

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

FRIDAY, 25th JUNE, 2010

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

- Members present: Councillor Hendron (Chairman); and
Councillors C. Maskey, McCausland and Stoker.
- External Members: Ms. S. Bhat, Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum;
Ms. A. Chada, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast & District Trades Council;
Mr. P. Scott, Catholic Church; and
Ms. E. Wilkinson, Belfast Regeneration Office.
- In attendance: Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;
Mr. I. May, Peace III Programme Manager; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Ms. M. Marken, Mr. R. Galway and Rev. J. Rea.

Peace III – Phase II Local Action Plan

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that the first Phase of funding under Peace III (£6.3m) will last until June 2011 and that the Good Relations Partnership is required to submit a new Peace Plan for the period 2011-2013. While the exact amount to be awarded is not yet known, we have been advised that it is likely to be between £6 and £8 million.

The attached papers outline, in considerable detail, the background to the bid; an overview of Phase I, including what has worked well and what lessons we have learnt; an overview of finances and the timeline, and an outline business case. The current plan is structured into four themes and we propose to maintain these themes for the second Phase of the Plan.

Progress made in Phase I and views expressed and comments made by the Good Relations Partnership at its meetings and review sessions have been taken into account.

The Council's Chief Officers were informed of this in December 2009 and were requested to advise relevant staff within their Departments to begin planning early this year, so that appropriate projects could be identified and developed to meet the SEUPB timescale.

Proposals were assessed against:

- PEACE III Criteria as established by SEUPB
- strategic fit with the Council's corporate aims
- achievability
- affordability
- stakeholder interests.

The attached papers outline a proposed draft Peace Plan for Phase II which will now go out for public consultation over the summer period. This report summarises the various projects proposed for inclusion in the Plan. These have been agreed at officer level to try to ensure that the city achieves maximum benefit from what is expected to be the final phase of European Peace funding.

Key Issues

The Council's Phase II Peace Plan has obviously been based on our experience of Phase I.

Some projects have clearly been successful and should be carried forward to Phase II.

PROPOSALS TO BE CARRIED FORWARD include:

Small Grants programme; almost £1m is currently allocated under this heading and this should be carried forward in to the next tranche.

The small grants programme provides much needed funding for voluntary/community sector organisations who deliver programmes right at the heart of local communities across the city. Members will recall that there was significant demand under this programme and we expect this to be a very competitive process when repeated.

Partnership members will be aware that although this currently takes up less than 20% of the total budget, it involves around 80% of officer time in administration. We therefore propose that a similar amount is ring-fenced for small grants but that the threshold is raised so that we have fewer numbers of grants but with larger amounts e.g. 10 at £100,000 or 20 at £50,000. This would ease the management burden considerably.

Migrant Forum – with a much reduced budget, i.e. minus the salary of the original officer

Community Cohesion Networks, led by the NI Housing Executive

Tackling Sectarianism and Racism, led by the Good Relations Unit, which deals with physical manifestations of these via bonfire management and mural replacement/removal

Mediation programme, currently led by Mediation NI; this could be expanded to include interface work in future.

City of Festivals, led by Good Relations Unit in conjunction with the Events Unit

Creative Legacies, led by the Tourism, Culture & Arts Unit

Roots of Empathy, led by the Health Development Unit.

Mending the City Scars, currently known as Shared Routes, led by the Planning & Transport Unit.

With the exception of the last listed, all the above projects could be described as being in the category of low cost and high impact.

PROPOSED NEW PROJECTS:

The Council aims to co-ordinate and integrate activities across the organisation more effectively to remove duplication and achieve better value for money. The Good Relations Unit has worked closely with the Community Safety Unit in the past year in delivering anti-hate crime training and we are keen to develop this working relationship further.

We therefore propose introducing a programme which would incorporate both an element of anti-hate crime training and a development of the Community Safety Unit's *tension monitoring programme*. This aims at monitoring both sectarian and racist tensions, identifying 'hotspots' and potential trouble spots in advance and taking appropriate measures to avoid possible incidents in interface and flashpoint areas. This would enable the relevant authorities to be more responsive in ongoing work.

A *youth engagement project* aims to improve the quality of life for communities in interface areas by targeting marginalised young men in a partnership programme, which provides purpose and hope and diverts them from involvement in paramilitary activity. This is based on a similar successful model from Birmingham, now included as part of their 'Total Place' pilot and extensively documented.

Elected Members will be aware that the Council is endeavouring to make City Hall as welcoming and accessible as possible for all communities in the city. The *City Hall for All* initiative aims to enhance the current exhibition area, available for use by community groups. Linked to this, feedback from visitors and tourists to the city demonstrates considerable support for the telling of *the Belfast Story*. This would be a display or exhibition that examines and enhances awareness of our shared history and heritage, enabling communities to better understand experiences, contested events and areas and identities in a divided city. The aim is to make the content as widely available as possible through modern media and through a major community engagement programme to empower more active, confident and tolerant citizens.

A *community tourism* project is proposed, to work with partners to spread the economic and social benefits of tourism across the city through strong community engagement. Local tours and trails linking areas across Belfast would be established, generating employment opportunities in disadvantaged areas and allowing communities to interpret their areas and local sites of interest. This would encourage greater movement between neighbourhoods and further promote the concept of increasing shared space in a segregated city.

Based also on the idea of increasing movement and improving connectivity across the city, an *employability access project* would identify and analyse challenges in relation to employment opportunities in new development sites, e.g. Titanic Quarter. It would promote such employment opportunities across the city and would develop an awareness programme, access initiatives and development actions to encourage people from all areas to dispel their current limited mental maps, enlarge their potential job horizons and enable the fullest possible participation in the Titanic Quarter job market.

