

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

MONDAY, 10th FEBRUARY, 2014

MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

Members present: Councillor Hendron (Chairman);
Alderman Stoker; and
Councillors Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhín
and Reynolds.

External Members: Ms. O. Barron, Health and Social Care Trust;
Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Ms. A. Chada, Minority Ethnic Groups;
Archdeacon B. Dodds, Church of Ireland;
Mr. R. Galway, Confederation of British Industry/
Shorts Bombardier;
Mrs. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
Dr. C. Hughes, Belfast Regeneration Office;
Ms. M. Marken, Catholic Church;
Ms. C. Moore, ICTU; and
Mr. U. Tok, Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Director of Health and Environmental
Services;
Mr. I. May, PEACE III Programme Manager;
Mr. D. Robinson, Senior Good Relations Officer; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor Attwood, Mr. McGivern and Mr. Scott.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 13th January were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Peace III – Implementation Update

The PEACE III Manager reported that, further to the request which had been submitted in December, the Special European Union Programmes Body had issued an addendum to the Council's Letter of Offer which would enable an extension to project activity under the Transforming Contested Space theme.

The Partnership was advised that the Lord Mayor had, on 16th January, hosted a delegation from the Basque Regional Government which had undertaken a visit to Belfast to study the PEACE III Plan, the Youth Engagement Project and the Interfaces Programme.

The Partnership was informed that the Youth Engagement Project would host an event to celebrate the achievements of its participants in the Reception Room, City Hall, on Friday 28th February at 10.00 a.m. An invitation to attend would be issued to all Members of the Partnership.

The PEACE III Manager advised the Partnership that a claim of approximately £830,000 had been submitted to the Special European Union Programmes Body on 31st January. He indicated that final claims had been received by all but one of the projects which had a completion date of 31st December.

Noted.

Good Relations Audit 2014

(Mr. J. McVey and Mrs. N. McKeagney, Blueprint Consulting, attended in connection with this item.)

The Partnership received a presentation from representatives of Blueprint Consulting in respect of an audit which it would be undertaking on the Council's Good Relations remit and requirements during the next year. This audit was required by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister to assist in the formulation of the Action Plans which Councils submitted for funding under the Good Relations Programme.

Mr. McVey highlighted the key issues which had already been suggested for inclusion in any Good Relations Action Plan, viz.,

- promoting increased engagement between communities at interfaces;
- promoting positive expressions of cultural heritage;
- developing year-round intervention and resilience programmes;
- promoting the participation and inclusion of migrant and minority ethnic communities;
- delivering effective training, monitoring and evaluation of programmes;
- supporting groups at neighbourhood level through a Good Relations grant-aid programme; and
- sharing models of good practice.

The Chairman then invited Members to comment on the initial themes in order to inform and strengthen the scope of the audit.

During discussion, a Member suggested that the needs of the Irish language speaking community should be considered as part of any future Action Plan and programme of work. A further Member indicated that, in addition to the Irish language, it would be important that the requirements of other minority languages would be included with a view to promoting overall linguistic diversity in Belfast.

A Member stated that any new Action Plan developed would need to promote and encourage Good Relations on a cross-community basis. He pointed out that any Action Plan formulated should seek to support those projects which promoted inter-dependence between both Nationalist and Unionist communities.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the information which had been provided and noted further that the representatives of Blueprint Consulting would engage further with any Member who so wished. The completed Action Plan would be submitted to the Partnership's meeting in March for the Members' consideration.

Review of Good Relations Partnership

The Partnership was reminded that an independent review had been undertaken in respect of its role and remit in 2011. The PEACE III Programme Manager pointed out that, in light of the Reform of Local Government, it would be prudent for the Partnership to commission a further review in order to ensure that it would be able to meet the challenges posed through the extension of the Council boundary. He suggested that the following issues could be addressed as part of any review of the Partnership, e.g.:

- future composition and governance arrangements;
- future strategic direction and adherence with policy development;
- planning and resourcing for possible PEACE IV Programme;
- monitoring and review of activity and outcomes; and
- ongoing Partnership development;

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to authorise expenditure in the sum of £3,000 to enable the hiring of independent consultants to undertake the review on the terms outlined.

It was noted that this expenditure would, in turn, be recouped in full from the Special European Union Programmes Body.

United Communities Intervention and Resilience Programme

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The Partnership will be aware of the recent Government Strategy: Together; Building a United Community (United Communities). In this strategy, under the shared aim of ‘Our Children and Young People’, there is a commitment to ensure that the approach to youth intervention becomes a year round programme.

