

## **GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**

**FRIDAY, 15th MAY, 2009**

### **MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**

- Members present: Councillor Long (Chairman); and  
Councillors C. Maskey, McCausland, McCarthy and  
Stoker.
- External Members: Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;  
Ms. A. Chada, Minority Ethnic Groups;  
Mr. R. Galway, Bombardier Aerospace/CBI;  
Ms. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;  
Rev. J. Rea, Methodist Church;  
Mr. L. Reynolds, Voluntary/Community Sector;  
Mr. P. Scott, Catholic Church;  
Ms. M. De Silva, Voluntary/Community Sector; and  
Rev. S. Watson, CALEB.
- Also attended: Ms. E. Dargan ) Consortium of Community Relations  
Ms. P. Perry ) Council and Border Action.
- In attendance: Ms. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;  
Mr. I. May, Peace III Programme Manager; and  
Mr. J. Heaney, Committee Administrator.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Mrs. M. Marken, Ms. A. McKenna and Ms. E. Wilkinson.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the 17th April were taken as read and signed as correct.

Arising from discussion on the minutes, the Good Relations Manager informed the Partnership that the Director of Corporate Services had written to the Chief Executive of the Special European Union Programmes Body outlining the Council's concern in relation to the delays associated with the receipt of payment of funding which was due to the Council and indicating that this had implications for the Council's financial position.

Noted.

#### **New Member**

The Chairman welcomed Reverend J. Rea, who would be representing the Methodist Church, to the Partnership. She thanked Ms. Helen Smith, the previous representative of the Methodist Church, for her work on the Partnership. The Chairman thanked also the Reverend S. Watson who was attending his last meeting as a representative of the Protestant Churches.

**Peace III Small Grants –  
Issue of Letter of Offer**

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 17th April, it had agreed to accede to the request from Young at Art to defer the commencement of its project and to review the project following consultation with the organisation's stakeholders. As a consequence of this decision, the Partnership had authorised that a pre-contract check be undertaken with New Life Counselling, the next organisation in order of scoring.

The Peace III Programme Manager outlined the aims of that organisation's Reconciliation Therapy Service Project which sought to undertake a range of counselling and therapy sessions for people who had been directly or indirectly affected by the past Troubles or by the current effects of sectarianism and community tension.

He reported that pre-contract checks had been carried out and there had been no issues of concern reported, with all core policies in place and evidence of strong financial management and sound operational management in place. Accordingly, he recommended, on the basis of the project score as approved by the Partnership in January, the site visit and the pre-contract checks which had been undertaken, that the Partnership approve the issue of a letter of offer for funding to New Life Counselling.

After discussion, the Partnership adopted the recommendation.

**Peace III – Culture and Arts Development  
and Outreach Programme**

(Ms. D. Robb, Culture and Arts Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 17th April, it had deferred consideration of a proposal relating to Action 3.4 of the Belfast Peace Plan, Building Shared Cultural Spaces – Culture and Arts Outreach Programme, in order to receive a presentation from a representative of the Council's Culture and Arts Unit regarding the outreach programme.

The Culture and Arts Manager stated that the aim of the programme was to identify appropriate arts organisations and devise an enhanced programme of development outreach support for the Good Relations aspect of their work with the aim of building shared cultural spaces within the City. The focus of the project would be to create a consortia approach towards citywide arts development and the mainstreaming of Good Relations principles with a dedicated staff resource for outreach work. The project would be managed by staff from within the Council's Culture and Arts Unit.

After discussion, the Partnership agreed, in principle, to approve the proposed action 3.4 Culture And Arts Outreach and to approve the progress towards the project initiation stage. The Partnership noted that a detailed copy of the proposal was available on the Council's modern.gov system and upon request from the Good Relations Unit.

### **Peace III Training Seminar**

The Peace III Programme Manager reported that a seminar, to provide training to those groups which had received letters of offer in relation to the Peace III Small Grants Programme, would be held in the Ulster Hall on Wednesday 27th May, commencing at 9.45 a.m. The seminar would provide guidance to the groups in relation to procurement, publicity requirements and information and communication, the claims process and the monitoring and evaluation frameworks associated with the individual projects.

