



Belfast City Council

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| Report to: | Development Committee |
| Subject: | Consultation response to the Partners for Change Action Plan |
| Date: | 16 January 2008 |
| Reporting Officer: | Marie-Thérèse McGivern Director of Development ext 3470 |
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Relevant Background Information

Partners for Change is an action plan for Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector. The *Partners for Change Strategy* emerged from the *Compact* (1998) and sets out how Government will put the principles and commitments in the *Compact* into practice. It is designed to promote the role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in delivering services and to give some clarity around the range of activities that Government undertakes in partnership with the sector

Key Issues

All Government departments in Northern Ireland have contributed to the strategy with the Department for Social Development taking lead responsibility. This document details the actions departments will take under three key themes:

- **Building Communities/Promoting Active Citizenship** – encourage voluntary activity and the involvement of communities (both “geographic” and “of interest”) in the planning and decision-making process about matters which affect them;
- **Shaping Policy Development/Working Together** – ensure that the knowledge and expertise of the Sector informs policy development and that policies are sensitive to the needs of those who experience disadvantage; and
- **Investment in the Sector/Capacity Building** – build the capacity of the sector and ensure sustainable resources necessary to enable the sector to make an effective, continued contribution to society in Northern Ireland.

The Voluntary and Community Unit of the Department for Social Development together with the Joint Government / Voluntary and Community Sector Forum will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation of this plan.

DSD has asked for the responses to be framed under the following questions:

1. Do you agree that the key themes and outcomes identified in section two are an appropriate way of classifying departmental commitments to action?
2. How will you use *Partners for Change*?
3. How will *Partners for Change* impact upon the voluntary and community sector?
4. Do you believe that *Partners for Change* could be better targeted to promote equality of opportunity?
5. Does *Partners for Change* have any adverse impacts for any of the Section 75 groups (listed in Annex 1) that you feel we may not be aware of?

Considering that the deadline for responses was Monday, 31st December 2007 the Council submitted its response subject to Committee approval.

The attached **Appendix 1** is a copy of the response outlining that the Belfast City Council in general welcomes the proposal, but some specific comments are expressed.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the content of the attached consultation response.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Consultation response - *Partners for Change*.