The Partnership will also know that the Council has administered Summer Intervention Funding on behalf of OFM/DFM for the past 3 years. As part of this process, a review and evaluation was undertaken by Deloitte in 2011, which highlighted key components for intervention work. Central to these recommendations were:

- 1. Intervention should be a year round process**
- 2. Allocations of funding should be done as early as possible**
- 3. There should be one single pot of funding that can be accessed by community groups**
- 4. Non financial assets should be utilised to support local intervention work**
- 5. There should be an overarching Governmental strategy to intervention work**

The purpose of this report is to inform the Partnership that within the United Communities Strategy, the Council has made a bid to OFM/DFM for a programme to deliver on the strategy and the

Deloitte recommendations and to seek approval for its delivery once this has been granted.

Key Issues

Within United Communities, Council's have been identified as key delivery agents. As usual, the Council will develop its annual Action Plan to be submitted to the District Council's Good Relations Programme at OFM/DFM. An audit of need is currently being undertaken to inform this Action Plan. The Action plan is 75% funded by OFM/DFM.

In addition to the Council's annual Action Plan, there are several 'Headline Actions' within United Communities, which will command 100% funding.

The Council has worked up a bid to OFM/DFM, which is attached as an appendix, to support a programme of work, at 100% funding, to build on our traditional Summer Intervention Programme, which will include the following elements:

- Consultation and engagement with community and voluntary groups

Consultation and engagement with communities is undertaken jointly between the Good Relations and Community Safety Units. All groups that are funded under the Summer Intervention Programme and the Policing and Community Safety Small Grants Programme are supported to develop collaborative projects at neighbourhood level and coordinate activity together. They also meet 3 times per year to feed into the evaluation and developmental process.

- Open call for small grants

This will be the traditional Summer Intervention Funding programme to support intervention activities with young people at interface areas during key times of heightened tension over the summer months

- Year-round funding for intervention work in 'hot-spot' areas

The year round funding seeks to build on the successful Youth Engagement Project which has been delivered under PEACE III. This will support intervention projects within local communities in areas identified by the PSNI as being 'hot-spots', on a year round basis.

- Summer camps/summer schools, within Council Leisure Centres

This element of the proposals seeks to locate intervention activities within communities and support the more strategic utilisation of local assets.

- Emergency Intervention funding for crises situations

The emergency funding seeks to build on the pilot that was undertaken in the summer of 2013, where small pots of funding

were allocated within a matter of days and reported retrospectively to the Partnership. This current bid to OFM/DFM seeks to increase this and allocate it out throughout the year, as circumstances dictate.

- **Support for schemes such as ‘Midnight Soccer’**

These schemes are invaluable in providing provision within local neighbourhoods to young people

- **A showcase event re: the forthcoming Giro d’Italia**

This has been included into the proposals to provide a positive showcase for young people across the City. In addition, there will be a launch of the overall programme, currently scheduled for 10th March, involving the Lord Mayor and the two Junior Ministers.

The proposals contained above, to OFM/DFM, are based on the experience of delivering programmes over the summer in the past and the proposals also seek to support development in a number of other areas in order to ensure that the collective intervention work of the Council is contained within one overarching strategic programme.

Resource Implications

The bid to OFM/DFM will be fully funded at 100%. Staff from a number of Departments within the Council will be tasked with supporting the delivery of the programme.

Recommendation

The Partnership is requested to note the contents of this report and to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the programme be delivered, as set out in the attachment, once approval has been awarded by OFM/DFM.

The Partnership adopted the recommendation.

Update on Interfaces Strategy

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

“1 **Relevant Background Information**

1.1 Members will be aware of the work which has been undertaken by the Council with regard to interfaces over the last number of years. At the recent Policy and Resources Committee, on the 24th January, the Committee granted this Partnership authority to proceed in partnership with OFM/DFM in further evolving the Council’s work on interfaces as part of their strategy: Together; Building a United Community (United Communities). The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the progress to date.

1.2 Members will know that following a Notice of Motion from Alderman Ekin which was unanimously agreed by the Council in September 2011, a strategy and framework for action was

developed, which sought to move towards the removal of a number of walls/barriers. This work was led by the Good Relations Partnership in conjunction with the Safer City Group, with some elements funded by PEACE III.

1.3 In addition to the Notice of Motion, the Council's Corporate Plan makes specific reference to interfaces, stating that we commit to lead on an Interfaces Strategy to ensure that we support a shared city.

1.4 Our Investment Programme notes that:

'... segregation and division produce significant additional costs in the city. The 'diseconomies of segregation' are borne disproportionately by the most disadvantaged communities. All of this projects a negative backdrop as Belfast presents itself as an outward looking and modern location for living, investment and tourism.

