



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Policy and Resources Committee.
Subject:	Structural review of Good Relations Unit to facilitate Peace III funding.
Date:	June 2008.
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer	Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager

Relevant Background Information

Approval was given in April 2007 for a review of the resources within the Good Relations Unit to address increased workload, both current and projected. The business case for this identified that the role and responsibilities of the Unit had changed from those related to the development and promotion of the Council's Good Relations strategy and equality agenda, to become as much one of a deliverer of key projects across the city including the inter-agency bonfire management and the Re-imagining Communities projects. At the same time the major Conflict Resolution Project (funded through the Peace II EU programme) commenced. Coupled with the increasing activity in the Good Relations grant-aid scheme, these responsibilities involved actions designed to effect real improvements within local communities through high-profile partnerships which also demonstrated the increasing validation of the Council's leadership role within the City.

In addition the business case identified a corporate desire to consolidate within the Unit the developing responsibilities for the Council in the context of increasing equality legislation, especially in the areas of race; disability and diversity generally. This legislative programme reflects the government policy document "A Shared Future" which called on public bodies "to set the pace on movement towards a shared society and ... to lead by example." The Unit also had been given responsibility to develop the Peace III Plan for Belfast in relation to two of the main themes.

It was quickly identified that the impact on the Unit of a successful bid under the Peace III proposals would be considerable but not yet fully quantifiable until the bid was developed and SEUPB made its decisions. It was agreed that work on the full review would be paused, particularly as some of the current pressure had been alleviated by the availability of additional funding from CRU (OFMDFM) for an additional Good Relations Officer. As the grant-aid was not secured beyond a twelve month period and the structure of the Unit was under review, the additional resource was engaged for a

fixed-term period of twelve months due to end in August 2008.

Key issues

A number of recent developments now justify the completion of that review and the recommendations in this report;

1. The Peace Plan for Belfast has been approved by SEUPB with the offer of £6.3m funding for the period till September 2011. This requires the Council to put in place the mechanisms and resources, met by 100% grant-aid from the overall allocation, to manage this funding stream in to the City;
2. CRU has indicated that core funding of the fourth Good Relations Officer will continue. This enables the Council to address the contractual term of this post
3. The Council has projects within the Plan for which it is the actual implementing agent and not simply the funding stream manager. If these are to be delivered for the benefit of the City within the timeframe of available funding, the resources paid for by the funding must start to be put in place.

This review then, will address all of the areas outlined above. It will look at the resources required in terms of 'technical' staff, clerical support to cover the needs of the enhanced 'field work' staff, and the resourcing requirements necessary to meet the Peace III Programme.

Meetings were held with the Business Support Manager and the Good Relations Manager to determine anticipated future requirements for the efficient and effective delivery of the programme. In conducting our research, BIS have consulted with experts in this field. This included meeting with the Operations Manager, Belfast Local Strategy Partnership (BLSP) and benchmarking with other similar organisations and bodies. This information was verified and analysed to determine anticipated needs and methods of meeting these needs.

Core Good Relations Unit

The remit of the Good Relations Unit has grown recently, with new responsibility for additional funded projects, as outlined above.

A new post of Good Relations Officer was created for a fixed term period in 2007. Since this post was created the Unit has been able to develop a wide range of projects and generate extra work. Following the assurance from CRU that core funding for a fourth Good Relations Officer will continue, BIS recommend that, considering the additional workload and the demands of the Unit, this post is made permanent, increasing the number of established Good Relations Officer posts to four. This post should only be recruited once funding has been secured from CRU.

At present there is one established post of Clerk/WPO, providing clerical assistance to the Unit. BIS carried out a staffing review in 2006 where roles and responsibilities were reviewed and realigned. From this time, the Unit have required additional clerical support due to the increase in the volume of work and the increase in the number of projects the being managed.

Since this time, the Unit has been supported by a temporary member of staff, employed through an agency. Due to the increase in the current projects the GRU are involved in and the associated clerical work that will be involved, BIS recommend that this post should be made permanent.

BIS would suggest that due to the volatile nature and changing role of the Good Relations Unit, we revisit the section after one year in line with good practice. This will ensure that the recommendations detailed in this report become embedded enabling the Good Relations Manager to deliver the Good Relations strategy and operational requirements in line with the Corporate Plan.

Peace III

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 the city's programme of work in the field of Good Relations.

Belfast City Council has recently been awarded £6.3 million to fund the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan. With this award there are a number of conditions of funding to which the Council must adhere. One of these conditions is that the management support costs for the period September 2008 to December 2010 should not exceed 7-10% of the funding award. In considering the staffing required to deliver this programme, BIS has therefore remained mindful of this stipulation.

