

APPENDIX 1

1) A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland (2005)

The shared future policy sets out challenging aims for building a shared society, with a key priority being to reclaim shared space. This vision involves moving beyond working with divisions to begin to actively challenge those divisions. A shared future outlines commitment to a more coherent, co-ordinated and long-term approach, that places responsibility for improving relations at all levels of public sector delivery. A shared future has begun to produce some positive local improvements, particularly in the area of re-imagining communities which aims to tackle visible manifestations of sectarianism and racism through removing displays of flags, murals and other territorial marking. Many of the commitments outlined by Government in this policy represent a real opportunity for change. Firstly, it represents a move away from adaptive policy making towards a more transformative approach. Secondly, Shared Future offers a vision of a transformed 'shared' society based on the principles of peace and reconciliation.

2) Draft Programme for Government (2007)

The return to devolution has seen the introduction of a new Draft Programme for Government (2007) which includes promoting tolerance, inclusion and health and wellbeing as one of its key priorities in Northern Ireland's society. The Draft Programme for Government (2007) highlights that it is imperative that we all embrace the opportunity to create a shared and better future, based on tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. The programme will bring forward cohesion and integration for this shared and better future to address the divisions within our society.

3) Racial Equality Strategy (2005)

Government also aims to tackle racial inequalities and to promote good race relations through its Racial Equality Strategy. The aims of the Racial Equality Strategy complement those of A Shared Future.

Internal Policy Context

There are three relevant policy strands currently in place in the Council which relate and inform the issue of naming / re-naming of Parks and Leisure Facilities to a greater or lesser extent, namely;-

1) The Street Naming Policy;

The Council adopted a policy on dual-language street-naming following the enactment of Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The Council policy makes provision for street name signs to be displayed in both English and a second language (not specifically Irish) and outlines the framework for making an application to the Council for dual-language street name signs.

2) The Equality Scheme;

The Council developed, published and implemented its Equality Scheme in 2001 in line with the requirements outlined by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which requires the Council, in carrying out all its functions, 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;
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, the Act 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.

3) The Good Relations Plan (2007) (currently being updated)

As the democratically elected body within the city, the Council is committed to demonstrating civic leadership and working in partnership with a range of relevant public, private, voluntary and community organisations for the well-being of its citizens. To this end, the political leadership of the city endorsed the development of a 'coalition of interest' on good relations in the first Belfast Good Relations Plan in 2007. The plan acknowledged that social divisions in Belfast were deep-rooted and that it would require collaborative efforts from a number of agencies, both statutory and voluntary, to effect change. It outlined a vision for Belfast as a shared, peaceful, welcoming and 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 a collective responsibility to make sure 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 should be accessible to and trusted by all of those who live and work in the city