

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**MONDAY, 10th OCTOBER, 2011****MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP**

- Members present: Councillor Hendron (Chairman);
Alderman Stoker; and
Councillors Attwood, Maskey and Reynolds.
- External Members: Mr. Brennan, Ms. Chada, Archdeacon Dodds,
Ms. da Silva, Mr. Galway, Mrs. Marken and Mr. Scott.
- In attendance: Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager;
Mr. I. May, Peace III Programme Manager;
Mr. D. Robinson, Senior Good Relations Officer; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the Reverend Carroll, Councillor Kyle, Mr. Mackel and Mr. O'Donnell.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 12th September, subject to the inclusion of Ms. da Silva and Mrs. Marken within the names of those External Members present, were taken as read and signed as correct.

PEACE III – Presentation by Consortium

The Peace III Programme Manager advised the Partnership that he had been informed that representatives from the Consortium would be unable to attend the meeting to provide a presentation on Phase II of the Programme.

The Partnership agreed that the presentation be received at its meeting in November.

PEACE III - Phase 1 Implementation Update

The Partnership considered a report which provided an update in respect of the implementation of Phase I of the Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan. The report reviewed the progress to date of the various projects contained within each theme of the Plan including expenditure, as at the end of September, together with information on the number of claims outstanding, the current status of each project, key risks and any actions to be undertaken. The Peace III Programme Manager informed the

Partnership that, subsequent to a meeting with the Special European Unit Programmes Body, it had been confirmed that any slippage encountered during the Phase I of the Programme could be re-allocated under Phase II of the Programme and that there would be an opportunity to submit proposals to the Body for consideration by the Peace III Steering Committee. He indicated that work was ongoing on an analysis of the statistic and stakeholder mapping regarding the Programme, together with a survey on participants' attitudes in relation thereto.

In response to a Member's question in relation to the extent of "ineligible expenditure" as identified within the expenditure for the Programme, the Peace III Programme Manager indicated that every effort had been made to minimise levels of ineligible expenditure and stated that, by way of example, ineligible expenditure regarding the small grants programme was approximately 0.6%, which was considered to be a very low error rate. However, the definite picture regarding Phase I expenditure would not be known until the final verification by the Programmes Body had taken place.

Forthcoming Events

The Partnership noted that the Consortium would be hosting the undernoted events which would take place from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on the dates mentioned:

- 19th October - Cross Border Networking Event – Belfast City Hall; and
- 23rd November – Peace Building and Reconciliation – Co. Monaghan

Phase III – Strategic Grants Programme

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Background

A key element within Phase II of the Belfast PEACE III Plan is the Strategic Grants Programme. It is anticipated that this new programme will build on the success of the Phase I Small Grants programme and aims to provide much needed funding for voluntary/community sector organisations who deliver programmes right at the heart of local communities across the city. It is proposed that the upper limit for small grants is raised which will mean fewer grants but with larger amounts e.g. 8 at £125,000 or 10 at £100,000 etc. As in the first phase consortia applications with a clearly identified lead partner are to be encouraged. The overarching theme of the programme would be that of Shared Organisational Space to promote collaborative working. Projects would focus on the key target groups of the PEACE III Programme which would include youth and early years work with related intergenerational work and projects led by the women's sector. In addition, and arising from public consultation and feedback

received the option to include capital elements within grant aided projects will also be considered but only in highly exceptional circumstances where it is clearly demonstrated that the proposed capital investment will contribute to achieving the aims and objectives of the PEACE III Plan.

Key Issues

The purpose of this open call is to identify projects from properly constituted organisations with sound management and good governance arrangements with a track record of successful delivery that:

- demonstrate a meaningful focus on peace and reconciliation;
- demonstrate active partnership in development and delivery of the activity;
- demonstrate robust financial and administration systems;
- complement existing and/ or planned activity in the city with particular reference to partner led projects within the Phase II Plan;
- will take place between 1st April 2012 and 30th September 2013. Activity must begin no later than 30th September 2012.
- Have a robust methodology for monitoring and evaluation of activity in line with the PEACE III Aid for Peace Framework.

The strategic grants programme is aimed at organisations with the management and administrative capacity to deliver large scale projects involving multiple stakeholders. Ideally applicant organisations will have previous experience of managing EU funding and projects will be expected to work closely with other projects supported under the Belfast PEACE III Plan.