Migrant Worker Project

The SEUPB has also approved funding at 100% for the creation of two further posts to ensure delivery of the Migrant Worker Project under point 1.1 of the Peace III Programme, *Building Positive Relations at the Local Level*. This funding is provided for within the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan.

Resource Implications

Staffing Requirements

A revised organisation structure, detailed job descriptions and competencies required have been drawn up in line with standard Council terms and conditions. These have been benchmarked with the Operations Manager BLSP, who also acknowledged the appropriateness of the salary scales awarded to each post.

Core Good Relations Unit

BIS recommend;

- The current fixed term post of Good Relations Officer is made permanent, and should be paid salary scale PO 4;
- The temporary post of Clerk/WPO currently filled through a recruitment agency should become part of the establishment, increasing the number of Clerk/WPO's

to two, within the Unit, and should be paid salary scale 2/3.

Peace III

BIS further recommend that the following posts are created to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of the Peace III programme;-

- Three Good Relations Staff – one Programme Manger (salary scale PO5) one Senior Project Development Officer (salary scale PO2), and one Project Development Officer (salary scale SO2) 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.
- One Programme Support Assistant (salary scale 6) to provide administrative support to the Peace III project.
- Three Financial Staff – One Finance Officer (salary scale SO2) and two Monitoring Officers (scale 6) 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 stringent EU financial requirements, to ensure probity and public accountability.

Migrant Worker Project

- Two Migrant Project Staff – One Project Officer (Migrant Workers) (salary scale PO4) and One Clerk/WPO (salary scale 2/3) to ensure management and delivery of the Migrant Worker Project and keeping under review new developments in the field of inward migration.

(see **Appendix 1** - attached organisation structure).

Financial Implications

Core Good Relations Unit

Good Relations Officer

The cost of the fixed term Good Relations Officer (PO 4) equates to £35,852. This post is 75% funded by the CRU.

The cost of a permanent post of Good Relations Officer (PO 4) is £35,852.

Therefore there is an ongoing cost of £8,963 per annum associated with this new permanent post, due to the fact that Council provide 25% of the cost of this post.

Clerk/WPO

The cost of the temporary Clerk/WPO (scale 2/3) equates to £16,536.

The generic post of Clerk/WPO has been evaluated at Salary Scale 2/3. This equates to a cost of £16, 536.

Therefore there is an ongoing cost associated with this new permanent post of £16,536 per annum.

BIS have been assured by the Department that the cost of the above recommendations will be met within existing budgets.

Peace III

The projected salary costs for management of the Peace III programme, including National Insurance, Superannuation and anticipated pay awards for the period September 2008-December 2010 equate to £442,049.

Additional running costs for the programme equal £179,560 For the period outlined above.

Total management Costs for the Peace III equates to £628,609

This figure is 9.9% of the overall award and is therefore within the threshold of 7-10% for management support costs as stipulated by SEUPB as a condition of funding.

Migrant Worker Project (affiliated to Peace III programme)

Project Officer (Migrant Worker)

The post has been evaluated at PO4, which equates to £35,852.

Clerk/WPO

This post has been evaluated at Salary Scale 2/3. This equates to a cost of £16, 536.

ALL OF THESE POSTS UNDER THE HEADING OF PEACE III ARE 100% FUNDED BY THE SEUPB.

The SEUPB expect Councils to absorb a proportion of the costs associated with the Peace III programme. Belfast City Council will make a contribution in kind through the corporate strategic management of the Peace III plan and its alignment to the Corporate Plan. In addition it will absorb the cost of any necessary furniture and equipment, as it will be more beneficial that these are retained as Council assets at the end of the programme.

Recommendations

Core Good Relations Unit

- That the fixed term post of Good Relations Officer is made permanent, salary scale PO 4. The cost to the council will be £8,963 per annum.
- The temporary post of Clerk/WPO is made permanent, salary scale 2/3. This post will be funded through the existing budget.

Peace III (These posts are fixed term until Dec. 2010)

- That a post of Programme Manager is created, salary scale PO5
- That a post of Senior Project Development Officer are created, salary scale PO2

- That a post of Project Development Officer is created, salary scale SO2
- That a post of Programme Support Assistant is created, salary scale 6
- That a post of Finance Officer is created, salary scale SO2
- That two posts of Monitoring Officer are created, salary scale 6

There are no costs to the Council as these posts are 100% funded by the SEUPB.

Migrant Worker Project (These posts are fixed term until Dec. 2010)

- That a post Project Officer (Migrant Worker) is created, salary scale PO4
- That a post of Clerk/WPO is created, salary scale 2/3.

There are no costs to the Council as these posts are 100% funded by the SEUPB.

In developing the recommendations detailed in this report, BIS have addressed the need to ensure the effective delivery of the Good Relations Strategy, in line with the Councils corporate objectives.

