

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

MONDAY, 8th DECEMBER, 2014

MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

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

Also attended: Councillor Convery.

External Members: Mr. S. Brennan, Voluntary/Community Sector;
Mr. K. Gibson, Church of Ireland;
Ms. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
Dr. C. Hughes, Department for Social Development;
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast and District Trades Union Council;
Mrs. M. Marken, Catholic Church;
Mr. B. McGivern, Belfast City Centre Management; and
Mr. P. Scott, Catholic Church.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Toland, Lead Operations Officer/Head of
Environmental Health;
Ms. N. Lane, Good Relations Manager;
Ms. M. Hand, Good Relations Officer;
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer; and
Ms. L. Francey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor Attwood, Ms. O. Barron, Ms. A. Chada and Mr. R. Galway.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th November were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declaration of Interest

Mr. S. Brennan declared an interest in respect of item 6, viz., Update on Forum for Cities in Transition Conference, in that he was a member of the group which had organised the Conference which had taken place in Belfast in October.

Interface Regeneration Art Scheme - Duncairn Gardens

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that Duncairn Gardens had been one of the areas which had been identified to benefit from the Council-led Peace III funded 'Interfaces Project'. The Project sought to work with local communities to identify small-scale regeneration works at interface sites. She explained that the Duncairn Community Partnership, which was being funded through the International

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Fund for Ireland's Peace Walls Programme, had been working to address the reduction and regeneration of interface barriers in the wider Duncairn Gardens area. That Partnership had established a Project Steering Group, involving local community representatives and a range of statutory partners, including the Council, with the aim of regenerating local interface sites.

Following consultation with the local community and relevant statutory agencies, a plan had been produced for the delivery of a number of small-scale environmental works in the area and for two artwork projects in Lepper Street and Syringa Street. She reported that the artwork projects had been included within a previous quotation exercise, however, due to a limited response from potential artists, there had been insufficient time to undertake a further exercise and, therefore, they had both been omitted from that project.

She explained that the proposed artworks formed a key element of the wider regeneration of the Duncairn area and that they had been agreed with the community through a locally led consultation process. She pointed out that the combined cost of the artworks would be no more than £10,000, 75% of which could be recouped from the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister and would be dependent upon additional funding being made available from that Office through the District Council's Good Relations Programme.

During discussion, a Member expressed concern at the lack of consultation involving local residents in relation to this and similar projects within the Duncairn area. The point was made that extensive consultation with residents was essential in order to promote inclusivity and ensure the success of such projects.

In response, the Good Relations Officer confirmed that, should the Partnership be minded to proceed with the artworks, the project brief would provide for extensive consultation with the local community through, for example, the hosting of workshops and information sessions by the appointed artist(s).

Accordingly, the Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it approve funding of up to £10,000 for the two aforementioned artworks, subject to additional funding being made available by the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister through its District Councils' Good Relations Programme.

Proposed Artwork Project – East Belfast

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that the second phase of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Re-Imaging Communities had been progressed under the banner 'Building Peace through the Arts – Re-Imaging Communities'. She reported that the programme had now closed, however, the Good Relations Unit had been approached by Charter NI and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, with a view to encouraging local communities to continue to engage in the current Arts Council's Re-Imaging programme, which sought to replace twenty-two paramilitary type

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murals with agreed public artworks. The Programme would see significant positive advancement in the physical shared space in the east of the City and contribute to confidence building within the community. The Arts Council had established a steering group, comprised of the Council, Charter NI, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Police Service of Northern Ireland, in order to manage the programme.

She explained that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive had agreed with Charter NI to fund £5,000 of a £10,000 re-imaging mural project, which would provide for the replacement of two or three other paramilitary type murals, which were outside of the Arts Council's programme, with sporting or historical images. The Council had been requested to provide the additional £5,000 required for that work, 75% of which could be recouped from the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy Minister.

After discussion, the Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to approve funding of £5,000 towards the provision of two or three artworks in east Belfast, subject to additional funding being made available by the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister through its District Councils' Good Relations Programme.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2015

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that Holocaust Memorial Day was an internationally recognised event which sought to honour and remember the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides in other countries across the world. The event was held annually on 27th January, as that was the date on which the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp had been liberated, and this year it would focus upon the theme 'Keep the Memory Alive'.

She explained that the Good Relations Unit marked Holocaust Memorial Day through a number of awareness raising activities and confirmed that an event would be held in the City Hall at 7.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 20th January in recognition of the Roma and other European gypsy communities which had suffered significantly during the Holocaust. That date had been chosen as a lead up to a major event being held on Holocaust Memorial Day by the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister. The Good Relations Unit would be working with organisations such as South Belfast Roundtable, Bryson Intercultural, Mediation NI and the Roma-Romanian Community Association of Northern Ireland on the Council's event, which would cost no more than £1,000. 75% of that sum would be recouped from the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it approve the hosting of the Council's event on 20th January and the associated expenditure.

Christmas Goodwill Events

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that it had, for a number of years, allocated funding of £200 to a number of groups in interface areas to enable

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them to hold small-scale cross-community Christmas events aimed at promoting good relations. She confirmed that requests had been received from the following groups which were each seeking to hold events of that nature in the lead up to Christmas:

- Black Mountain Shared Space Project
- Holy Cross/Woodvale Presbyterian Church
- South West Action Team (SWAT) - Annual Event at RISE sculpture
- TASCIT (Twaddell/Ardoyne/Shankill Communities in Transition)

The Partnership agreed that funding of £200 be awarded under the delegated authority of the Interim Strategic Director of Health and Environmental Services to those organisations and noted that 75% of that amount would be recouped through the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister.

Update on Forum for Cities in Transition Conference

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that the Forum for Cities in Transition had been founded in April, 2009 by Derry/Londonderry, Kirkuk, the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities of Nicosia and Mitrovicë/Kosovska Mitrovica, with the aim of encouraging mutual learning, dialogue and the resolution of conflict through non-violent methods. The Forum operated on the principle that cities which were in conflict or which had emerged from conflict were in the best position to assist others in similar situations.

She reported that this year's annual Forum for Cities in Transition conference had taken place from 27th till 30th October in Belfast. The event had focused upon the theme 'Promoting Reconciliation Through Resilience' and had been attended by Mayors, Elected Members, municipal officers and representatives of the business, community and voluntary sectors from the fifteen cities which participated in the Forum.

She explained that a number of delegates had demonstrated an interest in advancing their knowledge of good relations and how it was promoted by the Council and other agencies. Following the conference, correspondence had been received from Mr. A. Haigal, a member of the Baghdad Provincial Council, who had attended the event, requesting that the Council give consideration to the city of Belfast entering into a twinning agreement with that part of Baghdad. He had indicated that the request had been made with a view to promoting cooperation and exchanging information in areas such as culture, science, municipal services, strategic projects and other issues of common concern.

The Good Relations Manager pointed out that the issue of the twinning of towns was based primarily upon business, economic and tourism factors and that requests such as that which had been submitted by Mr. Haigal were progressed currently on the basis of friendship and cooperation. Accordingly, she recommended that the Partnership seek approval from the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for officers to discuss with representatives of the Forum for Cities in Transition ways in which to share best practice in good relations with Baghdad and other interested cities.

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The Partnership adopted the recommendation and noted that it would in due course receive an update on the outcome of those discussions.

Good Relations Partnership Workshop

The Partnership noted that a workshop to facilitate discussion around the future role of the Partnership and to inform the content of the Good Relations Action Plan for 2015/2016 would take place between 10.00 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 16th December in the Reception Room, City Hall.

Good Relations and Summer Intervention Grant-Aid Funds

The Partnership was advised that the latest call for applications under the Good Relations and Summer Intervention Grant-Aid Funds, for activities taking place between April and September, 2015, would close on 21st January. The Good Relations Manager reported that the call was being advertised through the Council's website and external roadshows and urged the Partnership to encourage groups to submit applications to the Funds.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

Update on Summer Camps/Schools

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that one of the headline actions set out within the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister's 'Together: Building a United Community Strategy' focused upon the provision of 100 summer camps/schools for children and young people. The Council was undertaking currently on behalf of the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister, an evaluation of a range of activities and projects which would inform the design of the summer camps/schools from 2015 onwards. She reported that a number of co-design workshops had been held recently and that resulting comments would be considered as part of the evaluation process.

Noted.

Refugee Transition Guide

The Partnership was informed that Law Centre NI had produced for the Council and a number of agencies and organisations a Refugee Transition Guide for people who had recently attained refugee status. The Guide, which had been launched in June 2014, provided them with assistance in, for example, finding a home, accessing benefits and securing employment and was used also by their advisors and by staff in statutory agencies.

The Good Relations Manager reported that a request had been received from Leeds City Council seeking to adapt the Guide for use within the Leeds area. She pointed out that the document was regarded by the Council and its partners as being

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an example of best practice and recommended that the Partnership accede to the request.

The Partnership adopted the recommendation.

Chairman