The Council's Parks & Leisure Department is currently developing a pitches strategy, a key element of which centres round an innovative approach to developing shared space. A number of pitches are planned, one of which is to be a high quality *3G hybrid pitch at Boucher Road*. The pitch itself will be funded through the Council's capital programme and the Peace III funding requested would support the associated enhancement aspects – i.e. the delivery of a programme of targeted community-based sports projects and events, including training and education programmes. The aim would be to increase access to, and inclusion in, sport, focusing on and encompassing anti-sectarianism and anti-racism work.

The Council is planning to design and build a state of the art Household Recycling Centre (HRC) on the former Mackie's site on the Springfield Road on the peaceline. The HRC itself will be fully funded by the Council and this project is to support and enhance this facility by proactively engaging local communities so as to maximise ownership and the perception of the site as a *shared space HRC*. This would include competitions for local schools, inter-school and inter-community dialogue sessions and an annual programme of environmental, community safety, arts and heritage activities across the interface.

The *City of Neighbourhoods* proposal from the Parks Department aims to transform existing facilities at 4 anchor sites – north, south, east and west – and develop them as shared spaces. Four local integrated neighbourhood plans will promote safe access to a network of services and facilitate contact for inter-community relationship building. Smaller scale satellite spaces will be developed and high quality public realm capital enhancements provided. Connectivity between the 4 anchors will be important and local residents will be encouraged to participate and volunteer in the anchors.

Resource Implications

None – to be 100% funded from the SEUPB.

Delivery Approach

This is split into approximately 60% Partner Delivery and 40% commissioned or grant aided projects.

The current plan is structured into four themes. We propose to maintain these themes for the second phase of the Plan. Budget allocation by theme would be as follows:

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Shared City Space | £4,760,500 |
| Transforming Contested Space | £1,300,000 |
| Shared Cultural Space | £1,465,000 |
| Shared Organisational Space | £1,000,000 (grants) |

Recommendations/Decision required

The views of the Partnership are requested. Partnership members are reminded that this is a draft document only and that it may have to be considerably revised following the public consultation process.

The final Plan must be submitted to the SEUPB by 17 September, which means that it has to be finalised by the Good Relations Partnership at its meeting on 13 August and by the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on 20 August.

Decision Tracking

Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, Ext 6020”

The members of the Partnership considered each of the proposed projects in turn and made a number of suggestions as to what should be included as part of the consultation on the project such as:

- the raising of the threshold for funding awarded under the small grants programme;
- a specific amount to be included in the small grants programme for work with the elderly or for intergenerational work;
- an option of which playing fields should be included in the Pitch Enhancement Project, that is, Boucher Road or Suffolk; and
- if any of the Members had suggestions or ideas for projects, that these be forwarded with support and information to be developed as projects to be included in the public consultation exercise.

After further discussion, the Partnership noted the details of the Action Plan and the timetable for the public consultation exercise and the submission of the plan to the Special European Union Programmes Body.

Regeneration and Good Relations at the Interface – Draft Report by Deloitte

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 11th June, it had received a presentation from representatives of Deloitte, the consultants which had been commissioned to undertake research into good relations activities in neighbourhoods located near/at interface barriers in the City. The Partnership members had expressed concern regarding certain aspects of the report and had agreed that the report be considered in more detail at its next meeting.

The Good Relations Manager reported that staff from the Good Relations Unit had had a meeting and a full and frank discussion with Deloitte representatives who had agreed to revise the report considerably in order to address clearly the original terms of reference, which were to:

- provide an audit of good relations activities and initiatives focused in neighbourhoods located at or near interface barriers in Belfast;

- develop a method for the assessment of the effectiveness of that work; and
- provide an analysis of further strategic actions which could be developed.

That would involve revising the structure of the report and including much more information, particularly that relating to discussions which they had had with interface workers and practitioners, which was highly relevant. The revised report was to include current information regarding the economic recession and the likelihood of reduced budgets in the future and how that would affect the sector. The accompanying data sheets were to be made more easily comprehensible and user friendly and more robust assessment of the effectiveness of previous work would be made. The Good Relations Unit's Peace III Team would assist in that by providing evaluations of relevant projects.

In addition, the suggested performance indicators were to be more closely aligned with those to be made available from the Council's own major Public Consultation Exercise, which was currently underway in the City. That would allow comparisons to be made over time and benchmarking to be undertaken in relation to other areas. The Deloitte representatives had also made a presentation to the Interface Working Group, which had been chaired by the Good Relations Council on Monday, 21st June, and that had appeared to have been fairly well received. The company representatives were aware of the comments which had been made by the Partnership members and would take those into account when revising the report. They planned to submit the revised report by the end of July.

Noted.

Council's Disability Action Plan – Year 4 Update

The Partnership was reminded that, under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), public authorities, when carrying out their functions, must have due regard to the need to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

For ease of reference the two duties were collectively referred to as the 'disability duties'. Those duties came into effect on 1st January, 2007. The Council had, in June, 2007, submitted its Disability Action Plan which set out how it would possibly meet those duties. Since then the Council had published annual updates which were made available on the Council's website. The updates were monitored annually and a report submitted to the Equality Commission.

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The Good Relations Manager reported that a new Disability Action Plan would be drafted for 2011 and submitted to the Equality Commission along with the revised Equality Scheme and accompanying documents. The Council's Departmental Plan updates 2010, detailing actions to meet the disability duties, would be circulated for public consultation over the coming weeks in accordance with the Equality Commission guidelines. The Equality and Diversity Officer would report back on the outcomes through Council structures.

The Partnership approved the 2010 Disability Action Plan updates and agreed that they be issued for public consultation.

Chairman