Key to Abbreviations

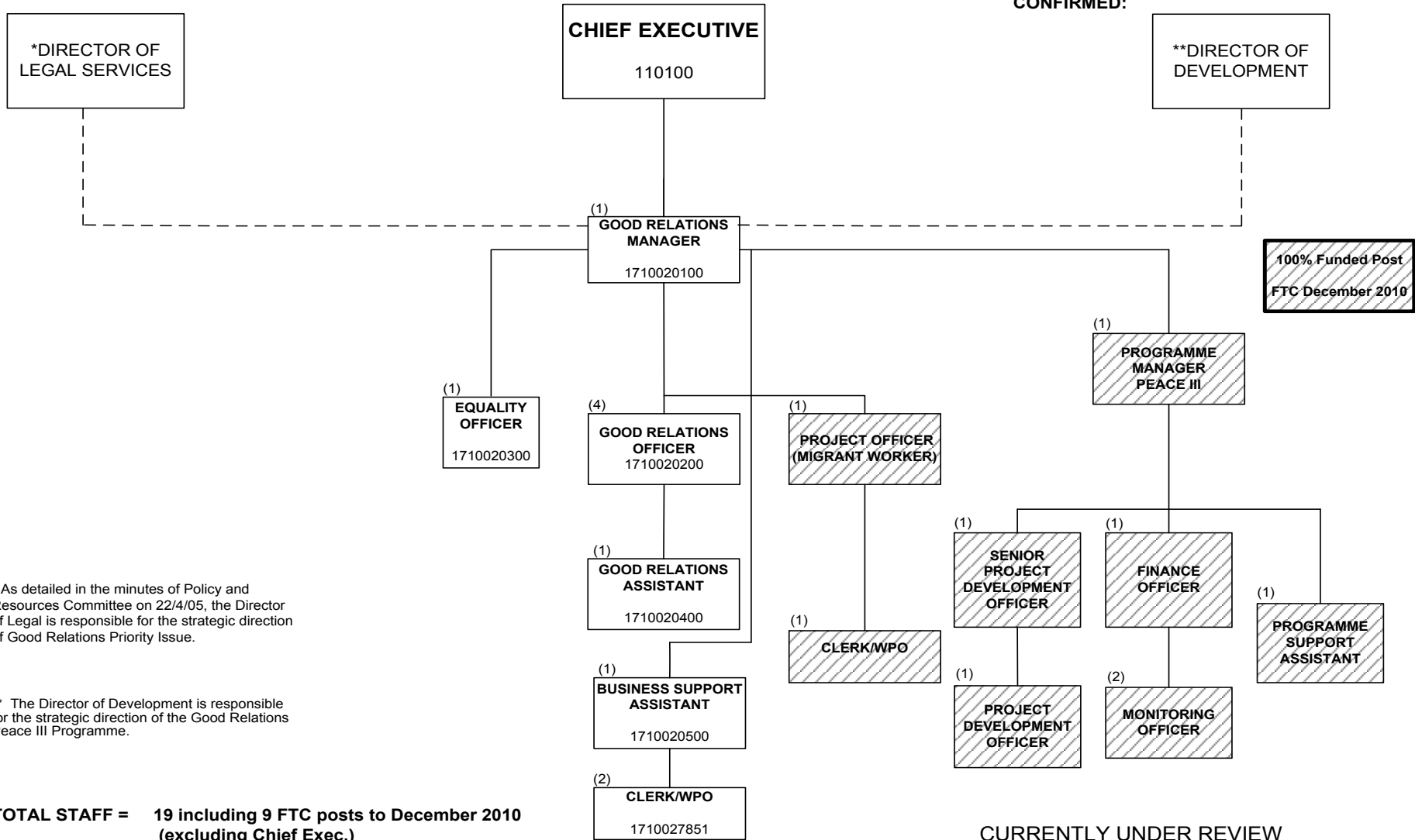
SEUPB - Special European Union Programmes Body
CRU - Community Relations Unit
OFMDFM - Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
GRU - Good Relations Unit
BLSP - Belfast Local Strategy Partnership

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Organisation Structure

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT - GOOD RELATIONS UNIT

STATUS: PROPOSED
PROJECT NO: 01/070/08/15
COMMITTEE: Policy & Resources
COUNCIL:
CONFIRMED:



* As detailed in the minutes of Policy and Resources Committee on 22/4/05, the Director of Legal is responsible for the strategic direction of Good Relations Priority Issue.

** The Director of Development is responsible for the strategic direction of the Good Relations Peace III Programme.

TOTAL STAFF = 19 including 9 FTC posts to December 2010 (excluding Chief Exec.)

CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW

