

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

FRIDAY, 17th SEPTEMBER, 2010

MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

Members present: Councillor McCausland (in the Chair); and
Councillors C. Maskey and Stoker.

External Members: Ms. S. Bhat, Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum;
Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Archdeacon B. Dodds, Church of Ireland;
Ms. A. Chada, Minority Ethnic Groups;
Mr. R. Galway, Bombardier Aerospace;
Ms. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland
Housing Executive; and
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast and District Trades Council.

In attendance: Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;
Mr. I. May, Peace III Programme Manager
Mr. D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the Chairman (Councillor Hendron), Councillor McCarthy, Ms. E. Wilkinson, Mr. P. Scott and Ms. M. Marken.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 13th August and 3rd September were taken as read and signed as correct.

Commencement Time of Future Meetings

The Partnership was advised that a Member had requested that it consider changing the commencement time of the meeting and that it be held at the later time of 1.30 p.m.

The Partnership agreed that the commencement time of its future meetings be at 1.30 p.m.

Engagement Capacity Building Programme

The Partnership was reminded that the tender for the Engagement Capacity Building Programme under Action 2.4 of the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Plan had been awarded to Intercomm and Mr. Brennan was in attendance to provide an update on the project.

Mr. Brennan outlined the objectives of the programme which were to establish a Project Advisory Group, identify/engage with a minimum of three emerging groups, provide accredited training, develop a tailored engagement framework and to evaluate the project. He explained that three emerging groups had been identified to cover each of the areas of the City, that is, Charter Northern Ireland for inner East Belfast, the 174 Trust for North and West Belfast and the Greater Village Regeneration Trust for South Belfast. He pointed out that the training provided by Intercomm under the Programme had been accredited by the Queen's University of Belfast School of Education and on completion participants could receive 20 CAT Points.

In conclusion, Mr. Brennan outlined the four modules contained within the Programme and the themes examined in each of the ten two-hour sessions.

Noted.

Peace III – Implementation Update

The Peace III Programme Manager submitted a report which provided an update in respect of the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan. The report provided an overview of the various programmes and projects, together with the summary of expenditure under each of the four themes of the Plan and included a summary of the monitoring activity both actual and planned for August till October. He drew the Partnership's attention to the following issues:

Forthcoming Events

Crossing the Line

The Lord Mayor would be launching in the City Hall on 23rd September a report entitled 'Crossing the Line' which had been produced by the Belfast Interface Project as part of its Supporting Sharing Project under the Peace III Programme.

Peace Partnerships – Dissenting Voices

A discussion session, which was being organised by the Consortium, would take place on 1st October from 10.00 a.m. till 1.00 p.m. in the Tara Centre, Omagh. The event was part of a discussion series for Peace Partnerships with "Dissenting Voices" the topic for discussion in October. The purpose of the event was to provide an opportunity for Partnerships to learn what other Partnerships were doing or proposing to do in order to address dissident activities/dissenting voices in their areas. All Partnership Members were invited to attend.

Mediation Northern Ireland

Mediation Northern Ireland would be holding a conference highlighting the achievements of the Belfast Mediation Programme at Malone House on 18th November. Full details of the event would be circulated in advance and all Members of the Partnership were invited to attend.

Development of Phase II Local Action Plan

The Partnership was reminded that the Council had been invited to submit a proposal for a Phase II Local Action Plan to the Special European Union Programmes Body by 17th September. The Consortium providing technical support under the PEACE Programme had been issued with a copy of the Plan on 20th August and had submitted a response on 8th September, a copy of which had been circulated to the Members.

Partnership Agreement

The Members were advised that, under the terms and conditions of the Letter of Offer to the Council from the Special European Union Programmes Body, a formal Partnership Agreement was required to be submitted for approval. No drawdown or claims for funding could be processed until the Partnership Agreement had been agreed and put in place. The current Partnership Agreement for Phase I would be extended until the end of June, 2011 in line with the extension to the Letter of Offer.

The Peace III Programme Manager submitted for the Partnership's consideration the following draft Partnership Agreement for Phase II of the Plan which would run until December, 2013:

"PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

For the IMPLEMENTATION of the BELFAST CITY COUNCIL PEACE & RECONCILIATION PLAN 2011 – 2013 (PEACE PLAN)

Within the framework of the Cross-Border Territorial Co-operation Programme for Northern Ireland, the Border Counties of Ireland and Western Scotland 2007-2013, hereafter referred to the PEACE III Programme.

Between the following partners:

LEAD PARTNER

1. Belfast City Council

Represented by Councillors:

**Maire Hendron (Chairman)
John Kyle
Nelson McCausland MLA
Pat McCarthy
Conor Maskey
Bob Stoker**

PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS (as at September 2010)

2. NI Housing Executive

Represented by: Jennifer Hawthorne

3. Department for Social Development/Belfast Regeneration Office
Represented by: Elaine Wilkinson
4. Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Represented by: Peter Bunting
5. Belfast Trades Council
Represented by: Paddy Mackel
6. Confederation of British Industry
Represented by: Rory Galway
7. Belfast City Centre Management
Represented by: Amy McKenna
8. Catholic Church
Represented by: Michelle Marken
Patrick Scott
9. Protestant Churches
Represented by: Archdeacon Dodds
Rev Lesley Carroll
10. Minority Faith Groups
Represented by: Sharada Bhat
11. Voluntary and Community Sector
Represented by: Sean Brennan
May de Silva
12. Minority Ethnic Sector
Represented by: Angila Chada

Please note that the use of the term 'Partnership' does not signify, and is not intended to establish, that a legal partnership between the parties exists.