Desired outcomes for the strategic grants programme include:

- Increased collaboration and development of new models of service delivery.
- Increased inter-community contact and corresponding improvement in knowledge/ perceptions of the “other”;
- Promotion of positive cultural expression;
- Increased understanding, interaction and capacity of individuals and community organisations to deal with and manage differences in more peaceful manner.
- Increased shared enjoyment and ownership of public spaces
- Increased engagement with communities and enabling them to shape their local area and tackle urban blight.

- Reduction in tensions around interfaces;
- Progress towards removal/ reduction of physical barriers impairing mobility and regeneration efforts;
- Enhanced opportunities for dialogue and debate on cross community basis
- Enhanced awareness of other cultures and backgrounds among participants
- Increase in the percentage of local residents who would define the neighbourhood they live in as a 'shared' space;
- Increase in estimates of 'social assets' within neighbourhoods in relation to social capacity (bonding, bridging and linking) social capability;
- Increase in percentage of people who believe that relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in 5 years time
- Geographic and thematic mapping of activity across city
- Increased co-ordination with other funders.

The fund for the Strategic Grants Programme is approximately £1million. It is anticipated that grants will be made to projects with a budget of between £75,000 and £125,000 that can demonstrate significant peace & reconciliation outcomes. Based upon previous experience under the first phase this is likely to be a very competitive process.

Assessment Process & Criteria

It is proposed that assessment will be in two stages:

Stage 1: Basic Eligibility Check

All project applicants must meet the following basic eligibility criteria – otherwise the application will not progress any further in the appraisal process and will not therefore be scored.

- The project proposal must clearly address one of the priorities outlined within the overall PEACE III Programme;
- The project activity must be within the eligible area (i.e. Northern Ireland or the Southern Border Counties of Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan, Leitrim, Louth and Sligo);
- All sections in the application form must be completed accurately and in full;
- Applications must be submitted by the specified deadline;
- If the project involves partners, the willingness for project partners to engage in the partnership must be fully demonstrated in the application;

- The project must be in accordance with the governing EU Regulations;
- The Applicant/ Lead Partner in the application should be a properly constituted not for profit organisation.

Stage 2: Full Project Appraisal and Scoring

All applications passing the Basic Eligibility Check will proceed to a full Project Appraisal and Scoring process carried by an Assessment Panel consisting of members of the Good Relations Partnership supported by Council staff with external support where required (value for money appraisal, reference checking, liaison with other funders etc). The panel may also include an independent observer where appropriate. On completion of the appraisal and scoring process the Assessment Panel then makes a recommendation to the Good Relations Partnership for consideration. All eligible applications will be assessed against the pre-set PEACE III Criteria which have been developed in line with SEUPB Guidance Note on Project Selection (G1).

Assessment Criteria and Scoring

The criteria and their weighting are set out below:

Programme Criteria	
Strategic Fit with PEACE III Programme	30%
Priority Criteria	
Strategic Fit with Local Action Plan	30%
Efficiency & Effectiveness	
Value for Money	10%
Need	10%
Cross Cutting Themes	
Equality	5%
Sustainable Development	5%
Impact on Poverty	5%
Partnership	5%
Cross Border	-
Total	100%

All applications will be scored out of 200. An application must score a minimum of 65% under Programme and Priority Criteria and efficiency and effectiveness criteria as well as under the cross cutting themes before it can be considered for funding under the Peace Programme. Projects under 65% will not be recommended for support. However a score equivalent to 65% or above will not necessarily guarantee funding as applications will be scored and

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ranked with funding available awarded to the highest ranked projects. Thereafter project applicants will be entered onto a reserve list and allocated funding should it become available at a later date. As well as achieving an overall score of 65%, successful applications must:

**Score 65% in both Programme, Priority and Theme objectives, and
Score 65% in Efficiency and Effectiveness objectives and
Score 65% of available marks for each cross-cutting theme**

Although cross border cooperation is not an essential criterion of the PEACE Programme and this element will not be scored, projects which have a demonstrable cross border element in terms of joint development or joint implementation are encouraged. All successful projects may be asked to share expertise and participate on a cross border basis.

