

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

MONDAY, 9th June, 2014

MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

Members present: Councillor Reynolds (in the Chair);
Alderman Stoker and Councillor Kyle.

External Members: Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Reverend L. Carroll, Presbyterian Church;
Archdeacon B. Dodds, Church of Ireland;
Dr. C. Hughes, Belfast Regeneration Office;
Mr. R. Galway, Confederation of British Industry/
Shorts Bombardier; and
Ms. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

In attendance: Mr. T. Martin, Head of Building Control;
Ms. N. Lane, Good Relations Manager;
Mr. S. Lavery, Programme Manager;
Mr. I. May, PEACE III Programme Manager; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of the Chairman (Councillor Hendron), Ms. A. Chada, Ms. O. Barron, Mr. P. Mackel, Mrs. M. Marken, Mr. B. McGivern and Mr. P. Scott.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 7th April were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Stoker declared an interest in respect of agenda item 5, viz., Bonfire Management Programme 2014, in that he was associated with the Greater Village Regeneration Trust, which was managing the Donegall Road Loyals bonfire site close to the Belfast City Hospital.

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Ms. Nicola Lane to her first meeting of the Partnership following her recent appointment to the post of Good Relations Manager.

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Annual Report to Equality Commission for Northern Ireland 2013/2014

(Ms. S. Gilmartin, Equality and Good Relations Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Partnership was advised that the Council was required to submit to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland an annual report on the progress which had been achieved on implementing the arrangements set out within its Equality Scheme, in terms of discharging the duties imposed under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Accordingly, the Equality and Good Relations Officer submitted for the Partnership's consideration the report for the period from 1st April, 2013 till 31st March, 2014, a copy of which was available on the Mod.gov website. She confirmed that the Council had submitted also to the Equality Commission its Annual Monitoring Return as at 1st January, 2014 and that a copy of that document could be obtained from the Human Resources Section.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

PEACE III Partnership Agreement

The Partnership was reminded that, under the terms and conditions set out by the Special European Union Programmes Body within its Letter of Offer to the Council, a formal Partnership Agreement was required for the delivery of Phase II of the Belfast Peace III Plan. The PEACE III Programme Manager reminded the Partnership that the current agreement, which had been approved by the Partnership at its meeting on 3rd April, 2012, was scheduled to conclude at the end of June. He pointed out that the Programmes Body had, at the request of the Partnership, agreed to extend the Phase II programming period until 31st December, 2014 to enable a number of projects to be completed. Accordingly, he recommended that the current Partnership Agreement be extended until that date, in line with the revised Letter of Offer, which in turn would guarantee the processing of claims and their subsequent payment.

The Partnership adopted the recommendation.

Update on PEACE III Interfaces Project

The Partnership was reminded that the Council had, in December, 2011, approved funding of £421,000 in order to deliver, under Phase II of the Belfast Peace III Plan, an interfaces programme which would seek to develop an inclusive community approach towards the regeneration of communities living at interfaces. The Programme Manager reported that, in 2012, the Good Relations Unit had, following a procurement process, appointed a contractor who had assumed responsibility for undertaking a consultation exercise within identified areas, devising local area regeneration plans and carrying out environmental or physical improvements therein.

He explained that, to date, a significant amount of work had been undertaken in terms of consultation and engagement with local residents and community representatives, which had led to the formulation of action plans for ten areas within the City. The Council was now in the final stage of the project, which required the delivery in each of those areas of environmental improvement schemes and artworks, at a cost of

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£165,000 and £75,000 respectively. However, since the current contract could no longer be used, it had been decided that officers seek an alternative means of delivering the work in the ten areas prior to the deadline of September 2014, as laid by the Special European Union Programmes Body. As a result, it was now proposed that the Council initiate a tendering exercise to appoint a suitable contractor to deliver the environmental improvements and seek quotations for the provision of art works and he recommended accordingly.

During a lengthy discussion, clarification was sought around the process which had led to the selection of the ten areas within the project and the extent of the consultation which had been undertaken, particularly in the south and east of the City. The point was made also that the Council should seek to increase communication and awareness around the Interfaces Project.