Article 1: Subject of the Partnership Agreement

The subject of this partnership agreement is the Belfast Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan funded by the European Regional Development Fund under Priority 1.1 of the Peace III Programme for Northern Ireland *Building Positive relations at the local level.*

Article 2: Duration of the Partnership Agreement

This partnership agreement covers the period October 2010 to December 2013.

Article 3: Role of the Lead Partner

- 3.1** Belfast City Council (the Lead Partner) will retain legal responsibility for the management of the Peace III funds allocated, including financial monitoring and audit requirements; the Council will also be responsible for any officers who may be employed under this Programme. The Lead Partner shall fulfil all obligations arising from the Letter of Offer and the approved application. In particular the Lead Partner shall fulfil the following obligations.
- 3.2** The Lead Partner is responsible for the overall co-ordination, management and implementation of the project. The Lead Partner shall be the beneficiary of the ERDF grant and shall manage the funds in accordance with the details of this Partnership Agreement. The Lead Partner assumes sole responsibility for the entire project vis-à-vis the Managing Authority.
- 3.3** The Lead Partner shall appoint a Project Manager who has operational responsibility for the implementation of the overall project;
- 3.4** The Lead Partner will ensure timely commencement of the project and implementation of the entire project within the time schedule in compliance with all obligations to the Managing Authority. The Lead Partner shall notify the Managing Authority of any factors that may adversely affect implementation of the project activities and/or financial plan;
- 3.5** Reception of payments from the Managing Authority and the management of the EU funds, in particular their timely onward transfer to those organisations commissioned to deliver elements of the Peace Plan; ; review of the appropriate spending of the EU funds by those organisations; ; and consolidation of the project-related individual accounting records of those organisations and preparation of all required documents and records for the final audit (with assistance of those organisations);
- 3.6** Preparation of a work plan setting out the tasks to be undertaken as part of the project and the role of those organisations in their implementation, and a project budget
- 3.7** Preparation and submission of periodic progress reports, interim reports, final reports, follow-up budget documentation, financial declarations, requests for payment, financial reports and application for budget or contract clause alterations;
- 3.8** Any other tasks agreed with those organisations commissioned to deliver elements of the Peace Plan.

Article 4: Role of the Partnership

The Partnership shall have responsibility for endorsing the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan, for the overall management of Belfast City Council's element of the Peace III Programme, for establishing the criteria to be used in determining applications for funding and for approving funding applications.

Article 5: Roles of Partnership Members

- 5.1 All Partnership members will participate equally in its operation and will be expected to contribute positively towards the aims of the Peace III Programme.
- 5.2 The members of the Partnership will receive full training in their new roles, responsibilities, relationships, conflicts of interest and standards of behaviour.
- 5.3 All members of the Partnership will act as representatives for the various sectors from which they have been nominated or selected and will be expected to report regularly to their constituents, to ensure good ongoing feedback, consultation, and accountability.

Article 6: Organisational Structure of the Partnership

The Partnership is established as a Working Group of the Council's Strategic Policy & Resources Committee. As such, all recommendations of the Partnership will be subject to the agreement of that Committee and to ratification by the full Council.

6.1 Quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the Partnership shall be 6, including at least 2 elected Members of the Council.

6.2 Chairman

The Chairman of the Partnership shall be appointed from amongst the elected Members of the Council. If the Chairman is present he/she must take the Chair. In the absence of the Chairman, an elected Member of the Council shall be appointed to take the Chair for the duration of the meeting or until such time as the Chairman arrives.

6.3 Meetings

The Partnership shall meet monthly, with the exception of July when no meeting shall be held. The Partnership shall establish the date and time of its meetings. Council staff will provide secretarial, administrative and other support services.

Article 7: General Rules for the Regulation of Business by the Partnership

7.1 In any instance of dispute as to the rules governing the order and conduct of business at a Partnership meeting, the Standing Orders of Belfast City Council shall be used as the appropriate reference document.

7.2 **Voting**

The Partnership shall strive to agree all matters before it by reaching a consensus. In the absence of such consensus, any question shall be decided by a majority of the Members present and voting by show of hands. The Chairman may vote and shall, in addition, have a casting vote in the case of equality of votes.

Article 8: Belfast Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan

The plan is included as an annexe to this agreement.

Article 9: Cooperation with third parties

9.1 In case of cooperation with third parties, including subcontractors, delegation of part of the activities or of outsourcing, all organisations commissioned to deliver elements of the Peace Plan shall remain solely responsible to the Lead Partner concerning compliance with its obligations as set out in this Partnership Agreement including its annexes and through the latter to SEUPB implementing the Programme.

9.2 The Lead Partner shall be informed by the organisations commissioned to deliver elements of the Peace Plan about the subject and party of any contract concluded with a third party.