For consistency and to facilitate efficient assessment the following approach has been adopted to scoring against the criteria:

Score	Measure (example)
5	Excellent level of detail demonstrating meaningful focus on peace and reconciliation.
4	Good level of detail demonstrating meaningful focus on peace and reconciliation.
3	Acceptable level of detail demonstrating meaningful focus on peace and reconciliation.
2	Limited level of detail demonstrating meaningful focus on peace and reconciliation.
1	Poor level of detail demonstrating meaningful focus on peace and reconciliation.
0	Failed to provide any information regarding meaningful focus on peace and reconciliation.

Based on the above system 65% of the available marks equates to a factored score of 3.25 out of the available 5 marks.

Next Steps & Anticipated Timeline

It is proposed to the Partnership that an open call for projects is made at the earliest opportunity. This will be advertised in the press and on Belfast City Council's website. Application forms, guidance notes and a summary of the Phase II plan will be available from the website. It is further proposed to hold two specific information sessions where there will be the opportunity to discuss project ideas with members of the PEACE III Team. This will be

supplemented by specific outreach activities where appropriate e.g. Equality Consultative Forum etc. A copy of the draft application form and guidance notes are attached as appendices to this report along with the draft Phase II Plan for publication.

In view of the size and scope of the proposed grants it is proposed that consultancy support is bought in to assist the Partnership with its appraisal of applications received. The cost of the external consultancy support is estimated at no more than £2,000. A copy of the draft terms of reference for this support is attached as an appendix to this report.

Activity	Time
21 Oct 2011	Call Opens / Public Notice
26 Oct 2011	Information Sessions – AM City Hall
9 Nov 2011	Information Sessions – AM Ulster Hall
Nov - Dec 2011	Project Development & Outreach Work
12.00pm - 16 Dec	Closing date for receipt of applications
Jan & Feb 2012	Appraisal & Assessment Panels
March 2012	Pre Contract Checks (est.)
April 2012	Issue of initial Letters of Offer (est.)

Based upon experience of Phase 1 and the stringent requirements of the PEACE III programme it is anticipated that significant resources are invested at the appraisal and pre-contract check stages to minimise financial and reputational risk.

Recommendations

That the Partnership approves the proposed approach to implementing the Strategic Grants Programme and recommends the publication of an open call for proposals in line with the assessment criteria outlined.

That the Partnership approves in principle the draft Terms of Reference for external consultancy support in the appraisal of applications received at a cost of approximately £2,000.”

The Partnership adopted the recommendations.

Peace III - Phase II Assessment

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Background

Following consideration of the Phase II Projects by the Partnership in September it was recommended that two projects be resubmitted for assessment prior to a recommendation being made to the Partnership. The projects in question were:

Project 1 – Community Cohesion Networks
Project 7 – City of Festivals II

Assessment of Partner Delivery Projects

While the overall project proposals have been considered by the PEACE III Monitoring Committee following a thorough economic appraisal carried out by Cogent Consulting it is a requirement that all projects in the Phase II plan are further considered by the Good Relations Partnership prior to implementation. An assessment panel convened on 6th October supported by council staff. Representatives from SEUPB and the consortium were also invited to attend as observers. Conflicts of interest were noted. Following a presentation on the project each proposal was assessed in line with the Project Selection Guidance issued by SEUPB namely: PEACE III Programme and Priority Fit (60%) and Efficiency, Effectiveness and Cross Cutting Themes (40%). The assessment papers and reports are attached as appendices to this report.

Recommendations

Following assessment it is recommended to the Partnership that the following projects proceed to implementation:

Project No.	Project Title
1	Community Cohesion
7	City of Festivals

It is recommended that the following general conditions are applied to all Phase II projects in addition to project specific conditions detailed in the assessment report (attached at Appendix 2):

- All projects must maintain a meaningful focus on Peace & Reconciliation outcomes and this should be kept under continual review by project promoters.

- All projects should seek to identify appropriate mainstreaming opportunities. Where there is significant potential for mainstreaming the project partners should develop a specific mainstreaming strategy.
- The potential for Phase II Projects to impact on poverty needs to be assessed for the programme as a whole. Projects should seek to link in with Council's anti-poverty strategy wherever possible and there should be clarity around use of terms such as social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal in all project documents.
- All projects should seek representation from Members of the Good Relations Partnership on respective Steering Groups/ Project Boards."