The seminar would be addressed by the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Councillor Hartley, and by the Chairman of the Partnership (Councillor Long). In addition, staff from the Community Relations Council/Border Action Consortium and from the Special European Union Programmes Body would be in attendance. It was hoped that as many Members of the Partnership as possible could attend the event in order to avail of the opportunity to meet with the groups and to gain a greater understanding of the individual projects.

After discussion, the Partnership authorised the attendance at the seminar of any Member of the Partnership who so wished.

### **Annual Report on Progress: April 2008 – March 2009**

The Good Relations Partnership was advised that the Council's Equality Scheme and Good Relations Strategy had stated that regular reports on progress were to be submitted to the Good Relations Partnership and to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that the Council was required to submit to the Equality Commission an annual report on the progress which had been achieved in respect of the implementation of equality and good relations duties imposed under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Accordingly, she submitted for the Partnership's consideration a copy of the annual progress report.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the contents of the annual report, which would be presented for consideration to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and to the Equality Commission, and noted also that copies of the report would be available to the public on the Council's website. In addition, the Partnership noted that the Council had submitted also its Annual Monitoring Return as at 1st January, 2009 to the Equality Commission and that a copy was available from the Council's Human Resources Section.

### **Update on Equality and Good Relations Learning and Development Strategy**

The Good Relations Manager advised the Partnership that the Equality and Good Relations Learning and Development Strategy had been developed by the Good Relations Training Sub-Group based on earlier recommendations made by independent consultants commissioned by the Council. The four over-arching aims of the strategy were:

- to raise awareness levels of staff;

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- to develop internal capacity and build confidence and cohesion in addressing equality and good relations matters;
- to establish and support the development of appropriate space for new and challenging dialogue around the themes of equality, sectarianism and racism; and
- to plan for and evidence continuous learning and critical reflection within the organisation in addressing issues of equality and good relations.

She pointed out that the Training Sub-Group had, in 2006, developed a three-year plan designed to work towards these aims. The roll-out of the plan had been co-ordinated by the Good Relations Unit in consultation with the Council's Human Resources Section and an inter-departmental Good Relations Working Group. The Good Relations Manager highlighted the various aspects of the strategy, including the internal training, accreditation, external training, Good Relations awareness events, e-learning and Good Relations Champions Programme.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

**Good Relations Grant Aid Fund**

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 13th February, it had approved the re-opening of the Good Relations Grant Aid Fund with immediate effect with a maximum grant of £10,000 and a total amount of £350,000 being made available for distribution during the financial year 2009/2010. Subsequently, at its meeting on the 13th March, the Partnership had agreed further that some minor adjustments be made to the assessment process and the scoring bands in order that the limited resources of the fund be directed to those applications which received the highest score in the assessment process.

The Good Relations Manager reported that demand on the fund had been extremely high during the current financial year with a total of £146,133 having been awarded by the Partnership to date. Accordingly, she submitted for the information of the Partnership a report providing a summary of the applications which had been made to the Good Relations Grant Aid Fund, together with the associated recommendations.

At this point Councillor Stoker declared an interest in this item in that he was a member of the Board of the Greater Village Regeneration Trust.

After discussion, the Partnership agreed unanimously that Grant Aid be awarded, under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive, to the following organisations:

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Recommended Amount, up to £</b>
815/1491	Trans urban Arts	<b>4,500</b>
643/1498	Manor Street/Cliftonville Community Group	<b>7,605</b>
583/1428	An Munia Tober	<b>900</b>
814/1490	Churches' Community Work Alliance (NI)	<b>4,684</b>
609/1500	Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT)	<b>7,430</b>
718/1497	St. Mary's Ladies Group	<b>2,000</b>
273/1494	Voluntary Service Bureau (VSB)	<b>1,300</b>
595/1502	ASCONI	<b>1,000</b>
817/1495	City of Belfast Swimming Club	<b>3,400</b>
264/1489	East Belfast Area Youth Project	<b>10,000</b>
264/1493	East Belfast Youth Forum	<b>5,000</b>
711/1496	New Lodge Arts	<b>4,600</b>
807/1501	Clonard Monastery	<b>2,800</b>
818/1499	Ligoniel Fishing Club	<b>2,360</b>
<b>Total:</b>		<b>57,579</b>

### **St. Patrick's Day 2008 – Report on Evaluation**

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that the Good Relations Unit had supported the Events Unit over the past three years in order to ensure that the carnival parade associated with the St. Patrick's Day celebrations was representative of the whole community and that the atmosphere and environment was conducive to the delivery of an inclusive citywide celebration. The Good Relations Unit had assisted the Events Unit in the recruitment of groups for the carnival parade and had supported the community efforts on the day.

