

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Development)
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Chief Executive's Office		
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4 June 2013

Dear Peter,

As part of its community engagement, the University is setting up a University Community Liaison Forum, which will co-ordinate and focus the existing wide range of community engagement activities and will ensure that the benefits of these activities flow to neighbouring disadvantaged communities.

It is the University's intention that a Community Liaison Forum will be established on each of the four campuses, the first being developed in Belfast and will focus on the delivery of the University's Widening Access and Participation, Teaching and Learning, and Research and Innovation community engagement activities so that these have the greatest impact on disadvantaged communities neighbouring the Belfast City Campus.

For your information, I attach a paper outlining the context of the University Community Liaison Forum.

A meeting will be held on 17 June at the Belfast Campus to which community organisations have been invited. The purpose of the meeting is to work out the process for nominating representatives to the Forum.

I would like to invite Belfast City Council to nominate four elected representatives to participate in this meeting, and who would be expected to join the Forum. I would be obliged if you could confirm the names of the representatives.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alastair". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot above the 'i'.

Professor Alastair Adair

BELFAST CITY CAMPUS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

University Community Liaison Forum

Context

The University's Corporate Plan commits the University to "focusing and deepening its contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of Northern Ireland and its global standing." The Corporate Plan sets the framework for the delivery of the University's core activities to achieve this through its constituent strategies and implementation plans. The University has a wide variety of stakeholders and interests and community engagement is embedded in a range of strategies for example, the Widening Access and Participation, Teaching & Learning and Research & Innovation Strategies.

In order to provide a more coordinated and integrated approach to community engagement the University has developed the *Your University and Your Community* initiative as a vehicle for more focused delivery and effective branding of the University's significant strengths in widening access, cultural, sporting, business and community outreach across each of our campuses. The Widening Access and Participation Sub-Committee has the responsibility for oversight of the delivery of outreach activities on each campus.

The University's Educational Partnerships and International Affairs Committee approved a Community Engagement Strategic and Operational Plan on 13 February 2013 to deliver community engagement across each of the University's campuses. It is within this framework of University wide community engagement that the University is committed to developing its outreach activities and to build upon the range of community engagements already in place on the Belfast and Jordanstown campuses.

The proposed University Community Liaison Forum for the Belfast City campus sits within the *Your University and Your Community* framework and has a particular focus on delivering community engagement benefits to the neighbourhoods around each of the campuses. Messaging relating to the Forum will be aligned to the outputs of the branding exercise currently being undertaken by the University.

Belfast City Campus Political & Community Engagement

The University has undertaken a significant programme of political and community engagement since 2009 for a number of reasons which relate to enlisting support for the core activities of the University relating to widening access, innovation, cultural and sports outreach, the University's development plans and enhancing community engagement with the University.

Part of the rationale behind the development of the new campus is to strengthen the link with the local community and, in particular, in line with our widening access agenda to raise expectations of communities adjacent to our campuses to aspire to university education.

To facilitate this it is proposed to develop a University Community Liaison Forum for the Belfast City campus which will be driven by the University and chaired by PVC (Development). It is intended to develop University Community Liaison Fora on other campuses in due course.

Initial meetings with community groups have welcomed the current approach by the University in dealing with local issues comprising Near Neighbour and University Community Liaison Forum levels of engagement.

The Near Neighbour approach facilitates meetings with local communities and organisations on a regular basis to exchange information. Meetings have been held with the Agreed Agenda Group for the Shankill, Ashton Community Trust, Belfast Charitable Society (Clifton House), Carrick Hill Residents Association, Clifton House, Inner North Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership, Lower Shankill Community Association, Quakers, Sailortown Regeneration Group, St Anne's Cathedral, St Patrick's Church, and Tigers Bay Community Group.

In supporting this approach a fundamental problem is defining the boundary of the nearest neighbour. To overcome this problem the University adopted the Planning Regulations definition of near neighbours as within a 90m radius of the development. Adopting any other measure of distance would be arbitrary and open to challenge.

