead delivery body for Neighbourhood Renewal in Belfast, BRO's Director will chair the group.

Scope

- 6 The work of the Group will encompass all activity contained in Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans for Belfast, together with any other issues that will influence the implementation of Neighbourhood Renewal in the city. The Group may from time to time consider the scope for joint working to address disadvantage and promote regeneration in Belfast outside of the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan process.
- 7 The Group will consider the resource implications of Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans and seek to achieve synergy across the relevant statutory bodies in the delivery of programmes. The Group will seek to achieve economies of scale where possible. The Group will assist in the monitoring and evaluation of Neighbourhood Renewal in and across NRAs.

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Schedule

- 8 The Group's work will be necessary for the duration of the Neighbourhood Renewal initiative, currently expected to be 7-10 years. The chairman may from time to time review the need for the Group. Meetings of the Group will normally take place quarterly although more frequent meetings may be necessary in the early stages of its work.

Support

- 9 Secretarial support will be provided by BRO.

Belfast Regeneration Office

May 2007

D1789/07

COR/625/2007

29th November, 2007

Ms. Elaine Wilkinson,
Director,
Department of Social Development,
Belfast Regeneration Office,
James House,
Gasworks Business Park,
BELFAST. BT7 2JA

Dear Elaine,

THE BELFAST STRATEGY GROUP

I am writing to you concerning the Belfast Strategy Group (BSG) and confusion, which seems to have arisen about its membership.

At the meeting of the October Development Committee, a number of Members having learned of the existence of the BSG, were concerned about the fact that it seemed to have only central Government departmental representation. Consequently, it was agreed to write to Minister Margaret Ritchie to raise the matter with her.

I have appended the reply of Alastair Campbell and here the confusion begins. Mr. Campbell states that I was invited to join the BSG, but was unable to attend the meeting held on 26th September, 2007. I do not know where this information came from; I have never been asked to become a member of BSG nor, to my knowledge, has any other Belfast City Council officer.

On 24th October, I received an invitation from you to attend a "themed workshop" on workforce matters. I was unable to attend this, but sent our Economic Development Manager, Lisa Martin, to represent the Council; an event she found useful and interesting. This week, I received notification of a BSG meeting on 4th December, 2007 to which I appear to be invited, this is the first such invitation I have received, however, due to other commitments I would be unable to attend.

Ms. Wilkinson

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29th November, 2007

I would be grateful, therefore, if you could clarify the situation. If you wish me or another Council officer to attend BSG meetings this invitation would need to come formally and given the circumstances outlined in this letter, have to be discussed and endorsed by Development Committee before acceptance could be given.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

MARIE-THÉRÈSE McGIVERN (Ms.),
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT.

Cc Cllr. Michael Browne, Chairman of Development Committee
Mr. Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Mr. N. Malcolm, Committee Clerk
Mr. Alastair Campbell, Departmental Private Secretary, DSD

DATE: 28.11.07
 D1789

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Department for
**Social
 Development**

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Our ref: COR/625/2007

22 November 2007

COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS SERVICES			
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Dear Mr Steele

NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL BELFAST STRATEGY GROUP

Thank you for your letter of 2 November, to Margaret Ritchie MLA, on behalf of the Council's Development Committee about the membership of the Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) Belfast Strategy Group. I have been asked to reply

As you may be aware, the Strategy Group was set up in June 2007. It brings together key Departments to examine the most effective means by which the public sector can respond, in a joined up and meaningful way, to the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans being drawn up by NR Partnerships across the city. Following the initial Inter-Departmental meeting of the group, it was recognised that the membership of the Strategy Group needed to be expanded to include a wider cross-section of stakeholders. Marie-Therese McGivern, Director of Development at Belfast City Council, was subsequently invited to join the Group.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

I understand that a representative of the Council was unable to attend the Strategy Group meeting held on 26 September 2007 but that the Council were represented at a recent workshop convened by the Strategy Group.

The Minister looks forward to the Council playing its full role in the work of the Strategy Group going forward as it seeks to improve service delivery and meet the needs of the most disadvantaged areas of the city.

Yours sincerely



ALASTAIR CAMPBELL
Departmental Private Secretary

copy to: Dir of Development