9.3 No organisation commissioned to deliver elements of the Peace Plan shall have the right to transfer its rights and obligations under this Partnership Agreement without the prior consent of the Lead Partner and the responsible programme implementing bodies.

9.4 Cooperation with third parties including subcontractors shall be undertaken in accordance with the procedures set out in EU public procurement directives.

Article 10: Project Budget & Eligible Expenditure

The Lead Partner is responsible for preparing a project budget setting out an estimate of eligible expenditure and funding arising from implementation of the Belfast Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan

Article 11: Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting

- 11.1 The Lead Partner has overall responsibility for monitoring the actions undertaken by the organisations commissioned to deliver elements of the Peace Plan on an ongoing basis.
- 11.2 The Lead Partner is responsible for submitting interim reports to the JTS throughout the lifetime of the project and by the official end date of the project in order for final payment to be received. These reports should provide details of the activities undertaken as part of the project, the progress/outcomes achieved against targets, expenditure incurred, an explanation for any variances against the work plan's targets for physical outputs and budget, and proposed corrective actions, and any other information deemed relevant.

Article 12: Communications, Publicity & Dissemination of outcomes

Partners shall play an active role in any actions organized to disseminate the results of the project in line with the agreed publicity and communications strategy (attached as annexe to this agreement.)

Article 13: Confidentiality

Although the nature of the implementation of the Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan is public, it has been agreed that part of the information exchanged in the context of its implementation between the Good Relations Partnership itself or with the JTS or Programme Steering Committee, can be confidential. Only documents and other elements explicitly provided with the statement 'confidential' shall be regarded as such.

Written in Belfast in 2 original copies, on XX October 2010.

Belfast City Council

Ciaran Quigley
Director of Legal Services
Belfast City Council"

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided, approved the Partnership Agreement for Phase II of the Plan and noted that it would be forwarded to the Special European Union Programmes Body, together with the Phase II proposal. The Partnership noted also that the composition of the Partnership might have to be reviewed pending consultation with the Programmes Body and following approval of the final Phase II Plan.

Peace III – Update on Review Session

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of report

To update the Partnership on the Review Session held on 2nd September.

Background

The Partnership agreed at its meeting in August to hold a review session on implementation of Phase I with particular reference to expenditure targets. Members of the Partnership were presented with an overview of progress to date. Attention was brought to a letter from SEUPB that warned of the consequences of monies remaining uncommitted or unspent, that is, SEUPB reserved the right to withdraw/reduce the levels of funding as outlined in original Letter of Offer. A copy of the presentation, papers and attendance list has been circulated as appendices to this report, along with a copy of the correspondence from SEUPB dated 29th July.

Key Issues

Uncommitted Funds

In February, the Partnership had considered the issue of uncommitted funding and recommended a range of actions. These included:

Establishment of a grants scheme for interfaith work. This has been actioned with approximately Letters of Offer of approximately £240k in preparation for 6 projects;

Additional Youth Intervention Activity. This has been actioned through the South Belfast Alternatives proposal brought to the Partnership in May 2010.

Additional Cultural Diversity in Sport activity- This has been actioned through the Respect through Sport proposal brought to the Partnership in May 2010.

Interface Audit & consultation with CRC/Interface Working Group. This has been actioned with reports to Partnership in August 2010.

Dialogue with private sector re safe accessible City Centre – This was actioned but no firm project proposals have been developed.

Mobility Research consultation with Translink- This was actioned but no firm project proposals developed.

Also following the review in February 2010 funding has been committed to an Early Years Intervention Programme –Roots of Empathy led by Council's Health Development Unit.

Proposals regarding Festivals activity, Community Cohesion and Interfaces work will be brought to the Partnership in September/October. Out of the allocation of approximately £6.3 million for the Phase I local action plan there is approximately £147K that remains uncommitted and for which there are no firm proposals at the moment.

At the review session consideration was given to the following options:

1. to not commit to any further funding (which may result in funding being withdrawn by SEUPB with possible adverse consequences for phase II;
2. to consider committing through existing funding options-grants, partner, commissioned.

During a wide ranging discussion, many issues were raised including: the need for a greater emphasis on evaluating the work that is being done; the creation of some lasting physical legacy of the PEACE III programme; increasing the capacity of community organisations and in the future for the Partnership to be more proactive in identifying gaps/issues that need to be addressed. It was concluded that for practical reasons an open call for grants be discounted as an option.

Following discussion the recommended action was to approach existing partners (members of the GRP) with a view to;

- (a) Identifying if there are any projects/proposals that fit the PEACE III programme but are not being delivered through lack of funding;
- (b) identifying if any current delivery partners can deliver projects within the timeframe i.e. to complete by June 2011 that address issues of physical improvement; youth work; regeneration. Specific project proposals identified included programming to commemorate key anniversaries falling within the timeframe such as the Belfast Blitz and the development of a new stained glass window on a suitable theme.

The PEACE III Programme Manager was to contact existing partners (both those involved in delivering programmes and partners who have not so far been involved in delivery) to discuss scoping of possible projects and practical options to take these forward with an update to be provided to the October meeting of the Good Relations Partnership.