The Partnership adopted the recommendations.

Belfast City Council - Revised Equality Scheme

The Partnership considered the undernoted report, together with the contents of a revised Council Equality Scheme, an Audit of Inequalities and an associated Action Plan, copies of which had previously been circulated:

"Relevant Background Information

The Partnership will recall that last year (15th October 2010) it considered a report outlining the revised guidance from the Equality Commission on S75 duties and the implications for the Council.

This revised guidance requires all public authorities to prepare revised Equality Schemes within a strictly defined timetable and introduces new elements including:

- the introduction of revised screening procedures, to be reported quarterly
- the undertaking of an audit of inequalities
- the development of an equality action plan, linked to the corporate planning cycle, to ensure that equality and good relations are incorporated and mainstreamed at strategic level across the Council's business.

Policy Arc Ltd consultants had been commissioned earlier in 2010 to review the Council's processes and performance in equality, to ensure that its work was as effective as possible. Particular consideration was given to the infrastructure required to ensure that all of the Council's responsibilities with respect to S75 were met and that equality was an inherent and central part of policy making and planning within the organisation.

Over the summer of 2010, the Good Relations Manager and Equality & Diversity Officer met all the Departmental Management Teams and made presentations on the new requirements. The EDO supplemented this with additional advice, support and assistance to the Policy Officers' Group and to individual Units and Sections, to ensure that equality is mainstreamed effectively.

On 15th October 2010 the Good Relations Partnership considered a report which referred to the enhanced role of the POG in ensuring a consistent approach to equality and good relations across departments; the introduction of equality indicators into the current performance management system and the re-instatement of a relevant statement into Committee Reports.

The Good Relations Partnership and the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee approved formally the revised approach to be taken by the Council at their meetings in October 2010 and the "Equality and good relations implications" statement has been included in Committee Reports since that time. This ensures that officers are prompted to consider such implications during the policy development stage and provides an effective means for the EDO to monitor compliance with screening procedures.

Key Issues

Timescale

The Council's current Equality Scheme was approved by the ECNI in 2001. The Council has been formally notified that it must prepare its revised Equality Scheme, in accordance with a model equality scheme for use by public authorities, and submit it to the Equality Commission for approval by 1st February 2012. The revised Equality Scheme will be submitted for approval in draft by the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in the October 2011 cycle since it has to be the subject of a formal 12 week consultation period¹.

Joint Council approach

Some members may be aware that the Equality Officers of all 26 Councils in NI worked together on the revised Schemes and related documents in association with staff from the Local Government Staff Commission, supported by Dr John Kremer, consultant. All the advice from the Equality Commission, the Local Government Staff Commission and Dr Kremer was to adhere closely to the model equality scheme to ensure best practice and this has been

¹ Under our existing Equality Scheme our consultation period is 8 weeks; the revised ECNI guidance recommends that this is extended to 12 weeks.

done. The Council Equality Officers are planning a joint consultation period and associated launch event (likely to be 16th November), to facilitate responses from consultees and regional bodies.

Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan

No clear guidance was given regarding the level of detail required in either the Audit of Inequalities or Equality Action Plan. The Audit of Inequalities exists only to inform our Equality Action Plan; neither the Audit nor the Action Plan have to be consulted on or submitted to the Equality Commission. Our Equality Action Plan is an interim plan for the remainder of the current financial year only; it will be up-dated and expanded next year to correspond with the corporate planning cycle.

We propose to consult on all 3 documents together – the revised Equality Scheme, the Audit of Inequalities and the Equality Action Plan – to ensure transparency, but Members should be aware that not all Councils are taking this approach². The ECNI has the power only to enforce the submission of a revised Equality Scheme.

Members are requested to note the screening procedure in Section 4 and the need for Directors/Heads of Service to “sign off” screening forms; this is a more formalised process than at present and is line with the recommendations in the model scheme.

Training

The Good Relations Manager has undertaken a number of training sessions with elected Members, not only as part of the formal Induction Programme but also at the request of party groups; these sessions cover the Council’s commitments regarding S75. The need to ensure that all proposals are subject to adequate equality and good relations proofing has been raised recently by a number of Members within Council.

