

**Good Relations Partnership,
Monday, 12th January, 2015**

GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

MONDAY, 12th JANUARY, 2015

MEETING OF THE GOOD RELATIONS PARTNERSHIP

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

External Members: Ms. A. Chada, Minority Ethnic Groups;
Mr. K. Gibson, Church of Ireland;
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;
Mr. I. May, PEACE III Programme Manager;
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer; and
Ms. L. Francey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Ms. O. Barron, Mr. S. Brennan, Mrs. J. Hawthorne, Dr. C. Hughes, Mr. P. Mackel and Mr. U. Tok.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 8th December were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Peace III Implementation Update

The Good Relations Manager informed the Partnership that all projects which had been funded under the PEACE III Plan had now been completed. She outlined a draft version of the Post Project Evaluation, as required by the Special European Union Programmes Body, which had been prepared and had been circulated to Members. It

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was agreed that the PEACE III Programme Manager would incorporate any additional comments from the Partnership within the final version.

She updated Members also on the Article 16 review which had been conducted by the Department of Finance and Personnel which had now been completed and a final report would be forthcoming. She added that no significant issues had been identified in relation to expenditure or processes. An interim evaluation report had also been completed on Phase II of the Youth Engagement Project. That evaluation, which had been conducted by Gauge Consulting, had found that the Project had a net social return which equated to £9 for every £1 which had been invested. Positive outcomes from the Project, she reported, had included a reduction in substance abuse and antisocial behaviour, newfound respect for the community and an increased trust in local authorities amongst young people. A copy of the final report would be circulated to the Partnership.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided and agreed to forward any comments on the draft Post Project Evaluation to the PEACE III Programme Manager for inclusion in the final submission.

Equality Consultative Forum and Screening Outcome Report

The Good Relations Manager reminded Members that two of the mechanisms which contributed to the Council in meeting its Section 75 statutory duties were the Consultative Forum and a Screening Outcome Report. She explained that the Council had hosted a Consultative Forum since 1995 and that a review of membership of that Forum had taken place to maintain a broad representation. The aims of the Forum were to:

- contribute to the consultation on the screening of policies;
- contribute to ongoing consultation on new policies;
- highlight equality and good relations issues with regard to the provision of the Council's goods, services and facilities; and
- advise on the implementation of the Council's Equality Scheme.

She explained that the Equality Scheme outlined how the Council would fulfil its statutory duties and gave a commitment to apply screening to all new and revised policies. After screening had been completed, a template would be signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for that policy. Such templates were then collated within a Screening Outcome Report and published on the Council's website.

The Partnership noted the reporting arrangements for the Consultative Forum and the Screening Outcome Report for the period from May to September, 2014.

Update on Interface Strategy

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The Good Relations Manager reminded Members that the Peace III funded programme for interface regeneration had concluded on 31st October 2014, in accordance with the SEUPB deadline.

A Member referred to the barrier at Roden Street and emphasised that this provided environmental protection between Roden Street and the heavy traffic on the Westlink. He emphasised that residents were opposed to the removal of the barrier for that reason and not because it was an interface. The Good Relations Manager agreed to amend the report to reflect the views of the Member.

Noted.

International Women's Day 2015

The Good Relations Manager reminded Members that the Council, at its meeting on 2nd, December 2013 had passed unanimously a Motion relating to International Women's Day. At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting in January 2014, the Council had recognised that the costs associated with marking International Women's Day would be recurring annual expenditure. The women's sector in Belfast had indicated that it would be keen that the Council would support the annual event and had provided estimated costs in this regard.

Accordingly, she provided an overview of the details for this year's event which would take place on Saturday, 7th March. The theme would be "No Peace Without Women" and would commence at 2 p.m. with a rally outside the City Hall. Lunch would be provided in the City Hall for up to 200 women and a number of lectures would also be given in the Ulster Hall in the week preceding the rally.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

Migrant and Minority Ethnic Engagement Work - Update

The Good Relations Manager provided the Partnership with an overview of the work which had taken place with other agencies to combat race hate crime in the City. That work was based on the three themes of Support Services, Communications and Messaging and Community Activity. She reminded Members that, as part of that collective approach, the Partnership had given its approval to delivering a number of actions to support engagement and development with migrant and minority ethnic communities under the Community Activity theme.

She updated the Partnership in respect of the three themes and agreed to distribute copies of the report entitled "Challenging Racism: Ending Hate" to the Partnership. She added that five 'Small World' events had been organised across the City and indicated that information on these would be circulated to the Partnership.

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Noted.

Black Minority Ethnic Steering Group

The Partnership was advised that the Council, at its meeting on 1st December, had referred the undernoted motion to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration, which had, in turn, referred the matter to the Partnership:

“This Council, cognisant of its responsibility as an equal opportunities employer and civic leader, seeks to establish a BME (Black Minority Ethnic) Steering Group to encourage and promote ethnic representation within the Council’s workforce and seeks to address the issue of under-representation of people from the BME community in political life, supplementing and strengthening the work already undertaken as part of the Workforce Race Action Plan 2012 to 2015.”

The Good Relations Manager reminded Members that the current Good Relations Action Plan contained objectives to improve the participation of migrant and minority ethnic communities in community life and to strengthen the ethnic diversity of the City as something to be celebrated and embraced. Under those objectives, a quarterly Migrant Forum for Service Providers had been established to improve service delivery to migrant and minority ethnic communities. A series of projects and events have also been organised to promote participation of migrant and minority ethnic communities in the public sphere. These projects were connected to the ‘Shared Community’ priority within the Executive’s ‘Together: Building a United Community’ Strategy. She also reminded the Partnership that the Council had submitted a response to the OFMdFM consultation on a Racial Equality Strategy and that Members would be updated on the outcome of that exercise when it had been completed. She emphasised that a more proactive approach would be required by the Council in order to increase migrant and ethnic minority participation within the context of the review of the Council’s future governance requirements.

During discussion, the Partnership welcomed broadly the establishment of a steering group within the context of the Council’s Community Planning remit. It was pointed out that, whilst promoting active participation from black minority ethnic groups within the workforce and within the political decision-making process, it would be remiss not to highlight that appointments were made on the basis of merit.

A further Member indicated that he had attended recently a Travellers’ Forum where a number of key points had been raised in relation to promoting positive attitudes to the Travelling community and of the difficulties faced by the Travelling community. He suggested that the Partnership might receive a presentation from representatives of the Forum at a future meeting.

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After discussion, the Partnership agreed that the comments which had been raised would be drawn to the attention of the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and agreed further to invite representatives of the Travellers Forum to attend a future meeting.

Allocation of Additional Funding from OFMdfM

The Good Relations Manager reported that additional funding, in the sum of £64,000, had been made available for the delivery of the 'Together: Building a United Community' Strategy, in respect of which the Council would be providing match-funding at 25%. She explained that officers would seek to ensure that as many actions within the Plan would be enacted within the tight timescale, including Grant Aid Programmes, Bonfire Management Programme, actions against racism and promoting participation of migrant and minority ethnic communities and actions agreed at the December 2014 Partnership meeting in relation to murals and interfaces.

Meeting with Junior Ministers

She reported that the elected representatives from the Partnership would meet with the Junior Ministers at Stormont to discuss the reduction in Good Relations funding. The meeting would take place at Castle Buildings on Tuesday 9th February, at 3:15 p.m. after the next Partnership meeting. A Member suggested that the important role of the Community and Voluntary sector in providing expertise and guidance in the delivery of Good Relations should be emphasised to the Junior Ministers by the delegation.

Members raised concerns also that the reduction in funding would have a negative impact upon a number of community groups. —The Good Relations Manager indicated that staff would continue to advise and support groups, and that additional information sessions would be held for those groups seeking funding through the schemes in future.

The Partnership noted that additional funding had been provided and agreed that the issue of the role of the Community and Voluntary sector in the delivery of Good Relations would be raised with the Junior Ministers.

Review of Good Relations Workshop

The Good Relations Manager provided an overview of the outcomes of the Workshop which had taken place on Tuesday, 16th December, which had discussed the future role of the Partnership and the Good Relations Action Plan for 2015/2016.

She indicated that a number of Members felt that Good Relations, as a concept, should be central to the Council's ethos. Members agreed also that the Partnership could be more proactive and that more power could be delegated to the Partnership. In response to a Members question, the Good Relations Manager agreed that the word

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equality should be central to the report and indicated that it would be amended to reflect this.

The Partnership noted the findings of the workshop report and it was agreed that any comments regarding the report on the Good Relations Workshop would be submitted to the Good Relations Manager by 19th January.

Chairman