We will continue to work with local communities who are seeking to reduce and remove barriers, in the context of local area working. We will support and advocate for a number of neighbourhoods in the city, close to interface barriers, to regenerate those neighbourhoods while safely and sensitively working towards removing and reducing barriers.'

1.5 Members are aware that improving the quality of life and connectivity in the city are clear priorities for the Council and the preparation of a more integrated strategy for interfaces within broader regeneration proposals is timely, given the imminent introduction of community planning and the transfer of regeneration powers which provides the framework for such place shaping actions.

2 Key Issues

2.1 Within United Communities, Council's have been identified as key delivery agents. As usual, the Council will develop its annual Action Plan to be submitted to the District Council's Good Relations Programme at OFM/DFM. An audit of need is currently being undertaken to inform this Action Plan. The Action plan is 75% funded by OFM/DFM.

2.2 In addition to the Council's annual Action Plan, there are a number of opportunities to access additional resources within United Communities, which will command 100% funding.

2.3 Interfaces feature prominently in this strategy, which states that in building a safer community, we will:

- Create a 10-year Programme to reduce, and remove by 2023, all interface barriers; and
- Create an Interface Barrier Support Package.'

2.4 The Council has granted authority to the Partnership to work up a bid to OFM/DFM, to support a programme of work, at

100% funding, to enable continued progress on the work already underway with regards to interface barriers.

- 2.5 The Department of Justice has assumed the role of lead partner in the development of this Interface Strategy and envisages a co-ordinated delivery programme by a number of interested agencies, including the City Council and NI Housing Executive.
- 2.6 The DOJ team will apply for additional resources to OFM/DFM under the *United Community* framework to cover the cost of this programme. This application will include a bid for sufficient funding to support resources within the Council which are specifically dedicated to working on the interface strategy, in terms of planning, design and delivery. Work to date has been undertaken by one of the Good Relations Officers and funded by Peace III but the work envisaged, going forward, will require staff with a mix of skills from a number of different Departments– planning, legal, project management etc.
- 2.7 The Council’s current work on tackling sectarianism and promoting positive relationships in the city, via the Council’s annual Action Plan will continue in parallel with this programme.
- 2.8 Any programme would be co-designed by both the DOJ and Council. This approach could be regarded as a holistic model of good practice , and if successful could be rolled out NI wide – OFM/DFM are keen to see how such a model might be used for example in Lurgan/Portadown.
- 2.9 The proposals within any bid to OFM/DFM, will seek appropriate start-up costs in order to enable the Council put a team in place to dedicate their time to deliver work on interfaces.

Longer term

- 2.9 In the longer term, when planning and regeneration functions have been fully devolved to local authorities, the Council is likely to continue this central role round interfaces, mainstreaming it within the broader context of community planning/ local area working/local regeneration plans. However, funding physical works will still be required.
- 2.10 It appears likely that a Peace IV Programme would include a specific programme to tackle interfaces and experience gained at this stage would be crucial.

3 Resource Implications

None at this stage – the Council’s bid will be for funding at 100%.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

This proposal seeks to improve the physical environment and the quality of life of residents from the most deprived communities within the city; any implications will be positive.

5 Recommendation

The Partnership is requested to note the contents of this report and grant authority to proceed on the basis as outlined above; further reports will be submitted in due course.”

The Partnership adopted the recommendation.

Opening of The Sam Thompson Bridge

The Partnership was reminded that a new bridge, linking the Airport Road with the Victoria Park as part of the Connswater Community Greenway, had been named in honour of the Belfast playwright Sam Thompson following a public ‘name the bridge’ competition. A request had been made to the Partnership from the Sam Thompson Society for a small amount of funding to support some events to mark the official opening of the bridge.

The Partnership granted authority for expenditure in the sum of approximately £800 to enable the hosting of a small reception, together with the staging of a number of short scenes from Sam Thompson’s plays, to mark the opening of The Sam Thompson Bridge.

Malaysian Night

The Partnership noted that an invitation had been extended to all Members, on behalf of the ‘Malaysia and You’ organisation, to attend a Malaysian Night in the City Hall on 9th March from 7.00 p.m. to 11.00 p.m.

Healing Through Remembering – Day of Reflection

The Senior Good Relations Officer reminded the Partnership that the above mentioned Day of Reflection was held annually to remember those who had lost their lives as a result of the Troubles.

It was noted that a report would be submitted for consideration at the meeting scheduled for 10th March, which would outline a range of options regarding how the Partnership might wish to mark the above-mentioned event.

Chairman