Underspend

Underspend is the term used for the negative variance between profiled and actual expenditure. The review session analysed the situation with reference to the delivery options available:

Commissioned/Procured Projects: Due to the nature of funding committed through procurement there is no identified underspend with payments made according to scheduled delivery and payment.

Partner Delivery: Current Situation £592K underspend. Detailed information regarding the current status of each partner delivery project. Reasons for the current underspend were tabled.

It was agreed that the best course of action was to ask partners to reprofile expenditure with a view to completing the programmes by June 2011. The reprofiled expenditure and activity updates would be reviewed by the Partnership with project extensions given to June 2011 where required and deemed appropriate.

It was further agreed that there would be a presentation to the Good Relations Partnership on the Shared Routes Programme at the October meeting of the Partnership.

Grant Aided Projects

The current identified underspend is £150k. Information was provided on the current status on all small grants projects supported through Call 1 and Call 2. A note on each variance was provided. It was agreed that letters would be sent to the 22 projects that were more than 10% adrift in terms of actual versus forecasted expenditure. It was further noted that projects had already received communications on the importance of keeping to spend profiles in April this year.

With regard to actions to utilise the anticipated underspend it was agreed:

- It would be impractical to have an open call for grant aid applications within the timeframe;
- SEUPB would be approached to ascertain whether a 'restricted call' invitation to existing projects to submit small scale project proposals would be judged to be an acceptable course of action;

- Consideration be given to procuring additional activity from existing commissioned delivery partners.
- It was also agreed that the Partnership would receive detailed progress reports in addition to papers supplied at monthly meetings as part of the risk management process.

Resource Implications

Financial Implications

None at present.

HR Implications

None at present.

Recommendations

The Partnership is requested to note the review process and issues raised.

The Partnership is requested to approve the scoping of possible projects for Partner delivery and practical options to take these forward with an update to be provided at the October meeting of the Good Relations Partnership.

The Partnership is requested to approve consideration of procuring additional activity from existing contracted delivery partners with an update to be provided at the October meeting of the Good Relations Partnership

The Partnership is requested to approve a presentation on the Shared Routes Programme at the October meeting of the Good Relations Partnership.

Decision Tracking

The PIII Programme Manager will be tasked with actions arising from this report and will provide an update on progress at the next Partnership Meeting.

Key to Abbreviations

SEUPB – Special European Union Programmes Body.

Officers to contact for further information:

Isaac May, Peace III Programme Manager, Ext 6034”

The Partnership adopted the recommendation.

Peace III – Proposed Mobility Project

The Partnership was reminded that the original aim of Action 1.3 – Mobility within the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Plan – was to complete research on patterns of mobility within Belfast. Following extensive consultation with stakeholders, such as Translink and transport academics, as well as the Community Relations Council and the Special European Union Programmes Body it was now considered necessary to look at alternative proposals in keeping with the aims and objectives of securing shared city space. With that in mind the Housing Executive, which was leading on the Local Area Networks, had prepared a proposal aligned to its work under that theme for the consideration of the Partnership.

The Markets Development Association had commissioned Copius Consultants to undertake a social-economic feasibility study of the Markets area to identify a number of initiatives which could address the actual and perceived problems within that area. The report dealt specifically with community-based issues and put forward suggestions for managing and funding the programme of proposals. In its recommendations however the first priority was placed on the development of new or improved facilities for the community and for the Association's administration.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, through its Community Cohesion Unit and South Belfast District Office, had supported that initiative and had seen the potential of fostering linkages and connectivity between relevant agencies and departments in the delivery of "integrated regeneration plans" to connect inner-city interface communities into shared city space, thus putting good relations at the heart of regeneration. The Executive had commissioned Urban Innovations as one of its retained framework consultants in order to address and achieve the aspirations of the Association which had been contained in the Consultants report.

The Peace III Programme Manager reported that Urban Innovations had identified potential regeneration projects which would reconnect the area with existing and planned developments in the City. Among those was the Tunnels Project, which was considered to have the potential to display all the aspects of regeneration and to open up connections north/south to the Waterfront from the Markets and to the Gasworks and hence the communities of lower Ormeau, Donegall Pass and beyond. To develop that proposal and test its viability, an economic appraisal was required. The potential regeneration project document for the Markets Development Association had brought in a dynamic to create change in the area and provide a stimulus for debate and discussion.

In addition, and to complement that work, the Housing Executive wished to apply a similar methodology, suitably adapted, to the Mount Vernon Estate in North Belfast. In that location the need had been identified to address "integrated" regeneration issues in that segregated area, through identifying projects which would open up socio/economic opportunities to the community, with the added benefit of connecting the area to the heart of the City and key regeneration sites such as the North Foreshore. Copies of the detailed proposals relating to the two schemes had been circulated for the information of the Members.

A Member pointed out that there was insufficient information in relation to the proposals and that the Partnership would require further details in order to permit it to make an informed decision and requested, therefore, that the matter be deferred. In addition, much of this work had been undertaken previously by the Department for Social Development and the Council should not be making additional funds available to duplicate that work.