In June 2011 Dr John Kremer held a useful equality briefing for the Policy Officers Group to emphasise the requirements of the revised equality guidance, particularly those relating to the screening of policies. The Council’s Core Skills programme will also include equality and good relations as key elements.

² Some Councils are not consulting on their Action Plans, using them as internal working documents and making them available only on request; some are only committing to the production of an Action Plan.

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It is proposed that an additional workshop for senior officers, led by John Kremer, focusing on the revised approach and raising the profile of issues around equality, good relations and diversity in general should be held early in the New Year to help build capacity, ensure a consistent approach and assist in shaping the vision for the workforce diversity strategy.

Resource Implications

Minimal – to be met from the Good Relations Unit’s revenue budget.

Equality and Good Relations Implications

Positive implications in equality-proofing and good relations-proofing Council policies and services.

Recommendations

The Good Relations Partnership is requested to:

- note this report
- approve the attached documents.

These draft documents will be submitted to the Good Relations Partnership and the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in October, to go out for a period of public consultation as set out above. The final documents will then be submitted to the ECNI by the required date of 1st February 2012.

Partnership members are reminded that these are all in draft and that comments may be submitted at any time during the period of the public consultation. Any substantial changes required as a result of the consultation will of course be reported back to the Partnership and Committee.”

The Good Relations Manager pointed out that the revised Equality Scheme had been drawn up in line with a model template as issued by the Equality Commission and indicated that it was unlikely that it would be altered prior to formal submission. However, she stated that the Audit of Inequalities and the Equality Action Plan were still in draft form and might be subject to amendment before submission to the Equality Commission in February 2012. She reminded the Partnership that although socio-economic status was not one of the nine official equality categories under Section 75, it was an important consideration for the Council in broader terms. She pointed out that the Council was concerned about addressing poverty and general inequality within the City and was currently discussing a possible anti-poverty strategy and economic stimulus package for Belfast. She added that it was therefore likely that an action relating to this strategy would be included within the final Action Plan but it was not possible to be more specific at this stage. I

After further discussion, the Partnership adopted the recommendations as set out within the report.

Comment [WU1]: Barry – I’d delete this sentence – the Scheme itself wouldn’t have any measures.

Growing a Shared City – Lunchtime Seminars

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that the 'Growing a Shared City' project, which was funded through the Peace III Programme, aimed to develop key institutional capacities for a shared society. She explained that the project explored the policy and capacity which the Council required, together with its partner agencies, to effect change in Belfast's divided society. It was pointed out that over 150 people had participated in workshops on topics relating to partnership working, equality and efficiency and that over 300 individuals had attended a number of diversity seminars, on topics including the economy, European funding, the media, promoting equality and good relations and the Connswater Greenway. She explained that, commencing in October 2011 and continuing until May 2012, a number of lunchtime seminars entitled 'Exploring Engagement' would take place as part of the project in a new series on the subject of "engagement".

The Good Relations Manager outlined the themes and likely speakers and indicated that invitations to attend would be forwarded to each Member of the Partnership.

Noted.

Starting Time of Future Meetings

The Partnership agreed, for a trial period commencing in November, that it would convene at 1:00 p.m. with refreshments, with a view to the business of the meeting commencing at 1.15 p.m.

Good Relations Plan

The Senior Good Relations Officer distributed for the information of Members the updated Good Relations Plan which set out a vision for Belfast over the next three years and which would seek to make Belfast a better place in which to live, work, socialise and do business. He provided an overview of the themes within the Plan and outlined the challenges and key objectives within the Plan for the period 2011/2014.

Noted.

King James Bible Event

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that the Council, at its meeting on 1st September, had considered a Notice of Motion regarding the 400th anniversary of the publication of the King James Bible. She reported, subsequent to the meeting of the Council, a lunch-time event had been organised, in conjunction with the Bible Society of Northern Ireland, which would take place in the City Hall on Wednesday 2nd November. She added that the event would look at the historical significance of the Bible and its influence on the English language. In addition, it was anticipated that the City Hall would display a small exhibition of related items for a short period following the event.

Steering Groups / Project Boards

The Partnership agreed that officers from within the Peace III team in the Good Relations Unit would examine the work of the range of Steering Groups and Boards which oversaw the work of the various projects with a view to identifying those groups which might be of relevance to Members of the Partnership with a particular focus on the Phase II PEACE III Projects.

Chairman