The Partnership was advised that Millward Browne Ulster, the Council's Consultants, had completed its standard evaluation report on this year's event. In addition, the Belfast City Centre Management had carried out an annual survey of its members regarding the event. The Good Relations Manager referred the Members to the Good Relations related issues within the report, including the fact that 9 out of 10 people who had attended the event had said that it had met or exceeded their expectations and that 92% had stated that they would recommend the event to others. 87% of those attending the event had been of the opinion that it was welcoming to all, with 50% of those who had attended from a Protestant background agreeing strongly with this statement.

In regard to the Belfast City Centre Management/Retailers view, 90% of respondents had thought the event was as inclusive as possible and over 96% had agreed that the event had been organised and marshalled appropriately. The Good Relations Manager indicated that the report had highlighted that significant progress, particularly around the perception of the event as an all-inclusive day, had been achieved. A Member suggested that it might be useful to ascertain the views of those persons who had chosen not to attend the event and the Good Relations Manager undertook to discuss this suggestion with the Council's Events Manager.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the contents of the report.

### Bi-Lingual Advocacy Project

The Committee considered the undernoted report in respect of a request to provide funding towards the project costs for the first year of a pilot Bi-Lingual Advocacy:

#### “Relevant Background Information

The Good Relations Partnership will recall that its meeting in April, it noted with concern the recent racist attacks in the city. Since then, Council officers have met with other relevant agencies to attempt to address the issues raised.

Recent racist attacks in Belfast have been directed against the Polish and Chinese community, particularly in South and East Belfast. As well as this recent increase in attacks on homes, it has long been recognised that the current crime statistics do not represent the reality on the ground, where people from these communities do not feel they have the confidence to report anything to the police and therefore are currently unable to engage fully with statutory agencies in relation to the reporting of crime and anti social behaviour.

#### Key Issues

As the language barrier is central in this, a new multi-agency pilot advocacy initiative employing 2 bi-lingual advocacy officers is being proposed. The PSNI and NI Housing Executive will provide the major funding for the salaries of the 2 workers (£20,000 each for 1 year), with a small portion contributed from the Belfast Community Safety Partnership (£2,000).

An English/Chinese and an English/Polish speaking advocacy worker with experience in working with minority ethnic communities will be employed. The Chinese Welfare Association and the Polish Association NI will assist in recruiting and supporting the advocate workers.

The scheme will tackle hate crime, increase community safety, develop minority ethnic capacity, deliver outreach services to support minority ethnic communities and promote a safer city. The pilot scheme will operate within south and east Belfast in close association with the police, Housing Executive and City Council.

Although the salary costs of the two proposed advocacy workers are funded, the agencies have approached the Good Relations Unit requesting financial support of up to £8,000 for project costs for the first year.

**This project will support the new Tension Monitoring Service being introduced by the Council. The project workers will provide advice, collect information and improve the two-way flow of information between the advocates, local police, NIHE and community leaders in the local area to enhance communication and dialogue. They will assist in identifying hot spots and trends, to allow agencies to provide intervention programmes to address issues before they get out of hand.**

**The aim is to build trust within minority ethnic communities, encouraging confidence in reporting incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour fully and reassuring the local community.**

**This project is a good example of genuine inter-agency partnership. Good Relations Partnership support for this project will reinforce the message that the authorities in the city are not prepared to tolerate racist behaviour and that we want to promote our vision of a shared, peaceful, welcoming and open city.**

#### **Resource Implications**

**75% of the costs of this project may be recouped from the Community Relations Unit within the Office of the First Minister/Deputy First Minister.**

#### **Recommendations**

**The Good Relations Partnership is requested to approve funding of up to £8,000 in project costs for the first year of the pilot bi-lingual advocacy scheme as set out above.**

#### **Decision Tracking**

**Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, Ext 6020.”**

After discussion the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

Chairman