



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Policing a Shared Society – PSNI EU Peace III Proposal
Date:	10 November 2010
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525

Relevant Background Information

Frank O'Hagan, the Traveller Liaison Officer (TLO) was requested to attend A PSNI Senior Management Team meeting to advise on matters relating to the policing and Traveller/Gypsy communities. This request emanated from a NI Assembly Member's questions relating to the frequency which the Traveller community were stopped at PSNI vehicle check points. The TLO advised the PSNI management team the ratio of stop and search was 12 times more than that of a settled community and was unacceptable. It was recommended the PSNI revise their policy on policing the Traveller community. He also advised that the three recommendations on policing in the Promoting Social Inclusion Report on Travellers (1999) had not been implemented by PSNI and that specific Home Office guidance to all police forces on policing the Traveller and Gypsy communities had not yet been addressed in Northern Ireland.

Following this meeting the TLO provided a number of training/information sessions with senior PSNI personnel and was requested to advise the PSNI on specific Traveller matters with respect to a PSNI EU Peace III proposal. A working group was established including

- Gerry Murray and Phil Robinson from PSNI,
- Katy Hayward, K Radford and M Lomarova from Queens University Belfast,
- Derek Hanway from An Munia Tober,
- Neil Jarman from Conflict Resolution,
- Martin Collins from Pavee Point,
- P Connaughton from Cavan County Council
- Frank O'Hagan, Belfast City Council's Traveller Liaison Officer.

The result of this working group has been to develop a funding bid to be submitted under the Peace III programme.

Key Issues

The basis of the proposed Peace III proposal is to develop a training programme for An Garda Siochana and PSNI to work with and to develop protocols with Travellers. The proposal supports institutional development to deliver a shared society and assist citizens in organising themselves to promote active citizenship and the accountability of public service to constituencies.

The project will:

- Improve the capacity of PSNI and the police service in the border region to engage positively with the Traveller community and in so doing to become more adept in culturally-aware policing of marginalised groups in a shared society.
- Create conditions for building the levels of confidence and satisfaction of the Traveller community in NI and the border region in the policing service
- Learn lessons from good practice in police services elsewhere in the EU in culturally sensitive policing engagement with Traveller and Roma groups
- Establish the foundations for a network and forum for cross border co-operation between An Garda Siochana and the PSNI in addressing the particular needs of the Traveller community.

BCC has been asked to be a partner in this Peace III proposal and Gerry Murray of PSNI has written to seek Council support. Belfast will not be expected to devote any financial resources to participate. The only resource requirement is input from the TLO in terms of time and sharing of knowledge and expertise to advise on the project.

The TLO's input to supporting PSNI to date has been extremely positive. The TLO considers this project to have the potential to provide a solution to the policing of the Traveller community. This has been a sensitive, outstanding issue that needs to be addressed.

BCC is committed to working with the Traveller community via the TLO and the Interdepartmental Traveller Liaison Group and both key drivers of this work would be enhanced by this programme i.e.

- To improve the quality of life of the Traveller community
- To empower the Traveller community to take informed decisions that have a positive impact on their lives

The TLO considers the Council's core objectives would also support this work and the possible outcomes of the PSNI EU Peace III proposals.

Resource Implications

The only resource requirement from BCC is the input from the TLO in terms of time and sharing of knowledge and expertise to advise on this project.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members consider and support the request for BCC to be a partner in the Peace III project application which will take the form of input in terms of time, advice and sharing of knowledge and expertise on behalf of the Traveller Liaison Officer.

Decision Tracking

Further to agreement the Council's will support the request to be a partner in the PSNI EU Peace III proposal.

Timeline: January 2011

Reporting Officer: Catherine Taggart

Key Abbreviations

TLO – Traveller Liaison Officer