In response, the Programme Manager confirmed that the project and target areas, the majority of which were in the north and west of the City, had been identified and developed through the Strategic Inter-Agency Group on Interfaces, which was chaired by a representative of the Department of Justice. He undertook to circulate to the Partnership details of the ten areas which were involved in the initiative, together with information on the consultation process and stated that the Council would, once the appropriate contracts had been put in place for the delivery of the projects, identify ways in which both the consultation process and awareness raising could be enhanced.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided and agreed to receive at a future meeting a presentation on the Interfaces Project.

Bonfire Management Programme 2014

The Programme Manager reminded the Partnership that, at its meeting on 7th April, it had delegated authority to Council officers to deliver in-house a Bonfire Management Programme for 2014. He reported that the initiative was being delivered by way of a two-part process, the first of which would see participating groups being awarded funding of up to £2,000 to undertake activities such as fun days and diversionary work, subject to their adherence to a number of criteria. The groups were required to attend an information seminar setting out the conditions of the Programme, to submit an application by the deadline date of 30th May, to agree in writing to the conditions set out within their Letter of Offer and to complete a post-event monitoring and evaluation form. 70% of funding would be allocated to participants in advance of their events, with the remainder being paid upon the successful completion of their project and conditions being met.

He explained that, under the second part of the process, contractors had been appointed to remove unwanted bonfire material and to deliver and install up to five beacons for bonfires taking place in July. It was anticipated that a contract relating to the monitoring and evaluation of the Bonfire Management Programme would be awarded in the near future. He added that the Bonfire Inter-Agency Group, whose membership included the Council, the Department for Regional Development, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Police Service of Northern Ireland, would continue to meet to address any issues arising over

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the course of the summer. In response to a number of issues which were raised by the Partnership, he undertook to examine ways in which the use of beacons could be promoted in future years and to raise with the Bonfire Inter-Agency Group the potential for tracing the origin of tyres used on bonfires.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided, including an updated list of those groups which were participating in the 2014 Bonfire Management Programme.

Addressing Hate Crime

The Partnership was advised that an inter-agency event had been held on 2nd June in the City Hall to highlight the issue of hate crime. The Good Relations Manager reported that the event had been chaired jointly by the Council and the Police Service of Northern Ireland and that organisations such as the Equality Commission, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities and the Youth Justice Agency had been represented. Discussions had centred around the reporting of incidents, improved accessibility to services and increased communication and best practice. It had been agreed that a working group be established to draft an action plan which would seek to address those issues. It was proposed that the group would report to both the Good Relations Partnership and the Policing and Community Safety Partnership.

After discussion, the Partnership endorsed this approach to addressing hate crime.

Summer Intervention Funding

The Partnership was reminded that, at its meeting on 10th March, it had approved funding of £112,653 for forty-three groups under the Council's Summer Intervention Fund. The Programme Manager reported that, in order to avoid duplication of funding, it had been agreed upon the establishment of that scheme that any groups who had been registered with the Belfast Education and Library Board would not be eligible for financial assistance as they had access to a separate fund which was administered by that Body.

He informed the Members that unsuccessful applicants to the Summer Intervention Fund were, as part of the process, provided with an opportunity to discuss their submission with officers of the Good Relations Unit. He explained that, whilst reviewing an application which had been submitted by the Blackie River Community Group, it had become apparent that the organisation had failed to obtain funding on the basis that it was registered with the Belfast Education and Library Board. However, it had been established that the organisation was not in fact registered with the Board. In view of that oversight, he recommended that the Partnership grant approval for the application to be reassessed in line with the criteria governing the Summer Intervention Fund and, if successful, that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to agree that up to £5,000 be allocated from the Fund to the aforementioned Group.

The Partnership adopted the recommendation.

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Archdeacon B. Dodds

The Partnership was informed that this would be the last meeting which would be attended by Archdeacon Dodds as he was due to retire from his ministry at the end of June.

The Chairman, on behalf of the members, thanked Archdeacon Dodds for the valuable contribution which he had made to the work of the Partnership over the past twelve years and wished him well in his retirement.

Date of Next Meeting

The Partnership noted that its next meeting would take place at 1.00 p.m. on Monday, 11th August.

Chairman