While the near neighbour approach has worked well from an information exchange and advocacy perspective the recent emergence of *umbrella* groups such as the Inner North Belfast Campus Development Group comprising the Greater New Lodge Community Empowerment Partnership, St. Patrick's and St. Joseph's Housing Committee, Sailortown Regeneration Group and Inner North Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership requires the University to review this approach.

To continue with the Near Neighbour approach is subject to definitional problems identified above and the risks of duplication created by the overlap between individual community groups and the emerging *umbrella* groups. It is acknowledged that the Near Neighbour approach was an early initiative which would now be replaced by the University Community Liaison Forum.

University Community Liaison Forum

The University Community Liaison Forum (UCLF) is a more formalised approach to community engagement which could be adapted on each of the University's campuses.

It is envisaged that the UCLF will be a permanent feature of the University's engagement with the wider world and will involve representatives from the University, elected members (Belfast City Council in the case of the Belfast campus), community organisations, partnership boards and relevant statutory bodies.

The UCLF will engage with representatives of the local community, public, private and voluntary sector on identifying projects for mutual benefit and partnership and opportunities for relevant, targeted and effective community outreach activities in line with the *Your University and Your Community* initiative.

UCLF will focus on delivering outcomes related to widening access and participation, teaching and learning and research and innovation benefits that will have the greatest impact on disadvantaged communities neighbouring each of the University campuses.

Examples will include focusing on primary and secondary schools in disadvantaged communities, social enterprise through KTPs and Volunteering activities through the Students' Union in order to produce creative change in such neighbourhoods.

The work of the UCLF will be delivered through the University's Community Engagement Sub-Committee (CESC) (under the direction of the Widening Access and Participation Sub-Committee) which at its meeting on 16 April 2013 agreed to establish a Working Group to develop operational priorities for community engagement. Priorities for the next 2 years will be established by the Working Group.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the University Community Liaison Forum are:

- To promote educational and social enterprise projects and programmes for mutual benefit and explore potential partnership action from the University of Ulster, the participating community stakeholders and/or other public, private or voluntary organisations.
- To engage with local neighbourhoods and relevant public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations keeping residents and community stakeholders informed

- To develop an effective, practical and co-operative relationship including the development of agreed practical programmes of work
- To ensure that information is shared in a timely and appropriate fashion
- To monitor and check that there are clear and effective reporting arrangements between the members of the Forum and their representative organisations with evidence of reporting within the organisations and effectual feedback to the Forum
- To act as a consultative forum and identify issues for consideration by the University's Widening Access and Participation Sub-Committee which will report to the Educational Partnerships and International Affairs Committee. In relation to community engagement a report will also be provided to the Organisational Development Committee.

UCLF will identify key issues and may liaise with other relevant groups as required to develop particular projects and programmes.

The Forum will have the flexibility, exceptionally, to co-opt additional members for specific periods/tasks.

The Forum will be convened as often as is required by the volume of work or at least two times per year.

The Forum will operate for a period of four years after which there will be a process of seeking new elected, community and business representatives by a method to be determined by the Forum.

Membership

University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Anne Moran (PVC Educational Partnerships) • Professor Alastair Adair (PVC Development, Provost Belfast and Jordanstown) CHAIR • Dr Duncan Morrow (Community Engagement) • Professor Jackie McCoy (UBS) • Dr Shane Crothers (Head of Widening Access & Participation)
Elected Representatives & Community Organisations/Partnership Boards Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 elected representatives & 4 representatives of community organisations/partnership boards with an emphasis on immediate neighbours.
Statutory Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast City Council

- Tigers Bay Community Group

The detail of nominating and electing representatives has been discussed with DSD and Belfast City Council.

The representatives of the organisations attending the meeting on 17 June will decide the method of nominating representatives to the Forum.