



Inquiry into Together: Building a United Community (TBUC)

Evidence on behalf of

Ballymena Borough Council

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**BALLYMENA BOROUGH COUNCIL
Good Relations Unit**



**Inquiry into
Together: Building a United Community
(TBUC)**

EVIDENCE

1. Introduction

1.1 Brief introduction to persons or organisations completing evidence -perhaps also stating area they work in/experience

This evidence has been completed on behalf of Ballymena Borough Council's Good Relations Unit. This Unit has responsibility for managing Council's Good Relations function, which includes delivery of its Good Relations Strategy which is underpinned by the Together: Building a United Community Strategy

Set out any factual evidence in relation to this term of reference which the committee might be able to draw conclusions from. Also include any recommendations for action that you would like the committee to consider in relation to this term of reference

2. Explore perspectives on sectarianism , division and good relations including

- > An examination of theory and practice with regard to Good Relations, Shared Space and Shared Services
- > Consideration of best practice, both locally and internationally, in bringing divided communities together, and in developing Shared Space and Shared Services

Comment

OFMDFM, as the Department responsible for TBUC, should establish a panel of experts to undertake a review of these areas to include both an academic literature review, statistical analysis around these areas both locally and internationally together with a best practice review. A key element of this review should focus on the best practice from the outcomes of a range of programmes, including the District Council Good Relations Programme, work with the local Police and Community Safety Partnership, Neighbourhood Renewal, Race Relations Strategy, Peace III Programme and any other relevant intervention that would have a Good Relations element.

Best Practice information sharing programmes should be established to deliver best practice in other areas. This should be delivered either through the Community Relations Council or the proposed newly revised Equality Commission in conjunction with District Council Good Relations Programmes

Good Relations should be an overarching key principle of the new enlarged Councils and a core theme within each area's new Community Planning process. This would afford each local area an opportunity to address their key needs and deliver suitable interventions, involving both relevant Community and Statutory Agencies working at an appropriate level.

3. **Seek views on what Good Relations means and how sectarianism and division can be addressed, with a particular focus on the challenges at interface areas, both urban and rural. This may include :**
 - > Seeking views on what issues need to be addressed in order for interface areas to be removed;
 - > examining the role of communities in policy and decision making in relation to community integration and particularly the removal of interface barriers; and
 - > consideration of the effectiveness of the Good Relations indicators in monitoring and measuring the progress of Government interventions

COMMENT

Community Planning will be an excellent vehicle for each new Council to use for delivery of a comprehensive, cohesive local solution to the issue of interfaces. Each new Council area is diverse with different Good Relations issues which are specific to their area; therefore, Community Planning will ensure all voices are considered when reaching local interventions and solutions.

It will be incumbent on Central Government to continue to Resource Local Authorities to promote Good Relations at a local level to maximise the Key Themes emanating from TBUC.

4. **Make recommendations in order to support and enhance policy and decision making with regard to Building a United Community, including on actions to tackle sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance, and to help the Executive's commitment on removing interface barriers.**

COMMENT

Council's Good Relations Strategy's aims are "Create a Climate for Change" and "Promote Provision of Shared Space" which complement the Key Themes in TBUC. Council's Good Relations Unit will continue to work in partnership with key local players to deliver on this Strategy's Themes.

It is vital OFMDFM continue to manage the delivery of a comprehensive, effectively resourced, Good Relations Strategy which gives delivery bodies opportunities to effect change in their areas.