Another Member pointed out that the communities involved in the projects had indicated that they were content with the proposals and appreciated that their views on the projects were central to the plans. He stated that the Partnership did not normally require such detailed information in relation to funding applications and that a decision to defer on that basis could set a precedent.

Ms. Hawthorne, who was involved in the project, provided further details in relation to the proposal and how the areas had been chosen. She indicated that, if the Partnership was so minded, it could receive a presentation on the proposals at its next meeting.

Moved by Councillor Stoker,
Seconded by Ms. Chada,

That the Partnership agrees to defer consideration of the matter to enable a presentation to be provided to the Members at its next meeting.

On a vote by show of hands four Members voted for the proposal and three against and it was declared carried.

Peace III – Dealing with Physical Manifestations

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 17th April, 2009, it had approved the Peace III Council-led programme “Dealing with Physical Manifestations of Sectarianism” as part of the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan. The Peace III Programme Manager reported that the programme was nearing completion with a proposed end date of December, 2010. Over the previous seventeen months, the funding available had been used to support the overall delivery of the programme in its efforts to transform a number of areas of cultural expression. However, there was a need to re-profile the budget to take account of a small number of amendments to the spend profile associated with the delivery of the programme. He outlined the key areas of expenditure within the overall budget which included:

- supporting six cultural networks, with facilitation, meeting costs, mentoring and capacity building/training;
- replacement of murals;
- graffiti project; and
- procurement of four beacons.

In general, the spend profile forecasted in April, 2009 had proceeded as planned in the majority of areas. However, there were some areas which required less financial support and others that required additional funds. One element of the programme did not proceed. He outlined the areas of the overall programme which did not proceed according to the original spending forecast which had been set out and emphasised that there would be no additional funding requirement but the Partnership needed to approve the re-profiling of the budget, a copy of which had been circulated.

The Partnership approved the re-profiling of the budget for the Dealing with Physical Manifestations of Sectarianism programme.

Peace III – Invitation to Collaborative Workshops

The Partnership was reminded that the Council had recently been successful in securing additional funding under the Peace III programme on the theme of “Growing a Shared City”. That project would support the continuing development of the good relations agenda in the City and would explore the policy and capacity required in the Council and its partner agencies to effect change in Belfast’s divided society.

The Good Relations Manager pointed out that the networks attached to the Good Relations Unit were central to the development and delivery of the good relations agenda in the City and, along with the Good Relations Partnership, those networks included the Equality Consultative Forum, the Migrant Forum, the Faith Forum and the Inter-agency Panel for the Growing a Shared City project.

She explained that Members of all those networks would be invited to two collaborative workshops which would be facilitated by the WEA and the Interaction Institute for Social Change. The workshops would explore ways in which the agencies could improve collaboration on the good relations agenda and had been designed to complement the Belfast Divercity project on collaborative working for the voluntary and community sector. She outlined the aims of the workshops and what they hoped to achieve and provided for the information details of the two-day programme.

Noted.

Peace III – Update on Shared Cultural Space Funding: City of Festivals Proposal

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The Partnership will recall that £350,000 has been allocated to Action 3.1 City of Festivals under the theme of Shared Cultural Space within the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan.

The aim of Action 3.1 is to work with a range of groups to support local community festivals, based on a new civic charter on standards, based on the Chicago City of Parades model. The key outputs associated with this action are:

- **Development of framework to increase sharing and interaction in cultural festival activities in Belfast;**

- Support to enhance the sharing and community cohesion element of ten existing festivals;
- Support the establishment of at least two new community-based festivals representing new cultural identities in the city by end of 2010; and
- A cross-border exchange programme for six community-based festival providers to share good practice.

Progress to date

At its meeting in April 2009, the Partnership approved the procurement of four key events to enhance community cohesion within Belfast at a cost of £100,000.

In February 2010, the Partnership approved an open call for funding from existing festivals with an audience reach of at least 10,000. The allocation for this call was £225,000, and, in May 2010, the Partnership approved awards to six organisations, totalling £149,780.

In February 2010, the Partnership also approved the allocation of £20,000 towards the development of a sharing framework, exchange programme and festivals action plan, subject to a full report on the work to be undertaken.

Festivals Forum

At its review of progress in September 2009, the Good Relations Partnership flagged a number of improvements that could enhance the remaining delivery of the City of Festivals programme. This included more proactive involvement of Belfast City Council's Tourism, Culture and Arts (TCA) Unit, which delivers the Community Festivals Fund, supports a wide range of festivals through its other funding schemes, and provides ongoing support to the Festivals Forum.

The Festivals Forum is a collective of over 120 festival organisers and key stakeholders from a wide range of community, arts and heritage organisations. It meets quarterly to share information and discuss strategic and citywide issues. Achievements of the Festivals Forum to date include the development of a Belfast Festivals Calendar, disseminated throughout Northern Ireland in January and June each year, and the delivery of tailored skills development and training courses, designed to build capacity within festival organisations.

Key Issues

City of Festivals Open Call Underspend

The Good Relations Partnership is asked to consider the attached options (see Appendix 1) to redeploy the £75,000 of unallocated funding under the Shared Cultural Space Open Call for grant applications. These options have been devised in discussion with the Festivals Forum and have been arrived at in recognition of need following work undertaken through PEACE III and by the TCA Unit over the past 18 months.

Further to agreement of the preferred option, a more detailed project plan, including the draft quotation document, will be prepared and presented before the Partnership for consideration in October 2010.

The Festivals Action Plan 2010

The Festivals Action Plan for 2010 was agreed at the February Forum meeting, and a copy of the plan is attached at Appendix 2. A £30,000 budget for the Festivals Action Plan has been included in the Departmental budget for 2010–11, and the Development Committee agreed the Action Plan at its August Committee meeting.

The Good Relations Partnership is asked to further approve the allocation of £20,000 towards the delivery of the Action Plan. The total budget to deliver the plan is £50,000.

Key actions aligning with Action 3.1 of the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan include:

1. Develop and disseminate a short and practical Festivals Strategy (2010–2012) for Belfast that addresses opportunities, removes barriers and leads to action
2. Develop a Belfast Festivals Civic Charter. This will establish best practice and a code of conduct, which festivals will be required to sign up to. It will be devised in consultation with the sector and key stakeholders, and a benchmarking exercise against other city charters, including Chicago, will take place.
3. Develop cross-border networking opportunities to benefit a minimum of six community-based festival providers
4. Develop a policy toolkit for measuring the social and economic impact of festivals. This will align with the Aid to Peace approach.

The Action Plan will also substantially increase sharing and interaction in festival activities by developing a coordinated marketing approach; aligning and integrating festival plans in and around the Council and across the city; facilitating knowledge-sharing meetings; developing shared ticketing and box office systems; and pooling shared resources and equipment.

Resource Implications

Financial

£30,000 towards the implementation of the Festivals Action Plan has been included in the Development Departmental budget for 2010–11. PEACE III expenditure will be recouped from SEUPB.

Human Resources

None

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Partnership:

- approves the Festivals Action Plan; and
- approves the preferred option and allocation of £75,000 to its delivery

Decision Tracking

Further to Partnership approval of the Festivals Action Plan, the Partnership will be updated on progress at a future meeting.

Further to Partnership approval of the preferred option, a more detailed project plan, including the draft quotation document, will be prepared and presented before the Partnership for consideration in October 2010 following further consultation with SEUPB and the Consortium.

Documents Attached

- Appendix 1: City of Festivals Open Call Options Paper
Appendix 2: Festivals Action Plan

Appendix 1

City of Festivals Options Paper

The purpose of this paper is to outline the options agreed by the Council's Tourism, Culture and Arts (TCA) Unit and Festivals Forum for discussion by the Good Relations Partnership.

Context

The aim of Action 3.1 of the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan is to work with a range of groups to support local community festivals, based on a new civic charter on standards, based on the Chicago City of Parades model. The key outputs associated with this action are:

- Development of framework to increase sharing and interaction in cultural festival activities in Belfast;
- Support to enhance the sharing and community cohesion element of ten existing festivals;
- Support the establishment of at least two new community-based festivals representing new cultural identities in the city by end of 2010; and
- A cross-border exchange programme for six community based festival providers to share good practice

The Festivals Forum and TCA Unit discussed alternatives for spending the allocation towards City of Festivals Action 3.1 and agreed:

- There should be an emphasis on shared resources which allow organisations to save money that can be directed into artistic delivery; and
- There should be an emphasis on helping festivals develop reach and bring their product to new audiences and parts of the city

The total available budget remaining under the City of Festivals allocation is £75,000.

OPTION 1: The PEACE Tent

Option 1 is for the purchase of a shared-resource marquee. The marquee would be procured by the TCA Unit, owned by the Council and managed by the Festivals Forum.

In the current financial year, seven festivals funded through the TCA Unit anticipate hiring marquees at the total cost of £164,037, or £23,434 on average. This represents a considerable opportunity cost, as this funding could be better spent in artistic programming, outreach and audience development. Other, particularly smaller, community-based festivals have indicated that they would like to

use marquees, but costs are prohibitive: a shared-resource marquee would help them build capacity and develop audiences. Finally, the availability of a marquee would also mitigate the risk of inclement weather for open-air festivals and allow festivals more flexibility and opportunity to programme in the winter months, providing the city with a more consistent festival offer.

The successful contractor would be responsible for storage and maintenance of the marquee. The Festivals Forum would be responsible for its management and allocation to festival providers. It is anticipated that a small fee will be levied against hire to cover ongoing costs. The potential to generate revenue to cover ongoing costs (e.g. maintenance and storage) will be explored in consultation with SEUPB.

The marquee will only be available to not-for-profit organisations who have signed up to the Festivals Charter. Festival organisers will need to make an application to the Forum, demonstrating additionality and need; and how their activity will enhance shared cultural space, develop audiences for the arts and be open and inclusive to all.

Indicative Costs

£75,000

Benefits

- Increases sharing and interaction among sector;
- Allows organisations to redeploy funding and resources in line with PEACE III and TCA priorities;
- Achievable within timescales and with existing staffing resources;
- Minimal ongoing management; and
- Preferred option of the Festivals Forum.

Risks

- Considerable capital investment with maintenance and insurance concerns;
- Reliance on third-party contractors;
- Under-use of marquee; and
- Resource oversubscribed causing dissatisfaction.

This is the preferred option as the TCA Unit consider it the best fit with the aims of Action 3.1 of the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan. It would be of substantial, measurable benefit to the festivals sector and is in line with the Festivals Action Plan 2010.

OPTION 2: Shared Cultural Festival

This option is to tender for six festivals based in North, South, East, West, Shankill and city centre to deliver a targeted audience development programme. All outreach activities must take place before 30 June 2011.

Festivals help promote Belfast as a shared cultural space and as a peaceful, attractive and welcoming city, open to everyone. The aim of the proposal is to develop and enhance existing festival provision by encouraging shared working practice and non-traditional participation in and attendance of arts and cultural events.

The programme must target audiences and participants outside the festival's traditional demographic:

- in the top 50 per cent most deprived areas in Belfast and/or
- from marginalised or disadvantaged groups identified under section 75

Activities must be delivered in partnership with other festival, arts and community organisations. However, the submission must be completed by the festival provider as lead partner.

The TCA Unit will commission an independent evaluator to assess the impact of the activity on both the festival and the communities. The evaluation will be in line with the Aid for Peace Framework. The TCA Unit will be responsible for the publication and dissemination of this report.

In line with current practice, a consultant will be procured to make initial assessments against the pre-set criteria. The Good Relations and TCA Units will quality assure the assessments before recommendations are brought before the Partnership.

Indicative Costs

£60,000 to successful festival providers (maximum £10,000 x 6)
£5,000 for independent evaluation
£5,000 for the publication and dissemination of the evaluation
£5,000 for consultant

Benefits

- Increases sharing and interaction among sector and within communities; and
- Festivals and communities develop reach and capacity

Risks

- Short lead-in time for festival planning;
- Completion date of June means not all festivals have equal opportunity to apply;
- Poor quality submissions; and
- Limited festival activity in some geographic areas.

OPTION 3: Research into the Impact of Festivals

The aim of option 3 is to commission a robust research paper examining the impact of festivals at a local level. The research paper will be used to reinforce and disseminate the benefits of festival activity in the city. The Festivals Forum will also be able to use this shared resource to lobby for continuing support for festivals.

The researcher will be required to devise an effective methodology, incorporating the Aid for Peace Framework and with consideration of other models, such as Social Return on Investment. Key themes to be addressed will include:

- Social cohesion
- Community determination
- Cultural diversity and perceptions of 'other'
- Access to and participation in arts and culture
- Skills development
- Capacity building
- Economic benefit
- Perceptions of Belfast and citizenship

The researcher will work closely with the Festivals Forum and will be expected to engage with the sector through workshops and other innovative engagement methods.

The researcher will be procured in line with SEUPB procurement guidelines and selected by a panel from the Good Relations and TCA Units. The TCA Unit will be responsible for the publication and dissemination of the research. It will be launched during a festivals conference event in May 2011, attended by festival providers and key stakeholders.

Indicative Costs

£25,000 to successful contractor
£10,000 for the publication and dissemination of the research
£10,000 for conference

Benefits

- High-profile event
- Robust piece of research likely to have significant benefit to sector
- Achievable within timescales and with existing staffing resources

Risks

- Decommittment of funding from Belfast as Action 3.1 allocation not fully spent

Appendix 2

Festivals Forum Action Plan 2010 / 2011

Core Themes

- Celebration of culture and arts
- Community cohesion
- Shared space
- Cultural tourism
- Civic pride
- Internationalism

<u>Priorities for Action</u>	<u>Budget – indicative*</u>	<u>Lead</u>	<u>Timescale</u>
1. Develop and disseminate a short and practical Festivals Strategy (2010–2012) for Belfast that addresses opportunities, removes barriers and leads to action	£1,000	Co-ordinator and Forum	Completed by March 2011
2. Use Festivals Forum to lobby for increased resources and recognition of festivals as integral to arts, culture and tourism in the city	-	Co-ordinator and Forum	Ongoing

<u>Priorities for Action</u>	<u>Budget – indicative*</u>	<u>Lead</u>	<u>Timescale</u>
3. Create a coordinated campaign to improve awareness of Belfast as a City of Festivals, including co-ordinated marketing approach through key agencies such as BVCB and NITB	£5,000	TCA team/BVCB/NITB	Ongoing
4. Council to ensure that festival-related plans in and across Council are aligned	-	TCA	December 2010
5. Involve key stakeholders in an initiative to share, and where possible, integrate festival plans across the city	-	Co-ordinator and Forum	Ongoing
6. Hold knowledge-sharing meetings between funders and festivals to improve understanding of needs associated with festivals e.g. funding timelines, flexibility, as well as needs of funders	-	Co-ordinator	2 meetings 1 by December 2010 1 by March 2011
7. Develop a policy toolkit for measuring the social and economic impact of festivals. This may require a recalibration of target markets to get a better balance between visitor and community targets	£5,000	Co-ordinator and TCA Team	June 2011
8. Coordinate a new, integrated and shared box office/ticketing system for the city	-	ACNI, Audience NI, Culture NI	Ongoing – initial feasibility by June 2011

<u>Priorities for Action</u>	<u>Budget – indicative*</u>	<u>Lead</u>	<u>Timescale</u>
9. Undertake a series of practical measures to support festival organisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a pool of resources such as equipment that can be shared ▪ Run training and mentoring programmes ▪ Encourage clusters and joint marketing campaigns ▪ Create an operational toolkit 	£5,000	Co-ordinator	June 2011
10. Council to investigate access to its properties, spaces and infrastructure as an available resource for festivals	-	TCA Team	Database on website March 2011
11. Develop a Belfast Festivals Charter	£5,000	Co-ordinator	June 2011
12. Develop cross border networking opportunities	£5,000	Co-ordinator	June 2011
13. Festival Forum meetings and capacity building	£4,000	TCA Team	Ongoing
14. Festivals co-ordinator, overheads, supplies etc	£20,000	TCA Team	November– June 11
TOTAL	£50,000		

* Indicative budget – revised on appointment of Co-ordinator”

The Partnership approved Option 2 – The Peace Tent – and the funding allocation of £75,000 for its delivery.

Peace III – Evaluation of Phase I

The Partnership was reminded that all projects funded under Phase I of the Belfast Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan were required to complete regular monitoring and self-evaluation returns. The Peace III Programme Manager reported that the process was working well and much valuable data was being captured.

He reminded the Partnership further that it had approved expenditure relating to independent external evaluation for the programme at its meeting in December, 2008. The development of the terms of reference and appointment of external support to conduct that evaluation had been put on hold pending the issue of guidance from the Special European Union Programmes Body on monitoring and evaluation procedures, including the Aid for Peace Methodology and provision for programme level evaluation. The Programmes Body had completed recently its own evaluation of Phase I of the Peace III Programme and the results were anticipated for later in the year.

He explained that, to complement the self-evaluation process and the Special European Union Programmes Body's exercise to help capture the story of the Phase I plan, it was now proposed to issue terms of reference for an independent external evaluation. A summary of the terms of reference had previously been circulated to the Members. The overall aim of the exercise would be to capture what had happened under the programme, what had changed as a result of the programme and what would be likely to last. It was anticipated also that the results of the exercise would assist with the transition to Phase II of the Plan and with subsequent project development. It was expected that the interim results of the exercise would be submitted to the Partnership before the end of the calendar year, with final report in Spring, 2011.

The Partnership approved the terms of reference for an independent external evaluation.

Glenbank Artwork

The Partnership was reminded that the Council had supported work in a number of local neighbourhoods through the Brighter Belfast project and, lately, through the Re-Imaging Communities Programme, which had been led by the Arts Council. That Programme was suspended currently as there was no funding available. However, the Good Relations Unit had a small amount within its own budget to support community art projects.

The Good Relations Officer explained that the Council's Renewing the Routes programme had been delivering a landscaping project at the bottom of Glenbank Avenue. As part of the discussions in relation to that, the community was keen to incorporate a small number of plaques to mark the cultural and heritage of the local community within the overall project. The bulk of the budget within the Renewing the Routes project in that area had supported the landscaping element and additional funding was required to provide for the cultural and heritage imprint.

He pointed out that, within the Re-Imaging Communities programme, the Arts Council required all artwork to fall within strategic themes such as shared future, community relations, community cohesion, regeneration through the arts or neighbourhood renewal. The plaques, if funded by the Council, would be required to adhere to those conditions as well as the following criteria:

- no paramilitary elements;
- that it contains nothing that can be perceived as being offensive; and
- that the Council approves the final designs prior to installation.

The Partnership approved funding for the Glenbank artwork project, the amount of which would not exceed £5,000 for the cost of the artist, community engagement and materials and, 75% of which could be recouped under the District Council's Good Relations Programme through the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister.

Good Relations Unit – Financial Position

The Good Relations Manager provided the Partnership with an update in relation to the financial position of the Good Relations Unit. She stated that normally a sum of around £500,000 per year was received towards the running costs of the good relations programme from the Community Relations Unit within the Office of the First/Deputy First Minister and this year, in addition, the Council had administered the Summer Intervention Fund of around £100,000 on behalf of that Office. Funding was normally reclaimed from the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister on a quarterly basis, but to date, although it was almost half-way through the financial year, the Council had not recouped any funds or even received a Letter of Offer from the Office indicating what would be the Council's annual allocation for the current year 2010-2011. The Partnership agreed that a letter should be sent to the Junior Ministers outlining its concern in this regard.

Belfast Migrant Forum Project

The Peace III Programme Manager sought the Partnership's approval for an additional print run of an information booklet which was produced by the Belfast Migrant Forum Project under Action 3.5 of Phase 1 of the Local Action Plan. The booklet covered information on living and working in Belfast, accessing services and information on volunteering. Demand for the booklet had been very high and, therefore, the project stakeholders had requested additional copies. An additional print run had been costed at approximately £3,000 and that would be met from within the agreed allocation for the Migrant Forum and would not represent an additional cost to the project.

The Good Relations Partnership approved the additional print run.

Chairman